His Girl Wednesday

by BlueBayou

Summary

Missing her interview for a position in the IT department of QC, Felicity Smoak meets Oliver Queen, son of the CEO and future CEO himself. Only Oliver doesn’t take the company as seriously as he should and after yet another fiasco with his assistant, his mother decides to take matter into her own hands and select one with more qualifications than long legs and deep cleavage. In an effort to get her off his back, he pretends he already hired one: the blonde nerdy girl he met a few minutes ago.

Or when Arrow and Ugly Betty crash in my head (except we all know Felicity could never be ugly). It is mostly Arrow, I borrow a few plot ideas/characters from Ugly Betty.

!!!COMPLETED!!!

Find Part 2 here: http://archiveofourown.org/works/7693105/chapters/17526601
Crash! Boom! Bang!

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much to @Victori96572376 for the poster she made just for His Girl Wednesday!! It's gorgeous!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

« Frack, frack, frack, frackity frack! »

Felicity Smoak, MIT class of 09, wasn’t one to swear and panic. Growing up in Vegas around casinos at least taught her how to keep her cool and a clear head. But today wasn’t just any day. She had just arrived in Starling City the night before, and was expected at Queen Consolidated for an interview in 20... scratch that, 17 minutes. Her flight had been delayed and she only made it to her hotel well past midnight. Exhaustion had taken over and she had forgotten to set her alarm clock.
This meant she was currently busy getting dressed after the quickest shower in the history of showers. She didn’t bother with her hair, just put it in her usual ponytail (hey at least it looked professional), grabbed her makeup supplies and rushed out of her hotel room.

At least her taxi was on time. Inside she used the precious minutes it took to get to QC to apply some light makeup. She didn’t look as neat as she would have hoped, but since she was applying for a position in the IT department, and not the public relations, she gathered it should not prejudice her. Someone was clearly on her side as traffic was smooth and she managed to enter the building a full 3 minutes before 10. She hurried to the front desk, barely taking the time to catch her breath. A twenty something gorgeous woman with long, blond silky hair gave her the head to toe glance, clearly taking in her quite disheveled appearance.

“… May I help you?”

“Hum yes, I know I’m late, I’m here for the interview, I know there were several candidates that were to be seen this morning. IT Department.” Felicity quickly explained.

“Oh, indeed, there is an assessment going on right now. I’m afraid you might be indeed late, but it’s on the 15th floor. The lifts are over there, and just ask for Mrs Pembrook.” Blond-hair handed her a visitor badge and pointed to a direction on her right.

“Thank you.” Felicity wasted no time and rushed to the end of the building, quickly scanning her badge while looking in her messenger bag for her resume. Not watching where she was going, she couldn’t see the gentleman who was just as much in a hurry and the two collided just in front of the main elevators.

“Oh God, I’m so sorry, I wasn’t paying attention!” She knelt to pick up some of her possessions that had scattered on the floor.

“Neither was I, obviously.” It wasn’t the words, but the voice that made her look up. She found herself staring into eyes so blue she forgot for one moment what she was doing there in the first place. The more-than-handsome man smiled at her, handing her a pen that had escaped during their collision as they both stood up.

“Hi, I’m Oliver Queen,” he said as he shook her hand.

“I know who you are, you’re Mister Queen.” She couldn’t help but blush a little, because even if she knew who he was, she didn’t know he would be even more handsome in the flesh. Actually, in the muscle would be more appropriate. Not only did he have the face but also the body of a Greek God, which really wasn’t fair for the rest of the male population.

“Nooo, Mr Queen is my father.”

“Right, but he’s gone. I mean no, he’s not gone, gone; he’s not dead. Right? Oh God, I sure hope he isn’t. I did my research before I applied for a job here and I’m positive he was still alive then. Anyway, I just meant that I know he went to visit the branch in Russia. Not that I spy on your family or anything, I just wanted to be prepared for my interview. For the IT department. Which I’m late to, actually.” As usual, the words rushed out of her mouth before she could control them and she mentally cursed herself.

Oliver quirked an eyebrow, clearly amused. “Alright… I shall let you go then. Have a good day, and good luck.” He pressed the button to call the elevator for her and with a wink and a smile, he walked towards the entrance of the building.
Felicity stepped inside the elevator, pushed the button for the 15th floor, and gave herself one last check in the mirror before stepping out. She walked towards one of the receptionists, showed him her badge and asked where she could find Mrs Pembrook.

“Well, I’m afraid Mrs Pembrook is not available right now, she is interviewing candidates. Did you have an appointment?” A somehow young man, with an easy smile, answered her.

“I know, I’m here for one of those interviews. Felicity Smoak.”

“I’m sorry Miss Smoak, but the assessment started at 10. I cannot interrupt it.”

“But… I am just like one minute late? I’m so sorry, I’m usually always on time, my plane was delayed, I just flew from Boston for this interview! Are you sure I can’t just explain to Mrs Pembrook myself?” she begged, wondering if dropping on her knees would help. *That might send the wrong message, Smoak.*

“I wish I could help you but I have strict orders. I can’t let you through.” The young man, David, according to the name on his tag, gave her a sympathetic look. “I can put you on the list for the next recruitment if you want to?”

“God knows when that will be… thank you.” Felicity walked back towards the elevator, feeling completely defeated. Of course she had applied to other companies, but she really liked QC and their applied sciences division. She was hoping to start in the IT department and maybe get promoted quickly. She had the brains, the skills and was hard-working. She also really liked Starling City and was looking forward to moving there.

She was interrupted in her thoughts by the sound of a quarrel. She had made it to the main hall on the ground floor, which was rather empty as most employees were already in their office. Oliver Queen himself seemed to be having an argument with a woman, who looked like his mother. Not wanting to be caught in the middle of a family drama, she quickly stepped back, not willing to interrupt them, but the elevator door had just closed, so she ended up stuck there. She could only hope they would not notice her and quickly finish their conversation.

“Oliver, this is serious. Your father is considering retiring but he cannot do that if there is no one to take charge!”

“He has a VP who is more than capable of taking charge! Walter is great, you know that, and he has all the skills and abilities for this. I don’t see where the problem is!” Oliver answered, the frustration clear in his voice.

“That is not the point, this is Queen Consolidated. A Queen must be at the head of it! And it will be yours one day. It’s more than time for you to start taking your responsibilities seriously.”

“I am serious!” Oliver petulantly raised his voice at his mother, who, for her part, seemed to stay calm and collected.

“Really? Oliver, how many assistants have you had in the past 6 months?” Moira Queen's eyebrow raised in question and even Felicity could read the hints of displeasure in her tone. “How many lovely female assistants, should I say?”

“Mom… what do my assistants have to do with all of that?”

“It’s symbolic, Oliver. It shows that you do not take things seriously. One day this will end up badly for us. One of those girls will sue for sexual harassment”
“I do not harass them, who do you think I am?” Oliver exclaimed, indignation written across his features.

“I know you don’t. But if you keep acting like this, it is bound to happen. You are the heir of a very wealthy family, Oliver. When there is that much money at stake, some people do not hesitate to twist reality.”

“Listen, mom…”

“No, Oliver. You need a new assistant. Since I can’t trust you with that, I’m going to ask the HR myself and you won’t have a say. For the rest, we’ll talk about it when your father gets back from Russia.” Moira squeezed her son’s arm, and turned around to leave. That’s when Oliver seemed to notice Felicity, who was still standing a few feet away from them.

“I already have one,” he quickly said.

“You already have a what, dear?” Moira stopped and looked at her son expectantly.

“An assistant.”

“How can you already have one? Shelly resigned yesterday afternoon. How did you even recruit her? What are her qualifications? The HR haven’t even had the time to send you candidates’s resumes!”

“Well, she tried for a position in the IT department, but was late for the assessment, and I think you’ll see that she is even overqualified for the job.”

It took Felicity a couple of seconds to understand what he was saying. Surely he doesn’t mean…

“I can even introduce you right now. Miss?” Oliver looked at her with insistence and she could read in his eyes the plead for her to play along.

“Yes, this is me. I am Miss.” She closed her eyes. Of all the times to babble…Get a grip, Smoak! “I mean, I am Felicity. Felicity Smoak. And yes, I did try for a position in IT but long story short, my flight was delayed, I missed my alarm clock and was one minute late. One mi-nu-te.”

Moira gave Felicity the full head to toe look, her eyes narrowing as she observed her. Felicity shifted on her feet, knowing fully well that she looked rather... average with her flat shoes, simple low ponytail, and a plain, full buttoned blouse that showed zero cleavage. Although, judging by the conversation she had just overheard, maybe the lack of cleavage was actually a good thing.

Felicity fiddled with her purse strap, uncomfortable under the matriarch’s cold stare. Being scrutinized by Moira Queen herself was an experience she hoped only happened once in a lifetime.

“Very well... have you let the head of HR know that there is no need for them to look through candidates for you?”

“I was just going to. I was actually waiting for Miss Smoak so we could go there, sign her contract and get her started as soon as possible. Right, Miss Smoak?”

“... Right, Mister Queen.” She glared at him behind his mother’s back.

“Alright then. I will see you for dinner, don’t forget the Merlyns are coming. Don’t be late.” Moira turned around and left them, alone for the second time that day, in the entrance hall.
“What was that exactly?!” Felicity whispered furiously.

“You were late weren’t you? I know that if you’re late, they don’t let you in. And seeing you 5
minutes later only means you couldn’t get through. Am I right?”

“Yes. One minute late. One…”

“Mi-nu-te. I know. So what do you think? I need an assistant to get my mother off my back and you
still need a job don’t you?” He shrugged and looked at her with a smirk.

“Do you know I went to MIT? I worked really hard and it wasn’t so I could fetch coffee!” she
huffed, keeping her voice low.

“But you still need a job. You can start as my assistant and then it will be easier for you to move to
another department.”

Damn it, he has a point. A job is a job. And she really wanted to work for QC. She could save
money and apply as soon as another position opened. Come on Smoak, the whole point of coming
here was to take risks and start a new life. She took a deep breath.

“OK.” I’m so going to regret this.

“OK?” Oliver sounded surprised, probably not expecting her to agree that easily.

“Yes, but let’s be clear: this will only be temporary. And you will write references when I apply for
another position.”

“It’s a deal, Miss Smoak. Now if you don’t mind, we really need to sign your contract.”

“Lead the way, Mister Queen. And that contract better mention that bringing coffee won’t be
expected of me.”

“… we’ll negotiate the terms,” Oliver answered while guiding her through the lobby.

Oooh… I can assure you we will, Mister Queen.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve always been fond of the relationship between Oliver and Felicity when she was his
assistant. And I loved Daniel and Betty from Ugly Betty, so I decided to mix the two of
them!

Any feedback is always more than welcome, I’m really looking for constructive
criticism. Thank you so much to yellowpretendingtobered, my beta and partner in crime,
I would have never been able to get on with a multi-chapter story if you hadn’t showed
up when I was screaming for help ;)
Chapter Summary

Missing her interview for a position in the IT department of QC, Felicity Smoak meets Oliver Queen, son of the CEO and future CEO himself. Only Oliver doesn’t take the company as seriously as he should and after yet another fiasco with his assistant, his mother decides to take matter into her own hands and select one with more qualifications than long legs and deep cleavage. In an effort to get her off his back, he pretends he already hired one: the blonde nerdy girl he met a few minutes ago.

Or when Arrow and Ugly Betty crash in my head (except we all know Felicity could never be ugly).

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the kudos and comments and bookmarks. I was so happy to see so many positive reactions, you have no idea (I might have squealed a bit everytime I got an email about it…)
As usual, thank you to my beta and midwife yellowpretendingtobered :)  
~~~
You can find me on twitter @PimsiePim or on tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com. Don’t be shy, come say hi!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“So… you’re from Boston and went to MIT. Is this your first job?” Oliver asked while guiding her through the building.

“The first serious one at least. Obviously not the one I had in mind, but Queen Consolidated is an incredible company. It’s so advanced in sciences and technology. Not to mention that you seem to be taking a new direction in the environmental-friendly power resources. “ Felicity was struggling to keep up with him. He obviously knew the building like the back of his hand and his super long legs were forcing her almost to jog just to keep up with him.

“I’m curious, though. Why Starling City? There are other similar companies on the East Coast. Wayne Enterprises for one. Do you have family here?” He opened yet another door and with a hand on her back, gently pushed her inside.

“I wanted a… change of scenery. And no, I do not know anyone here.” Her voice, now much more reserved, seemed to catch Oliver’s attention. He glanced at her from the corner of his eyes as if he was about to ask more about it but, fortunately, was interrupted. Talking about her reasons to want to move across the country was something she really didn’t want to do. Especially with her future boss.

“Ollie… you forgot to sign those papers I asked you to. Again. You promised you’d stop by my office yesterday.” A pouting blonde purred as she put her perfectly manicured hand on his arm.
Oliver stared at the newcomer for a few seconds, as if he was trying to remember her name. His eyes suddenly brightened, confirming Felicity's thoughts: he had completely forgotten who the girl was. Charming.

“Mandy… I’m sorry.” He flashed the girl a million dollar smile. “My assistant had to leave and I got caught up in all the drama. I’m sure we can plan for me to stop by tomorrow.”

“Is the position opened? As your assistant, I mean. I’m sure I could be more than helpful. You know I don’t mind working after hours.” As if the suave smile she gave him wasn’t obvious enough she added a very subtle “or during weekends.”

“Now that is a proposition that I find very hard to resist…” Oliver murmured, his eyes travelling over her figure.

Felicity was too shocked to even take offense in the fact they were both completely ignoring her. That is not even flirting anymore. It’s like sexting without the texting part!

“Hum. I’m sorry to interrupt your little one on one, Mister Queen, but we are supposed to head to the HR office as soon as possible.” And let's hope this is the only kind of one on one I'll ever have to interrupt. Cause it's bad enough already.

Oliver tore his eyes from the busty blonde girl and her even more busty cleavage, openly annoyed at the interruption. He took a breath to speak but she didn’t want to give him any leverage.

“You wouldn’t want your mother to have to do it for you, right?” she asked smoothly, a small smile stretching her lips.

The little reminder was apparently enough to get his full attention on her again.

“Right. Well, Mandy, the thing is I already have an assistant. Miss Smoak, this is Mandy. She is a secretary here, works in the public relations service. Mandy, this is Felicity Smoak. My new assistant.” Finally seeming to remember his manners, he gave a vague gesture between the two women. Public relations… well, talk about a surprise. She seems very much into relations and doesn't seem to mind having a public view.

Mandy burst out laughing at his words.

“Ollie, you have always been such a prankster. Seriously, can I drop my application?”

“I’m serious. Felicity is my new assistant and this is her first day.” Oliver at least had the decency to look slightly uncomfortable. At least that makes two of us now.

Something in the way he shifted probably made Mandy realize he wasn’t joking. She turned to get a proper look at Felicity.

“Oh God… your mother picked her, is that right? We all heard a rumor about a threat she might have made if one of your assistants was to quit again.” Whispering loud enough for said new assistant to hear every single word, Mandy put her hand on Oliver’s chest “But we never thought it was real.”

“And let's hope this is the only kind of one on one I'll ever have to interrupt. Cause it's bad enough already.

… No, it has nothing to do with my mother, I don’t know where you got that. I chose Felicity myself. Anyway, she is starting today and let’s leave it at that. I’ll make sure she can find enough time for me tomorrow so I can stop at your office, what do you say?” He punctuated the last with a wink. Mandy patted his tie, then raised on her feet to plant a kiss on his cheek.

“I say my boss is never around after 2PM.” Looking at Felicity, she added “don’t you need to note
“I have a very good memory, don’t worry about that.” With a small smile, Felicity looked at Oliver expectantly.

“Well, Mandy, I’m sorry but we really need to go. I’ll see you tomorrow. I promise.” He raised her hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles, earning an enamoured giggle. “Miss Smoak? This way, please.” He showed her a door on his left and she followed through, silently grateful that this awkward exchange was over.

The rest of their walk was in silence and by the time they had finally arrived at their destination, Felicity was having serious doubts about this whole idea. Had she not been in such a hurry to leave Boston as fast as possible, she would have probably turned around and left.

The HR Department consisted of a big open floor, with a dozen of spacious cubicles, all occupied by a variety of employees of all ages and genders.

Oliver looked around, clearly searching for something – or someone. Whatever it was, he must have found it because he started to walk decidedly towards one of the cubicles, leaving her alone to face the multiple stares coming her way. Mostly curious, but some with envy or opened jealousy.

“Hi Sara. I need you to fix a standard contract for my assistant. Can you please bring it to Isabel’s office as soon as possible?”

“Isabel is in Russia with your father, Ollie. I can replace her if you want to.” The girl named Sara looked at him curiously, her eyes wandering between him and Felicity.

“If you don’t mind. We’ll wait for you in the conference room.”

They only had to wait a couple of minutes before Sara joined them around the big oval table.

“Hi, I’m Sara Lance. I work for the HR Department as you know. If you have any question about the contract, you can ask me. Or about anything concerning the company. I practically grew up with Ollie, so I know it like the back of my hand,” she smiled at Felicity reassuringly.

“Thank you. I’m Felicity. Felicity Smoak.” How many times have I said that line today?!

It turned out that the contract was, indeed, pretty standard. It involved the salary, the number of hours she was expected to work each week, and all the typical information that one would find on a document like this. Sara and Oliver talked together while she read through the six pages. It was obvious the two of them knew each other well, talking about their families and a Sunday brunch they were apparently both supposed to attend.

“Laurel is getting all worked up you know. I heard her talk to mom last night. Wondering when you’re gonna pop the big question.”

“My father has been pester me about it for a while, too. Kinda makes me glad he’s halfway across the world,” Oliver laughed but Felicity noticed he avoided answering the question.

Probably sensing she wouldn’t get anything more on that topic, Sara swiftly changed the conversation and dropped her voice:

“So… your new assistant. She’s different. Finally growing up?” she teased him.

Felicity stiffened, having heard perfectly, but not dropping her act as she kept on reading the
documents.

“…Mom heard about Shelly. Felicity had just missed her interview for the IT department and it seemed like a good idea.” Felicity felt his eyes on her, and he must have been reassured that she wasn't paying attention because he added: “As soon as my mother is off my back, I’ll find another one.”

Sara let out a sigh. “Give her a chance, she might surprise you. I took a glance at her resume. She is crazy smart, Ollie. Summa cum laude at MIT, that’s... something. I’m actually even surprised she accepted this position. And the fact that you didn’t really choose her might be a good sign: you always pick the wrong girl, Ollie, you know that.”

Felicity had enough. She took a sip of water and put the glass back on the table with a little bit more force than was necessary. The loud noise got their attention.

“...it all seems in order to me. It’s pretty standard. The only thing I would like to add is that I am free to apply for another position as soon as I see fit and that I will not be held by any prior notice.” Pushing her glasses on her nose, she looked at the pair that was facing her. “Then I’ll sign it.”

“Ollie?” The question in Sara’s voice was crystal clear.

“It’s fine, Sara. You can add that part. We’ll wait for you. I’d like to get this done as soon as possible.” Oliver didn’t take his eyes off Felicity until Sara left the room, leaving them in an awkward silence. Oliver fished his phone out of his front pocket and quickly started typing, completely ignoring her. Thankfully, Sara was back within a few minutes with a new set of papers.

“There you go. You can see I added your request on page 5, under the specific conditions. Does that suit you?”

“Yes, perfect.” Felicity grabbed her pen, and quickly signed the document, then handed it to them so they could sign it as well.

“Was that really all you wanted to add, Miss Smoak?” Oliver asked once he put his pen back in his suit pocket, not bothering to keep the sarcasm out of his voice.

“I believe so, yes.” Not lowering her eyes, she continued “Queen Consolidated is very thorough apparently. Unfortunately, there is no mention of coffee. Neither of any other kind of drinks. Actually, there is no description of the work I’m supposed to do. I guess it will be up to my interpretation, then.” Smiling sweetly, she stood up and gathered her bag.

He huffed out a laugh and lightly shook his head, muttering something under his breath that sounded suspiciously like “I should have known…”

“Well, thank you for your help, Sara. I’ll see you on Sunday for brunch then?”

“Sure. Welcome to Queen Consolidated, Felicity. Please don’t hesitate, if you ever need anything. I know Ollie is not the easiest boss to work for but I promise you, he’s not that bad.” Her eyes were soft and understanding as she shook Felicity’s hand. “I’ll copy those and send them to your office by tomorrow, along with the employment regulations and some info about our healthcare system.”

“Thank you, Sara.” Felicity gave her what was probably her first genuine smile of the day. So being a bitch is not mandatory to work here. Pheww, that’s a relief.

Sara burst out laughing "Thank God it's not!"
Felicity gasped and felt her face burning with shame. "Oh no. I'm so sorry, sometimes my brain forgets that it's supposed to censor itself. I didn't mean that... I mean you're really nice with me. That's all I meant."

Still chuckling, Sara shook her head. "Believe me, I completely understand. I've been working here for a couple of years and... yeah I completely understand what you meant." Winking at her, she added "Ollie... I like that one. You should try to keep her."

The trip to his office took them longer than she expected. It was lunch time and a lot of employees were in the hallways; the building was much more busy than it had been thirty minutes before.

"I'm just going to show you the way to my office. You have yours right across mine, it's on the 16th floor" Oliver explained as they walked by a group of employees that were standing by a coffee maker. “Ladies,” Oliver winked at them. “Any chance one of you might show my assistant how the coffee maker works?”

Felicity shot him a furious look, which only made him smirk. Apparently, the man loved to play. Good. So did she.

The oldest one giggled. “I’ll make you a cup myself, Ollie. One espresso, black, is that right?” Is she batting her eyelashes at him? Oh my God… She is! And she looks old enough to be his mother!

“Aww, Patty. You know the way to my heart.” He took a sip from the cup Mrs Robinson was handing him. “Mmmh. Perfect, as always. Thank you. Now, if you’ll excuse me, ladies, I need to show this young woman to her office,” he said as he pointed his chin towards Felicity. “Have a good afternoon.”

They left under a chorus of “Bye, Ollie!” and flirtatious smiles that made Felicity roll her eyes. Alright, the man was charming, but he was also apparently a gigantic douchebag so what were all those women seeing in him exactly? Apart from his good looks and money, that is?

And this was how, five minutes later, she found herself standing in the middle of a very wide hall that led, like Oliver had said, to both their offices. All the walls were made of glass, the rooms were very spacious and offered a breathtaking view over the city. A small steel sign read 'Oliver Queen – Chief Marketing Officer' right on the wall. And that was all she knew about his job, or the one she was supposed to do here.

“Well, this is your office. As you can see, mine is right through this door. You have everything you might need, but if there’s anything else, just ask one of the other assistants. I have a meeting for lunch,” he frowned at his watch as if the time was personally offending him for moving against his will. “For which I’m already late. I’ll see you later, I guess? Oh, and here’s my phone number, if there’s an emergency. And only if there’s an emergency.” Oliver handed her his business card and then left her, bewildered, in the middle of her 16th floor office.

Felicity took a good look around. The whole room, thanks to the glass walls, was extremely bright. I'm sure it’s gonna be a nightmare to look at a screen with so much light in the room.

Her desk was made of steel, as modern as the rest of the furniture. Oliver’s office was bigger than hers and included one of those designer sofa, that looked more pretty than comfortable. Everything was neat, neutral and professional. And she couldn’t feel more out of place.

Sighing, she moved to her desk, sat down and started the computer. Life lesson number 1: In times of
doubt, always start with the computer.

It turned out, just like she was expecting, that the system used was so old and dated she was quite confident it was older than her. She made a list of the things she would need to improve the system, first one being a new processor, and worked with what she could find at the moment.

The biggest shock came with the fact that, apparently, all of Oliver’s former assistants had used a paper agenda, which was, for Felicity, nothing short of a federal crime. And apparently they also liked to draw little hearts around their boss’s name. God help me.

It took her most of the afternoon to organize his online agenda, that she linked with her professional email address and Oliver’s. The only thing left to do was sync his phone as well. This way, she could customize the alerts she would send him. A glance at the clock told her it was past five. Oliver hadn’t been back all afternoon, and she wasn’t sure how long she was supposed to wait for him. Or even if she was supposed to wait for him at all. Her eyes eventually landed on Oliver's desk. *His system is probably as outdated as mine… and even if it’s not, I still should configure it so everything is completely in sync. I'm pretty sure that's what a good assistant would do.*

Two Hours Later -

“You know, it’s not the first time I’ve caught one of Oliver’s assistants under his desk. But I have to say, he’s usually sitting in his chair when it happens.”

Felicity yelped, bumping her head when she tried to get up.

“I’m sorry, I wasn’t prying or anything, I was rebooting Mister Queen’s system and God this is so old and the very opposite of practical, I just… had to fix it because how can anyone be expected to…” Felicity stopped mid-rambling when she took a good look at the man standing in front of her. He was in his mid-twenties, with gorgeous black hair and a mischievous look. *Of course. Tommy Merlyn, partner in crime.*

“I’m sure you can pry all you want, Miss…?” Blue eyes smiled at her very obvious nervous state.

“Smoak. Felicity Smoak. I’m the new assistant. Which you obviously already knew.” She blushed, eyes darting to her hands for a moment in embarrassment.

“Well, Miss Smoak, it’s a pleasure to meet you. Oliver has always known how to pick his employees and he hasn’t failed this time either.” He winked at her then went to sit on the extremely-uncomfortable-looking sofa.

“Well, sir,…”

“Call me Tommy, please,” he said with a charming smile.

“Like I was saying, Mister Merlyn, Mister Queen isn’t here and he hasn’t told me when he is coming back.” Felicity was actually impressed at the authoritative tone in her voice. It was more professional than she felt at the moment.

“He’ll be here soon enough, we’re supposed to meet here. It’s more than late, what are you still doing here in the first place?” Tommy asked, frowning.
Felicity glanced at her watch and gasped “7.30?! I had no idea, I was so busy trying to get everything ready that… Of course, I’ll go. I wouldn’t want people to start thinking Mister Queen is working me up all night.”

Tommy raised his eyebrows, the corner of his lips twitching.

“… Frack. I so didn’t mean it that way. Please forget I even said anything about Mister Queen, me, and how we spend our nights. SEPARATELY I mean. We don’t spend our nights together, we just spend them, as in, he spends his, and I spend mine. I’ll just stop talking.” She closed her eyes and pinched her nose. 3,2,1. Breathe in, breathe out.

“That would be alright, Miss Smoak. I’m afraid this is my fault. I should have let you know at what time you could leave. I’m afraid my… business meeting took longer than I thought.”

Felicity turned her attention to the newcomer. Oliver. Please tell me he didn’t hear… Wait, a business meeting? My arse!

“Business meeting? Cause these look like lipstick marks,” she pointed at some very apparent red smears on the collar of his shirt.

“I’m looking to invest in the cosmetics sector,” he deadpanned.

She just tilted her head and pinched her lips, knowing her disbelief was written across her face. A sigh escaped at the realization that this was probably not the only excuse she was going to hear while working here.

“Very well… what time should I be here tomorrow morning?”

“Around 9 I guess? I’d rather you arrived before me. I wouldn’t want people thinking we spent the night working each other up.” His voice was all business, but his eyes were twinkling. Damn it. He heard it all.

“Damn it, I did, Miss Smoak.” This time he couldn’t hide the smile that spread on his face. And oh boy, could the man smile…

“I’m so…”

“Don’t mention it. It’s late. Go home, I’ll see you tomorrow morning.” With a gentle nudge, he pushed her towards her office.

“But we have to talk about schedules, and what you’re expecting of me, my duties. I also need to head back to Boston to pack, so I’ll need a couple of days off and-“

“Tomorrow, Miss Smoak.” His voice was warm, but firm.

“… alright then. Have a good night.” She turned to leave, but spun back around when she remembered they were not alone. "You too, Mr Merlyn.”

“Goodnight Miss Felicity, I hope we’ll see each other again!” Tommy waved at her.

She quickly gathered her bag, her phone and a small stack of papers she had left on her desk .

“Before I leave, Mister Queen. Could I have your phone please?”

“I believe I already gave you my phone number, Miss Smoak”
“Yes but that’s not what I’m asking for. I need your phone, the device itself. I had to create an online
directory, because none of my predecessors realized that this is 2010.” She held her hand open,
waiting for him with a challenging look.

“I’m not sure I need an online directory, Miss Smoak. I managed just fine before.”

“With all due respect, if you really had managed fine, you wouldn’t have had to pick a random IT
girl as your new assistant, Mister Queen.” Felicity said with a smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes.
“Your phone, please.”

Tommy snorted. Oliver glared at him, then, sighing, reached inside his jacket to retrieve his phone.

“There you go, but I don’t have the time for this..." 

“It’s only gonna take a minute. Just need to sync your email address, I already set it up... and there
you go. It’s done. I’ll figure out the alerts from mine. See you tomorrow.” Handing the phone back,
she left both men behind as she made it to the elevator.

“Well… interesting choice here. She’s rather lovely, but I never knew you had a thing for the
librarian kind.”

“Shut up, Merlyn. It was either that or my mother would have picked God knows who. It’s only
temporary, as soon as I can send her to another service, I’ll hire a new assistant before my mom even
hears about it. It’s a win-win, really,” Oliver answered as they left his office.

“Still, she looks like a nice girl. And hard-working, obviously, which is not something we’re used to.
And I have to say that little babbling thing of hers is rather… charming. If you’re not interested, I
might even give it a try. You know I never had a nerdy girl, and I’m always ready for new
experiences,” Tommy slyly said.

“Don’t. Like you said she’s a nice girl, but she doesn’t play in our league. Not to mention, I had
lunch with Helena… her cousin is in town this week and she was hoping we would stop by her
place after dinner. You in?”

“The Bertinelli cousins… I’m always in for them. I think I still have some of their underwear
somewhere in my car from that night at Poison. Do you think she still does that thing with her legs?”

“I don’t know. But we sure as hell will find out later” Both men walked inside QC’s garage, where
Tommy’s chauffeur was waiting for them.

By the time they had made it to the car, Oliver had already forgotten everything about his new
assistant.

Chapter End Notes

For those of you who know Ugly Betty, yep, Mandy is Amanda. I slightly changed her
name because there already is an Amanda in Arrow and I think it would have been confusing.
Don't hesitate to leave feedback, I'm all for constructive criticism!
I forgot to mention this in the first chapters. I name the chapters after songs. I don't pick them randomly, so feel free to listen to them before/during or after, I think it gives a nice vibe to have like an "official soundtrack".

Chapter Notes

Being Oliver Queen’s assistant included a lot of tasks. Taking messages, sorting his mail, writing letters, keeping his agenda organized. Unfortunately, none of these were exactly time-consuming for a woman like Felicity Smoak. Having arrived at exactly 8:45AM, she had already been through all the basic duties she could think of and a quick glance at the clock confirmed that she still had an hour and a half to kill before noon and her lunch break. Sighing, she was about to start a game of Candy Crush when a small knock on the door startled her.

“Hi! Felicia, right?” With a smile that didn’t reach her eyes, Mandy approached and dropped a file on her desk. “This is the Venizzi report, about the new solar plant thingy. I know it must be a bit complicated for you so I’ll spare the details, but as Ollie’s assistant you are supposed to make sure he goes through it for the meeting tomorrow afternoon. Normally our courier delivers that kind of files from one service to another, but since it’s your first day I thought it would be nice for you to see a friendly face.”

Felicity raised her eyebrows. Friendly face? “It’s Felicity.”

“Pardon me?”

“My name is Felicity, not Felicia. And thank you, but I thought the meeting was this afternoon, not tomorrow?” Stay professional. Professional.

“Oh I guess you didn’t have the memo, of course, silly me! The change was made two days ago, Shelly must have forgotten to write it down! Same time, same place, though.” Throwing a longing glance towards Oliver’s office, she added “Ollie’s not here yet?”

“No, Mr Queen has not arrived yet. May I take a message before you leave?” Quirking an eyebrow, Felicity didn’t lower her eyes, making sure the other blonde took this as her cue to leave.

“No. I’ll wait to see him personally.” Turning around and strolling back to the elevator, Mandy quickly glanced over her shoulder. “You know, you should consider another kind of wardrobe. It’s fine for an IT girl, but with this position, you need to… look the part. Just some friendly advice.” Winking at Felicity, she finally stepped inside the elevator.

Taking a couple of breaths to calm down, Felicity stared at the file in front of her. Well, at least now she had something to keep herself busy. What she had told Oliver was true: she really had been
paying attention to QC’s efforts towards the greener energy sources and getting more knowledge about one of their biggest projects surely couldn’t hurt her chances to get another position within the company. And if the last 24 hours had showed her anything, it was definitely that she wouldn’t stay Oliver Queen’s assistant any longer than necessary.

That’s how her boss found her two hours later. Her neat ponytail not so neat anymore, with a pencil stuck in her hair and a colony of post-its on her desk, along with some leftovers from the lunch she had ordered. A frown had appeared between her eyebrows, and she was so absorbed into what she was reading that she didn’t even hear the ping of the elevator.

“Felicity?”

Jumping probably a foot in the air, she placed a hand on her fast-beating heart and took a second to collect herself. “What the…don’t you knock?!?”

“Felicity… this is the marketing department. It’s not the ladies’ room.” With an amused smile, Oliver walked past her and inside his own office. “Any messages?”

“Hum, yes. Your father’s assistant called, asking you for a conference call with him as soon as you can. Seeing he is currently in a different time zone, you should probably do that first.”

Sighing, he threw his jacket on the back of the sofa. “Fine. Just set me up.”

She stared at him in disbelief. Surely he doesn’t mean he needs me to come over to his computer and click on the skype icon for him?

Oliver held her gaze, his eyes daring. Oh I see how it is… You wanna play. Game on.

“Of course, Mister Queen.” Quickly pressing a few keys on her tablet, she then raised her head just when the familiar sound of a call in the making was heard from Oliver’s computer.

“Oliver? Where are you?” Robert Queen’s voice was as deep and authoritarian as his son’s. But while Oliver’s was usually playful and full of sass, his father sounded mature, in control.

Oliver swapped his head towards his desk, then swapped it back at her right away, disbelief written on his face. “How did you…”

“I believe your father is waiting, Mister Queen.” With what was probably her first real smile of the day, Felicity went back to her reading, making sure she didn’t miss, from the corner of her eye, the sight of Oliver Queen taking a sprint.

As soon as he had greeted his father, she stood up and went to close the door, giving him at least some privacy.

The conversation between father and son lasted more than half an hour and was quite animated. Oliver raised his voice several times, and even if she could only make out a few words (“you can’t do that!” being repeated more than once), it was more than enough for her to understand that there were some real tensions between them. Felicity was just finishing the summary and commentary sheet concerning the file that Mandy had dropped when Oliver stormed out, barely paying attention to her and shouting a “I’ll be back later” before barging his way through the door leading to the stair case.

“OOO…K…” biting her lips, she quickly printed the page she had written, put it neatly on top of the Venizzi report and left the file on her boss’s desk.
She was just about to get back to a very thorough thumb twiddling when the now-so-familiar ping alerted her of someone’s arrival. Thinking it was Oliver, back from wherever he went to blow off some steam, she didn’t bother looking up until the typical sound of high heels on marble floor made her realize there was no way the newcomer was a man.

“Hum, yes. Can I help you?” she asked the beautiful brunette, who was probably a few years older than her.

“… Excuse-me, but who are you?” There was just a slight hint of disdain in the woman’s voice, and it was obvious that she was intrigued by Felicity’s presence.

“I’m Felicity, Mr Queen’s new assistant.”

“A new assistant? Again?! What happened to Shelly?”

“I honestly don’t know, I only started yesterday. What can I do for you?” There was something slightly familiar about the girl, but Felicity couldn’t place it.

“I’m Laurel. Oliver is going to take me out for lunch. Where is he?” Ooooh… of course. Laurel Lance. Sara’s step-sister and Oliver’s girlfriend.

“I’m sorry, Mr Queen left a few minutes ago. He didn’t tell me when he’d be back, nor that he was expecting you for lunch?” Clicking on her tablet, Felicity pulled up his agenda and saw that nothing was noted concerning a lunch date. Relief flew over her that she hadn’t somehow forgotten.

“I wanted to surprise him.” Laurel pushed back her hair behind her ear and shifted her purse on her shoulder. “Aren’t you going to call him?”

“Oh. Sure, of course. I’ll do that.” Felicity grabbed the phone and pressed 2, which was supposed to reach Oliver’s cell phone. After a couple of rings, she ended up on his voicemail. Glancing at the other woman, she put her hand on the speaker. “Do you want me to leave a message? Or maybe he’ll pick up if it’s your phone number that appears?”

“No, don’t bother. I’ll text him from there.”

Felicity hung up and looked expectantly at Laurel who was staring at her. “Is there anything else I can do?”

“Oh no, no. Just let him know I stopped by if you see him? And sorry but… you seem quite young to be assistant to someone like Ollie. What are your qualifications exactly?” There was mainly curiosity in her tone, but also a glimpse of… suspicion that made Felicity uncomfortable.

“I graduated last year. I have a Masters in Cyber Security and Computer Science. Not the typical way to get into secretarial arts, I’ll give you that…” I can’t believe I’m calling myself a secretary. “This is my first serious job. Mr Queen was in a hurry to get a new assistant and… I was available.”

“I’m sure you were… Well, interesting career move I’d say. Anyway, thank you for your help.” Turning back, she was just about to leave when Oliver resurfaced, disheveled, but also much more relaxed than when he had left earlier.

“Laurel! What a good surprise! What are you doing here?” Full play-boy smile on display, he quickly kissed her cheek.
“I was actually hoping you’d take me out for lunch, but your assistant wasn’t able to get a hold of you. I thought you told me you’d spend the whole day working on this new solar project?”

“I had a few papers to sign. I can’t make it to lunch though. We have an important meeting in 10 minutes. Miss Smoak, I have been told you were given the digest of the Venizzi file.” Smirking at Laurel, he added “Those things are so techy I swear it doesn’t even look like English.”

“But isn’t the meeting tomorrow?” Felicity felt panic slowly rising… what is he talking about, the digest?? What digest??

“What? Those meetings always happen on Wednesdays.” He took his cellphone and quickly typed a few keys, shoving it under her nose “See? Surely, an MIT graduate can read a date?”

“But…”

“Ok, maybe I should leave you then.” Laurel looked at them, shifting on her feet. “I can see now is not the best of time,” she let out a small humorless laugh.

“Hmm? Yeah, I’ll call you tonight.” Oliver gave her a small peck on the lips. “We could go to lunch tomorrow.”

“Sure, bye Felicity.” Laurel lowered her voice and petted Oliver’s arm as she walked away. “Don’t be too harsh with her I’m sure it was an honest mistake.”

“Mister Queen, I am sorry, I have been told that it was moved to tomorrow,” Felicity quickly explained herself.

“A meeting is never moved without a proper memo. Did you get one?”

“Well, no, but since I started yesterday I thought it was…”

“God. I don’t have time for this anyway,” Oliver interrupted her impatiently. “Where is the digest?”

“The Venizzi file is on your desk, but I don’t think there is anything that looks like a formal digest in there.” She quickly got up to retrieve the documents but Oliver beat her to it, and went to snatch it before her.

“What do you mean, you don’t think? You lost it?!” His temper was slowly showing and even if Felicity knew that this wasn’t her fault, she couldn’t form any coherent thought to get him to see what had really happened. She also didn’t know if telling him about Mandy’s scheme would make it worse, seeing as the two were quite… friendly.

“I made one, though. I mean the first page, I made a commentary sheet, summarized everything. I also added a few ideas that…” Trying to fix the mess she was in, she showed him the single sheet of paper that she thought was quite clear, even patted her own back for using generic layman’s terms.

He snapped the sheet back. “Don’t waste your time and try to make me believe that, in just under two hours, you managed to comprehend, analyze and synthetize a report that took one of the best solar energy expert and our own top marketing consultants more than 6 month to create!” He violently closed the file and stormed to the executive lift that would take him to the top floor of the building. All major meetings always took place in their biggest conference room, which was near the
CEO and VP offices.

Felicity quickly grabbed her tablet and a note pad and hurried behind him. She was shaking with nerves, trying to come up with a way to solve the mess she was in. As much as she tried, she couldn’t remember seeing any digest in the file that Mandy had brought her. Suspicion was raising its head, and after the stunt that Mandy had pulled, Felicity wouldn’t be surprised if she had actually taken it out on purpose. Anger was slowly starting to take the place of her nervousness, and seeing the same anger literally coming from every pore of Oliver was only fueling hers. The huge sense of unfairness that washed over her wasn’t enough to drown the bitterness she was starting to feel. Had Oliver dared to show up more than 10 minutes before his meeting, had he dared to show up at all apart from that skype call and actually talk to her, that situation would have been avoided. *There is no way I’m getting my head chopped for that.* Felicity Megan Smoak may have been a “sweet girl” but she was also from Vegas and had been raised by a single mother. In other words, she knew how to fight back.

Fortunately, the ride to the top floor only took a few seconds, and she literally ran out of the elevator almost desperate to escape her boss’s ice-cold stare and impatient foot stomping.

The conference room was very spacious, with a direct view on Downton’s other skyscrapers. The huge round table was big enough to seat at least 30 people, and there were also benches on the wall opposite the windows – which she assumed were for the assistants and secretaries. More than half the seats were already taken, which gave Felicity the occasion to get a good look at most of QC’s executives. A dozen other employees were gathered near the benches, including Sara. Felicity hurried towards her, silently thanking all the gods above her for what was still the only friendly face she had met this week.

Noticing Felicity, Sara smiled while patting the seat to her left. Her welcome face changed abruptly when she saw the worry on Felicity’s features. “What’s wrong? You are pale as a sheet” she whispered genuinely concerned.

“Something happened. I only got hold of the Venizzi report a couple of hours ago and the digest was missing. Actually I had no idea there was supposed to be a digest, so there also was no way for me to know that something was missing in the first place but hey apparently being Oliver Queen’s assistant, I’m also expected to have like an Inner eye or something.” She was stopped mid-rambling by Sara’s calming hand on her shoulder.

“Ok, first of all, breathe. Slow down. There is always a digest included with this kind of report, it’s the only way that lot—” pointing her chin towards the table, Sara continued “can work with those. Are you sure it didn’t fall under your desk or something?”

“No, it didn’t! I checked everywhere and I swear to God there was nothing but the report when that Mandy brought it to me!” Struggling to keep her voice down, Felicity started fumbling with her notepad. “She even told me the meeting had been pushed back to tomorrow, so I don’t know what I’m supposed to think.” Her voice started trembling with her last words, so she preferred to stop there with her explanations. Last thing she wanted was to start a drama or to have Sara think she was accusing a colleague.

“Mandy? Denis Lewis’s secretary? The one from Public Relations?”

“Yeah.” Her voice now barely audible made Sara bend closer to her.

“Hey. Ok. First of all, it’s not really your fault, there was no way you could have known if
everything was complete in the file she gave you. Oliver, though, must have seen it right away. Why didn’t he send you to ask for a copy?”

“He only came back like 10 minutes ago, so there wasn’t really any time. I should have told him right away and showed him that damn report, but I thought the conference call with his father was more important.” Sara was just about to reply when suddenly all the executives sat down, just as Walter Steel, Robert’s Queen right hand, entered the room and took his place at the head of the table.

“Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Please, let’s get started right away. Some of us are expected at the country club tonight, after all.” This brought a few laugh. “Robert will be joining us later, but let’s begin with the Venizzi report. I think we all know that QC is expanding its business towards eco-friendly factories. Most of our competitors are also approaching a greener way for business. But we want to always be a step further. Our plan is to make Queen Consolidated the world leader in eco-friendly managing and have 100% of our resources certified green by 2020. Technical and logistic aspects of this project, not to mention the financial part, are the main issues, which is why this Venizzi report was ordered by Robert himself last year.” Taking a deep breath, Walter let his eyes wander around the people surrounding him “Well. As usual, let’s start with Lucas, see what the Applied Sciences have to add to this.”

Felicity turned her attention to the man who should have been her new boss, and quickly lost track of time, taking as many notes as possible. Until now, she hadn’t known how big of a risk QC was ready to take with this new solar project. But seeing how the executives kept asking questions and how every service seemed to be involved somehow, she realized that this was a huge step. She glanced at Oliver, biting her lips, and saw he wasn’t paying attention at all, seemingly lost in thought as he was reading what she recognized as the document she had printed earlier. A frown appeared between his eyebrows just as he raised his head and locked eyes with her, as if he had sensed her staring. Blushing, she quickly went back to her notes and started scrambling the first words she could actually catch.

That didn’t save her from the dreadful feeling she felt when she heard Walter say “Oliver? You’ve been awfully quiet. What’s your call on this?”

Panic started to creep out on her, and she cringed with uncomfort at the idea that her boss was probably going to either make a fool of himself or put the blame on her in front of every major employee of the company she wanted to work for. She honestly couldn’t decide which one would be worse.

“Well… The main issue has always been the budget. In order to make this a livable project, we need to save expenses in other areas, which is usually workforce. That means firing people. Which always brings bad publicity and you all know how the stock exchange hates bad publicity,” Oliver smirked. Several of his colleagues let out a laugh at that, shaking their heads, no doubt thinking of Oliver’s own bad publicity over the years. “What would be the point of being the greenest company in the world if that meant putting thousands of our own employees out of work? Gaining points in one area, just so we could lose some in another one? QC is a family company, we are supposed to have values. And those values include treating our employees like family; fighting for them. How will it look for us if we are willing to fire a third of our so-called family?” He took a deep breath, but was interrupted by a 40ish something woman, whose position Felicity couldn’t remember.

“But we would eventually create new jobs, if we do invest in new solar plants around Starling.”

“Key word being eventually,” Oliver replied. “Not to mention, do we have any idea of the volume of that new workforce? I am pretty sure, given the report, that this will be as cost-saving as possible,
and from what I’ve read that implies as few employees as possible. This is serious, because if we go back on our values the entire company will need to be rebranded from the inside out. Doing that would make the cost skyrocket. Do you have any idea how much money it takes to buy media time? Let alone create whole new image campaigns?” Looking around the table, obviously waiting for someone to come up with an answer, he continued when there was none. “That’s what I thought. We need to keep this in mind. Lucas, is it technically possible to use the extra production of energy?” Oliver’s eyes dropped to his stack of papers “Cogeneration, is that right?”

Felicity’s jaw dropped once she realized that he was basically reading some of the comments and suggestions she had written down. Although he fumbled with the word “cogeneration” he was taking the cues right from her notes.

Oliver quickly glanced at her and turned towards the head of Applied Sciences.

“Yes, cogeneration. In simple terms it means using the extra energy given up by electricity production. But what does it have to do with all of this?”

“Well if we can harness this... trash energy we're producing and put it to use somewhere else, then this new project could be almost self-sufficient. That will keep us from firing thousands of people, and we can create new internships for the ones who are willing to work in this new field. There would almost be no casualties in the HR department. No problem of image there, no bad publicity.” Silence welcomed Oliver’s last word until Walter spoke up again.

“This is definitely... a new possibility. I’ll have to talk about it with Robert. Lucas, is this realistic?”

“I don’t know. I mean, theoretically, I guess so. But I’ll have to see with our engineers. And Isabel will also have to have a say, new internships have a cost and that’s something for the HR department,” Lucas mumbled, shifting uncomfortably on his chair.

“Will a month be enough?” Walter asked as he checked his phone. “Robert should be back by then.”

“I’ll see what I can do, and keep you informed about any progress.”

“Since this gave us all some food for thought... You will all get a new memo about this proposition as soon as Robert has heard of it. I’ll try to explain to him as much as I can, but-”

Oliver interrupted him. “My assistant already made an analysis with all these suggestions. I’ll have her send a copy to your office by tomorrow.”

Walter smiled at him rather fondly. “That’s settled then. Good job, son.” Waving at his secretary, he added “Your father had an announcement to make, he’ll be online with us in 15 minutes. I suggest we all take a break in the meanwhile.”

Everybody stood up at once and gathered towards the smaller room adjacent, filled with pastries and drinks. Felicity stayed behind, hoping to catch Oliver by himself, but Patty, the cougar she had met yesterday, already had her claws on him. Turning around, she found herself facing a pair of very judgmental brown eyes.

“Sandy!” she exclaimed with a smile as fake as her colleague’s.

“It’s Mandy.”

“My bad... with all those new names to remember, it’s getting hard to keep track.” Staring right back
at her, Felicity let her eyes wander to the man standing next to her. Denis Lewis, from Public Relations. Mandy’s direct boss. “By the way I am so sorry I couldn’t find the time for Oliver to stop by at your office to… sign those papers. I’ll make sure I save time for him this week though. What time did you say again? That you were always more available after 2, right?” As on cue, Mr Lewis turned to Mandy, taken aback by what she had just said.

“What papers, Mandy?” he asked, sounding intrigued.

“Hum, I don’t know, I mean, it’s probably something Shelly set up before she left.” Blushing under her boss’s questioning eyes, she glanced furiously at Felicity but didn’t have the time to reply.

“So I assume there is no need for him to stop by, then. Perfect. Thank you for your help, Mister Lewis.” She turned to walk away, then with a sudden change of mind, turned back and looked sweetly at Mandy. “Oh, also, apparently there was a page missing from the Venizzi report you brought me personally. I hope you didn’t have the same problem? Thankfully, I was able to make a new digest, solar technology has always been like a… hobby for me. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to talk to Mister Queen.” Felicity left them standing there, but still could heard him say, “We’ll talk later about the fact that you ask our CEO’s son to drop you a visit when…” The rest was inaudible, washed away by the sound of people talking around her. She quickly made her way to Oliver who had been observing the scene, a few feet away from them.

“What Mister Queen, I wanted to explain…”

He cut her off. “I think you should start calling me Oliver. Mister Queen is my father and that is probably going to get people confused.”

“Alright… Oliver. As I was saying…”

He interrupted her once more. “We don’t really have time for that. Sara talked to me and might have pointed out that… I shouldn’t have left you alone all day. So maybe, we’re both to blame.”

Felicity felt her jaw drop. Wow, I didn’t expect that.

Oliver was about to continue when Walter called everyone back in the room again. They didn’t have a choice and went back to their seats, but not before Oliver grabbed her arm and whispered “we’ll talk about it later.”

The giant screen behind him turned to life and they only had to wait a couple of minutes before Robert Queen’s smiling face showed up.

“Good evening, everyone. Excuse my attire, but as you know, it’s the middle of the night here.” Winking at the camera (Oh God like father, like son), he continued “I wanted to say this officially myself, and I probably won’t be able to be back before a couple of weeks. Walter, you’ll keep me updated with what you have all said, won’t you?”

“Of course, you will get a full report by next week at the latest.”

“Perfect. Well, as you know, I’ve built this company with my father. I made it grow and prosper with the years, with the help of some very loyal partners. Walter, for one, that I trust blindly. I also believe this might be a good time to start having some of us adorning new responsibilities. You know that family values are what made this company what it is today. You also know that we live in a very different society than when it all started. Which is why I decided that we needed a new position of Financial Director who would also act as co-VP when Walter is not available. I think that with this
new direction we are taking, it is crucial to prove our own investors that we have a solid leadership at all times.” Robert paused and tapped his fingers against his lips.

People started to openly stare at Oliver who for himself, stubbornly kept his eyes on his glass of water. *Am I about to become executive-assistant to a VP? Jeez, quite the fast career, Smoak! Now if only my boss would stop pouting like a 6 year-old who has been told by their mother to clean up their room, that would be nice.*

Felicity was interrupted in her inner rambling by Robert’s voice.

“I am pleased to inform you that, starting today, Isabel Rochev will be taking that position.”

And this time, Felicity’s jaw wasn’t the only one to hit the floor.

Chapter End Notes

As always, thank you all for the comments and kudos, it makes me so happy that so many people are getting into this story :-) Huge thank you to my beta, yellowpretendingtobered, who does an amazing job at editing and also, when needed, taking care of some scenes that just don't want to work the way I want them to. She truely is like a... scene-whisperer or a sorcerer or something like that.

I updated this chapter sooner because I'm going away for the weekend. Next chapter should be updated next weekend as usual though.

~~~

Find me on tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com or on twitter @PimsiePim. Don't be shy, come say hi!
Silence welcomed Robert's announcement.

Breaking the awkward moment, Robert continued “Isabel will be back tomorrow. I trust you will all welcome her back, and help her settle in her new functions. Have a good afternoon.” The call ended on this, leaving the room in a stunned atmosphere.

People were openly watching Oliver, trying to gauge his reaction. He stayed calm and stoic, gathering the few sheets that were scattered in front of him. Walter seemed to snap out of his trance and cleared his throat, bringing everyone’s attention to him.

“I suppose this will be all for today. Thank you for your attention, I’ll let you all know when the next meeting will take place. Good day.” He left the room, talking with the head of Applied Sciences.

A brown haired man with glasses approached Oliver. “Queen. Interesting input you had there. All this concern about people losing their job. Very touching.” Sarcasm was literally pouring out of his words and his eyes were cold and full of dislike. Clearly, the guy wasn’t a big fan.

“What can I say, Jones? QC is a family company. It’s supposed to have values.” Oliver shrugged, barely showing any emotion.

“Since when do you have values?” Jones snorted.

“Since that night with your mother. She really rocked my world.” Oliver smirked as he moved past him, quickly walking out of the conference room.

Felicity swiftly followed, passing by the man named Jones who seemed frozen in place, with a furious look on his face as he watched Oliver walking away.

This time Felicity took the stairs, needing the few minutes to process everything that had happened. If she was being honest with herself, she really wasn’t looking forward to being alone with her boss.

As she stepped inside her office the sight of Oliver ready and waiting met her eyes. He was leaning on her desk with his arms crossed at his chest.

“Felicity. I’ll be honest with you. I didn’t particularly want you as my assistant and I assume I’m not wrong when I say that you didn’t particularly want to be my assistant either?”
“Yes, Mis…” she swiftly corrected herself. “I mean yes, Oliver. Or no. I never know if I’m supposed to answer yes, as in “yes, you are right” or no, as in “no, I didn’t”. What I meant to say is that you are right, being your assistant wasn’t exactly my dream job. But you should know that when I start something, I do it seriously. I commit 100%. And I know I made some mistakes today, but I would like to remind you that I was never an assistant before. I’m learning and you’ll soon realize I’m a very quick learner. You just need to give me a bit of time to adjust and…”

Oliver cut off her rambling. “Those mistakes were partly my fault. I can admit that. I forgot that you had no prior experience, unlike the other assistants I’ve had.” Passing a tired hand on his face, he sighed. “Let’s forget today even existed, alright? For now on, we’re stuck with each other. Let’s focus on trying to make this work as best as possible.”

Felicity couldn’t help but feel a bit hurt by his words. She knew that she wasn’t really “executive-assistant-to-the-one-Oliver-Queen” material, but she was smart and probably more hard-working than most people in this company, judging by the several interactions she’s had with some of them. But the last thing she wanted was for him to pity her so she swallowed her pride and straightened her head, looking at him in the eyes.

“Oliver, I’m sorry about this whole situation. You’re right. Let’s put it behind us and start afresh.”

“Good. I have to say, though, your summary was rather impressive. And that cogena…”

“Yes” Oliver huffed out a laugh. “Cogeneration. I didn’t understand a thing about it, except that it managed to make Lucas speechless. I feel like this alone is a reward in itself.” He winked at her, then got up from her desk. “I have to call my mother, now. Let her know about…” Not willing to finish his sentence, he just made a vague gesture with his hand. “I’ve also asked Sara to drop by and help you with some basic stuff. She’s going to show you around and give you more insight of how things work here.” Stepping inside his office, he quickly shut the door and fell on the sofa, fishing his phone out of his pocket.

As Felicity sat down, she noticed the summary she had made. Oliver had probably dropped it on her desk so she could work on the notes he had promised Walter.

Sighing, she logged in her session, and started completing the document with all the comments that had been said during the meeting.

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A small hand appeared out of nowhere startling her.

Raising her head, she let out a small smile, secretly relieved that it was only Sara who was wearing an indulgent smile. “Earth to Felicity?”

“Sorry, Sara. Once I focus on something, I usually block everything out,” Felicity chuckled. “Oliver told me you would stop by and “show me around,” she added while doing the appropriate gesture with her fingers.

Sara laughed. “That’s how he said it? It was more like “You either start acting like a boss or I’ll personally kick your ass so hard you won’t be able to sit for a week.” I’m quite surprised he didn’t mention it,” she whispered the last part.
Felicity burst out laughing, mostly because the image of Sara, who was barely taller than her, overpowering Oliver, all strong and muscular, was hilarious. “I’d pay to see that!”

“Pay to see what?” Oliver, seeing Sara’s arrival, had joined the two women. Apparently, the phone call with his mother had been short. After a couple of minutes, Felicity had noticed him putting his phone on the small coffee table and stepping in front of the windows, where he had been staring broodingly for the past 20 minutes.


Oliver rolled his eyes and muttered something like “women…” under his breath. Clearing his throat, he looked at his friend. “Before you show her around, do you mind giving us a few minutes?”

“Oh, sure. What do you say, Felicity? I’ll wait for you downstairs in the entrance hall? Might as well give you the grand tour!”

“Perfect, I’ll meet you down there as soon as possible.” Felicity gratefully smiled and watched Sara retreat back until she was no longer in sight. Taking a deep breath she turned her gaze to her boss and waited for him to explain why he needed to be on his own with her.

“You mentioned that you needed a couple of days to get back to Boston to start packing? How about you take the rest of the week? I’ve already made some arrangements and asked for someone to fill in for you.”

Felicity suspiciously eyed him. “Oh. Yes, that would be very nice, thank you, Oliver. But… why do you seem in such a hurry? I mean it can wait and with all the things that have been going on maybe now is not the best of times to-”

Oliver cut her off. “On the contrary, I think it’s the best of times.”

“Ooo... Kay. If you say so. Do you need me to fix anything before I leave?”

“As long as you make sure Walter gets your notes, it should be fine. Once you’re done with Sara, you can leave. I’ll see you on Monday.” He turned around and stepped back in his office, once again shutting the door and blocking her out.

Felicity quickly stood up and hurried to the elevator, almost desperate to escape.

Like she had said, Sara was waiting for her in the entrance hall, deep in conversation with a very impressively built black man, who was probably in his mid-thirties. As she was joining them, they both embraced and said their goodbyes. Felicity only caught a glimpse of what Sara told him “… wasn’t expecting that. Anyway, good luck for tonight, Dig!” As if she had sensed Felicity’s presence, she turned around. “Oh there you are. I was afraid he’d be keeping you much longer. Too bad, you just missed one of Oliver’s bodyguards. He works for the security department, very nice guy.”

They spent two hours exploring the building. Sara was kind enough to tell her about the way things worked, and who to ask for what. For anything related to computers (including the very much needed new processor), they were supposed to ask the IT department directly, but if it was office supply or any kind of other demand, she had to fill out a specifically formulated sheet and give it to one of the HR’s employees. Sara told her about meetings, board meetings, memos, and how to deal with “bitchy fellow assistants whose names start with an M”.

They decided to stop for a cup of coffee near Sara’s office, where almost everybody had already
gone home. It was quite eerie to see such a big open space with empty cubicles, and nothing but the sound of the air conditioning and the computers’ ventilation.

“Wow. It sure looks less impressive now that everyone’s gone.” Felicity stood, taking in the sight in front of her.

Sara smiled. “I know, right? I actually like it when I’m alone. It’s also much easier to work. But truth be told, I prefer working here rather than being an assistant. It can get quite lonely.”

Sitting on her desk, she motioned to her chair. “Have a seat, Ollie’s not expecting you anyway.”

Felicity sat down and carefully put her cup of coffee on a small drawer nearby. “Why do I feel like you didn’t take me here for no reason?”

“I wanted to have a small talk. I know today hasn’t been the best of days. But don’t let that get you down.”

“I won’t. It’s just that… my life is miles away from what I was expecting. I feel like I made a mistake, I rushed into things because I really wanted to move away. But I’m not… I don’t fit in here. And I’m not sure I should try to.” She looked at Sara, sighing. “Let’s be honest, even you saw it right away.”

“I did. But that doesn’t mean it’s a bad thing. There are a lot of people here who do not fit either. And I think sometimes a rush decision can lead to good things. I wasn’t supposed to work here, you know. I was supposed to go to college, I wanted to study psychology. I dropped out after one month. Moira asked Robert to get me a place here. And it might not be the perfect job, but I like it. Give it a chance, you might like it too, one day. Who knows, you might even want to make a career in here!”

Felicity laughed at her last words. “You’re right. I should try to… go with it and see where it takes me. I think it’ll be easier once I get all my stuff and find an apartment.”

“I’ll help you with that once you get back. We’ll start looking together, it will be so much fun!” Clapping her hands, Sara stood up. “But for now, I’m taking you out for dinner. It’s on me, what do you say?”

“I say I still need to finish that summary and send it to Walter Steele,” Felicity groaned, because the prospect of a relaxed evening was very tempting.

Sara waved her hand. “Come on, it will take you, what, 20 minutes at most? I’ll wait for you. There’s this nice little Italian restaurant across the street, meet me there in half an hour?”

“OK. 30 minutes, I can make that work.” A huge smile stretched her face as she gulped the last of her coffee and hurried to the elevators.

Once she stepped inside her office, she was startled to see that Oliver was still there. He had taken off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves and his tie was loose. He seemed deep in thought and didn’t even notice her. She quietly sat on her chair and finished her summary. Sara was right, it barely took her 10 minutes to be done with it. She printed the documents, placed them neatly on her desk and made sure to send a copy directly to Walter Steele’s secretary.

Gathering her coat and her purse, she hesitated, glancing towards Oliver’s office. Sighing, she put her purse back on the floor and went to knock lightly on the door.

“Oliver?”
Her voice obviously startled him and he looked at her, eyes slightly confused as if he’d forgotten she was working there.

“Yes?”

“Well, I just sent an email to Walter’s office with the summary. I also printed several copies. I left them on my desk, should you need one,” Felicity rushed to say. “Do you need anything before I leave?”

“No. No, thank you. Have a safe flight.” Oliver picked up his pen again and started scribbling something down. Just as she was about to leave, he seemed to have a change of heart.

“Felicity?”

She stopped dead in her tracks and turned back to him. “Yes?”

“As you know very well, the IT department doesn’t have any job opportunities right now. But I’ll ask for Sara to look into other positions inside the company that might be more suitable for you. You should give this some thoughts while you’re away, see which department would be a good fit?” He was barely looking at her, too busy playing with his pen.

Felicity felt like a bucket of ice cold water had been poured over her. “Am I fired? Is this why you want me to go to Boston? So once I’m there, you’ll just let me know there is no need to come back?” Indignation pouring out of every word, she was struggling to keep her voice down.

“No, not at all. You could be a great asset for this company, but maybe not in the marketing department?”

“Don’t you mean 'maybe not as my assistant?'”

“… that’s… That’s not what I meant.” At least he had the decency to look uncomfortable, Felicity noted.

“You know what? You’re right. I could be a great asset for this company. Actually, I already am. And I’m sorry if it means that I can’t be at your beck and call to blow off some steam like all your other assistants were, but once you’ll start considering QC’s interests above your own I’m sure we’ll make a good team. In the meanwhile, if there’s an open position in Applied Sciences, count me in.” With that, she turned around and didn’t bother closing the door as she walked away.

Nice Italian dinner? Screw that. I’m getting drunk tonight.

Finally alone, Oliver glanced at his watch. It was a little past 6 and most of the employees had already headed home. He considered stopping at Laurel’s place, but decided against it. Even if his mother hadn’t seemed surprised by Isabel taking up such a high position, he knew better. Besides, spending the evening with Speedy would probably cheer him up. He never really pictured himself as VP, at least not before another couple of years – Hell he even told his mom yesterday. But it still felt like being stabbed in the back, because everyone expected him to get that position and he felt a bitter taste in his mouth every time he remembered the looks thrown his way in the conference room. Oliver Queen wasn’t new when it came to people staring at him, but he wasn’t used to reading pity in their eyes.

He knew that he had taken his anger out on Felicity. After that skype session with his father, once he had learned that Isabel would be getting a very high position, a position that was supposed to be his
some day,… he had been overwhelmed with so many emotions, that he hadn’t found a way to deal with them properly. Anger had taken control and Felicity had been there to take the full blast. He had been unfair to her, but there was something about her… like she could take everything he would throw at her, and throw it right back at him. That sense of equality had thrown him off guard. Pushing her away was the best decision, he needed to be in charge. That’s how he had been raised, that’s how he was. And that girl was a threat to that. He needed an assistant who was soft and compliant, and if she could also help him blow off some steam… the better. Felicity wasn’t built to be an assistant, she was far too strong-willed for that.

As he was lying in bed later that night, staring at the ceiling, it occurred to him that it was probably the first time something happening at work kept him awake.

Once he had left the office, he had canceled his previous plans for the night and decided to spend the night home with his mother and little sister. Unsurprisingly, Moira had taken the news of her husband promoting his mistress stoically. She’s had to endure her husband’s behavior for more than two decades now and was used to it. There was also no way she would ever let her daughter see her distressed. Thea had been over the moon when Oliver had told her he’d spend the night home, which made him realize he had been more and more distant with his family. The pressure of behaving the way his parents were expecting of him had taken its toll on the sibling’s relationship. In order to escape the overwhelming expectations, he had drifted away from his little sister.

He was interrupted in his thoughts by a small ping coming from his phone. Reaching on his nightstand, he quickly checked and saw that it was Felicity trying to call him. Huffing, he sent her to the voicemail and laid back once more on his pillows.

Deciding that from now on he would try to be more present for his sister and mother, he finally managed to drift into a restless sleep.

“Oliver!!” He woke up abruptly to his mother’s scream as she barged into his room.

He jumped out of bed just as Moira turned on the lights. The expression on her face sent a shiver of fear down his spine.

“Oh thank God, you're awake. Get dressed, you need to head to QC. There's been an explosion!”

Chapter End Notes

... Kind of a cliffhanger, right? Thanks for reading me! Next chapter will bring a beloved character into action. Also, a not so beloved character shows up as well. And it's gonna be pivotal in Oliver and Felicity's relationship. Chapter 5 is super important for several characters.

Also, I hope this chapter brought more insight on Oliver's personality. He's a jerk, sure, but... I never want things to be black or white, so it was important to me to explain his actions towards Felicity.
**Ironic**

Chapter Notes

Song:
Ironic - Alanis Morissette

I decided to update sooner - Writing kept me busy, since I've been waiting for that bloody trailer for days now, refreshing my twitter and tumblr every 5 minutes. A huge thank you to yellowpretendingtobered who reads/betas (is it even a verb?) this story. And thank you to all of you who read, leave kudos and comment/bookmark. It's so heartwarming and know that everytime you do one of these things, I get an alert, which causes the 33 year-old Belgian that I am to smile giddily and squeal, no matter what I am doing. You can find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com. Don't be shy, come say hi ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Come on, don’t make me do it on my own!” Sara begged a very reluctant Felicity as she literally dragged her all the way to the small stage.

After a nice Italian dinner, along with an even nicer bottle of red wine, the two of them had decided to go out for a couple of drinks. Felicity definitely needed it and Sara was never one to let a friend drink alone.

The pub where they had finally landed also offered, every Wednesday, a karaoke night. At first, none of them had wanted to give it a go. But two margaritas later, Sara had decided it was the best idea ever.

“Next time, I’m going straight home,” Felicity mumbled as they made their way to the stage. “What did you even pick for a song?”

“Oooh I found the perfect song, don’t worry.” Just as she finished her sentence, the first notes of piano were heard. Felicity turned her head and glared at her while covering her mic. “'Bad Day', really?!”

“Hey it’s spot on. Don’t sing off key,” Sara whispered back.

After two more songs, and as many margaritas, Sara called it a night. She had to pick up her mum at the airport at 7AM and it was well past midnight when Felicity got out of her cab on slightly wobbly legs. She kicked off her shoes as soon as she stepped inside her room, getting undress and leaving her clothes scattering the floor. She gazed longingly at her bed, but the day had been long and a shower would probably make her feel better.
She was just out of the shower, drying her hair with a towel, when a small ping on her phone caught her attention. Wondering who could be trying to reach her at that time of the night, she quickly took a look and realized that it was an alert. Frowning, she had to re-read the text several times for it to make sense. “Explosion near Starling City, QC steel factory blows up.” She probably stared at the screen for a couple of minutes before her brain could catch up. With shaky hands, she tried to call Oliver, to ask if he needed her. In times of crisis such as this one was bound to be, she knew it would probably be all hands on deck. Her call was directed to his voice mail after two rings. He probably declined her call. *How mature. He could have at least had the decency to let it ring out and feign sleep.*

Biting her lips, she took a few seconds to decide what she was supposed to do. She wasn’t supposed to go to work anyway, and with the last words she’d had with him, he probably didn’t expect her to. But there was a voice who kept nagging her that QC was where she was had to be. If she wasn’t needed, then she’d leave. But if there was anything she could do, then it was worth a try. Making up her mind, she dressed up in a pair of jeans, a sweat shirt and put on a pair of flats. Not bothering with blow drying her hair, she just tied it in a messy bun and without a look back, she walked out of her hotel room, already calling for a cab and wondering where the hell her boss was.

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The drive to Queen Consolidated didn’t take Oliver long.

What took longer was to calm his mother down. Fortunately, Walter had showed up 15 minutes later, at Moira’s request. All that Oliver knew, all that anyone really knew, was that there had apparently been a gas leak and a QC steel factory had blown up, near Starling City. Thankfully, it hadn’t been the one in the Glades, or the number of casualties would have been dramatic. Even now, in the first hours after the catastrophe, there had been very little information. Despite that, everybody knew that the number of dead and wounded would be high.

Public Relations always have a plan for everything. In case of an emergency like this one, QC becomes the headquarters. All the executives are to meet there and no one is to talk to the press before getting the green light.

When Oliver stepped out of the car, he was surprised to see a familiar blonde figure pacing on the pavement in front of the entrance. Her hair looked very different and she was wearing casual clothes, but there was no doubt in his mind. That decisive gait clearly belonged to his assistant.

Taking the steps two at a time, he joined her, unable to hide the surprise in his voice.

“Felicity? What are you doing here?”

“Oliver! I had an alert about the explosion. I tried to reach you but you wouldn’t answer. I wasn’t sure what to do but I expected the executives to meet here. I thought I could be useful? Although that might have been the third margarita talking cause I don’t know much about steel factories to be honest,” she mumbled the last part to herself, avoiding his eyes.

“Oh. Thank you. I’m sure we could use your help somehow. To be honest, I don’t know much about steel factories either,” he gave her a tired smile as he reached for her shoulder. “Let’s go, journalists are bound to show up any minute now.”
Once inside, they didn’t waste any time and went directly to the main conference room, the one that they had left a few hours ago. There were only a few people already seated around the table. Denis Lewis and a few other ones from Public Relations were there – obviously, this was an event that called for Public Relations.

“Oh, Oliver, good. Isn’t Walter with you?” Mr Lewis asked.

“On his way, he should be here in a few minutes. What do we know, Denis?” Oliver took a seat and offered one to Felicity.

“Not much, for now. It appears to be a gas explosion, from what the witnesses have said. The firefighters are still trying to contain it, but it appears most of the factory is gone. It was night shift, so there were less workers, but we’re still talking about 100 people who were supposed to be inside the building. Some have escaped, they are the ones who described the explosion. It was very sudden, and since there are no chemicals that could produce so much damage, the gas leak is, for now, the best explanation we have.” Sighing, he took off his glasses and pinched his nose.

“We tried to reach your father, but we couldn’t get a hold of him. Did you have more success?” The forty year-old something woman that Felicity remembered from the day before spoke up.

“No, we tried, but couldn't get through. His assistant isn't answering either. My mother is staying home, she doesn’t want to leave Thea alone. Let’s not worry about that for now, he could be visiting a place with no good signal. It’s already early afternoon in Russia, after all.”

“He’s right. Robert is visiting our silver mine. It’s literally lost in the middle of nowhere. I’d be surprised if you could reach him at all today.” Everyone turned their head to the newcomer.

A beautiful woman with long brown hair was standing in the doorway. Felicity recognized her instantly: Isabel Rochev. She looks even meaner in person. Which is quite an achievement.

Stepping towards the table, she put her bag on the table. “We are going to have to hold a press conference as soon as possible. We must reassure our partners.”

“Isabel, I’m not sure…” Mr Lewis tried to speak, but she quickly cut him off.

“Well, I am. Call the usual crowd, we’re hosting it as soon as possible.” Not really paying attention to her colleagues, she rumbled through her bag and took out a small stack of papers. “I met Walter downstairs. We both agreed that one of us should head to the factory. He’s on his way there and he’ll be helping the authorities. That means that for now on, I’m in charge here.” Her eyes never leaving Oliver, she threw the documents on the table. “This is all my assistant could find concerning that factory. I believe about 100 employees were on site?”

“Yes. More or less. A few apparently escaped, but the majority was trapped inside,” Oliver replied reluctantly, obviously struggling with the idea of having to answer to her yet keeping his tone cordial.

“Mark? Could you fetch us some coffee?” Isabel asked a tall, brown haired man that Felicity hadn’t noticed before. He quickly nodded and hurried through the door, apparently relieved to escape some of the tension that had risen since their arrival.
Denis followed him, presumably so he could make arrangements for the inevitable press conference. Only five people remained behind. Isabel and Oliver were still busy having a staring contest, and the forty year old woman was talking with one of her advisors. Felicity was starting to really doubt herself, as she was completely useless and had no idea what to do. Which is a first for me… at least I’m not babbling. Maybe too many margaritas actually can get me to shut up. Wow. I should try again in different circumstances. Is it the alcohol or the lemon though? Cause I like to drink wine, and usually it makes me talk even more. Maybe it’s the lemon mixed with alcohol?

“… she’s my new assistant.” Oliver’s words eventually caught her attention.

Isabel quirked an eyebrow. “And she’s here in the middle of the night, because…?”

Just with that, Felicity realized what it must have looked like. She had just arrived, in the middle of the night, with Oliver Queen. Hair completely disheveled. Felicity mentally facepalmed. Oh God, no. They’re going to think that we…

“I had an alert on my phone!” She blurted out, her cheeks flaming up. “So I tried to call Oliver, but he wouldn’t reply.” Turning towards her boss, she continued “Why didn’t you pick up by the way? You hung up on me at my first attempt. I went to voicemail after two rings, while I know very well it takes six rings on your phone,” she interrupted herself under his glare. “And it’s probably not the right time to talk about how I know your phone goes to voicemail after six rings… Anyway. I tried to reach you, I couldn’t and I decided that maybe I could be useful so I called a cab, stopped to get a double espressos cause I’ve had too many drinks tonight and I… and you didn’t need to know that.” Taking a deep breath, she felt her face burn with embarrassment. “I mean that I thought I should stop by and see if there was anything I could do to help.”

“Isn’t that… sweet. So much devotion in such a new employee. You sure know how to pick them, Oliver.”

“Apparently, that’s not something I inherited from my father.” The fake smile he gave her should have been enough to see her back off, but apparently Isabel Rochev wasn’t someone who got easily intimidated. Before she could reply, Oliver continued:

“Alright, I think I’ll take all those papers down to my office, and my assistant and I will look through them. Should anything arise, call me on the direct line.” Taking this as her cue to leave the room, Felicity rose on her feet and followed him as he left.

As soon as the stepped inside his office, Felicity was surprised to see that someone else was already there. Oliver didn’t seem that surprised though and a resigned sigh escaped him as he welcomed the tall black man.

“Dig… I suppose my mother called you?”

“Yep. I’m to follow you until further notice.” His voice was deep, oddly comforting to Felicity. Noticing her, he reached to shake her hand. “I’m Dig. You must be Felicity?”

“Yes. It’s a pleasure to meet you.” She couldn’t help but smile back at him. He had arms the size of trees but his hand was surprisingly soft and gentle.

They soon settled down in the small seating area, but Oliver was still restless and once again, found himself standing and staring broodingly at the window. I don’t think I have ever met anyone who is so intense and focused at… staring into emptiness.
Felicity, glad that she finally had something to do, printed all the data she could find about the steel factory, the number of employees, their healthcare and any other bit of information that she thought could be useful. Dig helped her, reading the docs and highlighting the important parts. After a while, Oliver joined them and started to read what they had found, adding notes and asking more questions. It took Felicity by surprise to see him suddenly getting involved, and even more when she realized his questions were not dumb at all, but rather insightful.

It was almost dawn when a knock on the door interrupted them. Isabel, still looking incredible neat and beautiful despite the lack of sleep, had a slightly out of place gleeful look.

“Oliver? Everything is ready downstairs. We’re holding the press conference in the lobby. Denis will talk first and then I’ll answer a few questions with him. You should be there too because… well… it’s your name on the top of the building. With your father being away, you need to represent the Queen family.”

As it turned out, Denis had managed to get what looked like every single journalist in California. There was probably a hundred seats, and they were all taken. A few tables at the back held some refreshments, and more people were gathered near them.

Denis quickly walked on the small stage – where the heck did they find a stage at this time? Do they have like emergency kit stages? Can you buy one at Ikea or something? If it’s in a kit, it’s probably in Ikea. Oh God. Now I want meatballs.

The long night was taking a toll on Felicity who was struggling to stay awake during Denis’s speech. She only caught the usual lines “we are doing everything we can to cooperate blablabla the entire company is with the victims and their families blablabla”. Felicity poured herself a cup of coffee, handing one to Dig who had stayed behind with her while Oliver had been asked to move to the small stage.

“He appreciates it, you know.”

Felicity looked at Dig, who was keeping his eyes on the stage. She wasn’t even sure she had heard him right or if exhaustion was starting to play with her, when he added: “That you stayed. He won’t show it, but the fact that you came, tried to help. Hadn’t you been there he would have probably stared at that damn window all night long.”

She giggled at his words, knowing they might be true. “I was thinking that earlier. The man sure can brood.”

Looking at her with a teasing smile, Dig answered “Oh you ain’t seen nothing yet.” Winking at her, he turned his attention back to Denis who was now giving his place to Isabel. Felicity quickly gulped the last of her coffee and poured herself another cup, that she drank just as fast. Quickly thanking whoever was up there that she was so reactive when it came to coffee, she was finally able to pay attention to what was being said.

And just in time it seemed, as the first words she managed to hear made her pale instantly:

“Queen Consolidated is a family company. Since Robert Queen isn’t here today, I’m sure his son will be able to fill his shoes and answer all the questions you have. I have to say, he probably knows Starling and its surrounding areas better than I do, since he grew up here.” Isabel turned to Oliver with a smile that probably looked genuine to the majority of people, but some, including Felicity,
knew better. Whatever that woman wanted to do, it wasn’t for good reasons. And the slightly gleeful look she’d had when she came to Oliver’s office now made sense. She had been planning all of this. As for the reason why, Felicity didn’t have time to dwell on that. All she knew was that Oliver was still her boss and even if he had been nothing more than a jerk to her the day before, she couldn’t let him face those reporters by himself. It wouldn’t be right, under those circumstances, to let Isabel play a sick game of cat and mouse. Apparently, Dig reached the same conclusion.

“That bitch, she’s throwing him under the bus!” He cursed, passing a hand across his face.

Think, Felicity. Think. And fast. Inspiration struck her suddenly and she put a hand on Dig’s arm. “She’s not. Not if we have a say about it. I need a couple of minutes,” she quickly explained as a plan was already forming in her head. “Can you give me that? You work in the security department, can you cut off the electricity for 2 minutes? That’s all I need.”

Dig looked at her, intrigued, but he was obviously a man used to act first and ask questions later. He just nodded his head and with that he was gone, moving much faster than a man of his size was supposed to.

Oliver, seemingly recovering real fast from the scheme, was just taking place behind the podium. His eyes wandered across the room and landed on her and she could see, clear as day, that he was lost. In those few seconds she realized how easy it was for her to read his emotions, as no one around her seemed to notice anything. She gave him a reassuring smile and tried to make a sign with her hands to make him understand he needed to start talking and gain some time. She wasn’t sure he understood, but he nodded towards a journalist from the front row. From where she was, Felicity couldn’t understand the question, but it didn’t escape her attention that he had picked a young looking woman. Good thinking, Oliver. Just charm her pants off for a couple of minutes.

From afar, Felicity was able to witness Oliver Queen being his usual charming and charismatic self. The one she had heard so much about, but didn’t really get to meet personally. She had had a small glimpse of his… talents on her first day, even though it had always been directed towards other women. That woman doesn’t stand a chance.

Just when another reporter, a much older man with white hair and a very stern look, interrupted them so they could get back on topic, the lights went off. After a second of stunned silence, several voices were heard, asking people to stay calm. Felicity used the tablet that she’s had in hand ever since she had sent Dig on his mission to find her way to the stage. Oliver saw her thanks to the small light coming from it just as she put it on the podium.

Whispering before he could even speak, she quickly explained. “I’ll guide you. Just read the key words I’ll type and you’ll be fine. Make sure to repeat the question somehow so I can hear it.” Just as she was about to step down, the lights came back and she caught a glimpse of the surprise in Oliver’s eyes. Surprise… and gratitude.

Fishing her phone from her purse, she opened once again the shared document that Oliver would be reading, ready to type down any accurate information he might be asked.

She sat at one of the tables, and pulled another tablet from her purse – the one from her office, that she had used to research info about the factory earlier that night. Just as the first question was being asked, Dig reappeared and wordlessly took place beside her.

“He has my tablet. I’m gonna give him all the data we can find. He’s lucky I have such an obsession for techy things. I don’t think any of his other assistants even knew how to fire up a tablet,” she
explained.

Dig snorted. “Let’s be honest; we both know that their professional aptitudes were not the main reason why he employed them.”

They both shared a look, but none of them had time to add something else as they heard Oliver’s voice, carried with the mic.

“I’m sorry, I’m not sure I heard right. You want to know how many employees were working and if that number was within the mandate of federal standards, is that right?”

Felicity could barely remember what happened the next hour. All she knew was that she probably broke her own record of words typed per minute and that she saw so many numbers that she even got dizzy. Dig was just as exhausted, but all of it had been worth it. Not much for the fact that Oliver had done good enough, and the slight hesitations or mistakes could easily be explained by the lack of sleep and the trauma caused by the night. No. What had made it worth it was the utter look of disbelief on Isabel’s face.

“I’m still craving meatballs.”

Dig turned his head towards her, just as Oliver approached. “… what?”

“ Meatballs. I’ve been craving them for hours now,” she explained, biting her lips.

“Why?” Oliver asked with an amused smile. He seemed much more relax now, and there was something more about him. Like confidence. Which was odd because if there was one thing Oliver Queen had never lacked, it was probably confidence. Felicity observed him silently, lost in thoughts, while the three of them were walking out of the lobby and headed to the garage.

“Mmh? Oh yes meatballs! It’s because of that stage, you know, I was wondering where they found it on such short notice. I suppose it’s like a kit stage? Which made me think of Ikea, which made me think of meatballs, not that you would know anything about Ikea meatballs.” She stopped dead in her tracks and frowned. “Do you even know Ikea??”

“Yes, Felicity, I know Ikea. I’ve never been there, and never had their meatballs, though.” Shaking his head, Oliver opened the backseat door for her. “But I know a place where you can get the best burger in Starling. And it’s open 24/7. Dig, what do you say? We won’t know anything more in the next couple of hours anyway. Denis will call me as soon as we have new information.”

Dig was already behind the wheel when he answered. “I say we all deserve a Big Belly Burger.”

Once they were seated in their booth and had ordered their food, a small, awkward silence made Felicity slightly uncomfortable.

“Sooo… do you come here often?”

“No. We usually have them deliver at QC,” Oliver replied while loosening his tie. “We usually do that every Tuesday for lunch.”

“You’ll see, the food is delicious. You’ll beg to join us on next Tuesday.”

Felicity snorted, while Oliver looked sheepishly at his hands.
Quirking an eyebrow, Dig stood up. “OK… I can see there might be some issues here. I’m gonna go… somewhere while you two talk.”

As soon as Dig was out of view, Oliver sighed and looked up.

“Felicity, I…” Clearing his voice, he continued. “I’m sorry. About what I told you yesterday. That was uncalled for. I shouldn’t have treated you that way. I was pissed at my father, at Isabel,… I took it out on you and I shouldn’t have.”

“Wow. Oliver Queen apologizing… where are the reporters now?!” She teased him.

Smiling faintly, his index finger followed a drop of condensation that was sliding down his glass. “I made sure there was none around.”

“Alright, then. Apologies accepted.” She took a sip of water and played with her straw. She knew she should probably make it harder for him but the night had been long.

“I know that I don’t have the right to ask you this, honestly I would completely understand if you said no… but I would really like you to stay. As my assistant I mean.”

Felicity paused, the straw still between her lips.

“I thought you already had somebody else in sight?” she eventually asked suspiciously.

“… Not really. I kinda lied,” he laughed.

“Why do you want me to stay now? Is it because I helped you tonight?” Felicity frowned, not fooled by his careless behavior.

“Yes. No. Probably. I don’t know. Does it matter?”

“Well, yes it does. I don’t want you to give me that bullshit every time I say something you don’t like or every time your father pisses you off.”

As Dig was coming back, he heard her last words and whistled. “Looks like you need more time, but the food is here.”

As the server handed them their plates, Felicity didn’t drop the topic.

“I’m serious, Oliver. I’m not staying if you don’t tell me why.”

“I want this company. I never realized how much I wanted it until my father named Isabel to a position that was supposed to be mine eventually. It’s not just because he gave it to someone else. It opened my eyes. I’ve been working for the company because that’s what I was supposed to do if I wanted to keep my trust fund. But with the explosion and everything else… I care about the people who work there. I’ve known this my whole life, it’s a legacy. And if tonight has proved anything, other than the fact that I’m not prepared to shoulder this responsibility…” he snorted, biting a fry. “It’s that a typical assistant won’t help me. I need someone like you.”

Dig, who had been too busy eating to comment, nodded. “You were incredible there. You kinda worried me when you asked me to cut the electricity, but I’m not sure there are that many people
who could have pulled a plan like that in 30 seconds.”

Oliver agreed. “What you did was very impressive. I don’t think anyone noticed.”

Felicity smiled with the praise. “You thought that was impressive?” She wiggled her fingers, smirking. “You should see what I can do with those when I’m completely sober.” Reaching for her glass, she stopped herself once she replayed the words in her head. “Oh. No. I meant things I could do with wires and computers. Not with your… you know.” Glancing at them, she noticed them sharing an amused look.

“Why did you, by the way? Help me I mean?” Taking a bite of his hamburger, Oliver changed the topic, probably taking pity on her.

“I didn’t think… I just saw her, trying to do… I don’t even know what. But something terrible had happened and no one should try to take advantage of a tragedy like that. So actually, it wasn’t so much helping you, but more like stopping her.” Smiling, she bit a huge piece of her cheeseburger. “Mmmh this is sooo good!” She moaned as she swallowed. “OK, you won. Count me in next Tuesday and probably the next ones too.”

Chapter End Notes

Sooo... what did you think?
Chapter 5 is so important because that's when Oliver comes to understand a few things about himself, his work, the company. That's also the start of their partnership, so their relationship is going to be a bit different from now on (I've been dying to reach this point ever since I've started the fic to be honest). Oliver isn't going to grow up overnight, but he needed to start at some point.
Never hesitate to let me know what you liked, so I know I can keep going that way, but also if there's something that's bothering you. I'm always open to constructive criticism! Oh and I love cooking, so if you need help with that, feel free to drop a comment as well :p
Song: Womanizer - Britney Spears
I'm gonna have to use caps because I want to make sure everyone notices it:
I HAD TO CHANGE THE RATING (I wanted to be safe -And I might go with small
smutty things in next chapters. Please, if anyone is uncomfortable, let me know. If I
have to post edited chapters separately to make it work for you, I will, just let me know
please :))

A huge thank you to all of you, the kuddos and comments and bookmarks and reaching
out on twitter or tumblr... I have no words, it just fills me with feels XD
All my gratitude to my beta yellowpretendingtobered who does a terrific job, editing my
chapters and also listening to my crazy plot ideas that constantly pop up in my brain.

And a very very warm thank you to @victori96572376 for the gorgeous poster she
made for this story!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.
When Felicity stepped inside Queen Consolidated on Monday morning, her steps were confident and she was more at peace with herself. Today was supposed to be her second first day working as Oliver Queen’s assistant. Second first day, because she had realized that after their little talk at Big Belly Burger, their professional relationship had taken a new turn. Although she suspected that working with him would never be a piece of cake, as the man had his fair share of flaws, at least now there was a mutual honesty between them. It was a good start, much better than the “let’s hire the first girl I see because I don’t want my mom to pick my assistant for me”.

After their breakfast, they had all gone their separate ways. Felicity, back to her hotel room, had booked a flight to Boston and started making phone calls to find a moving company that would send her stuff all the way across the country. Thankfully, she didn’t have much, mostly books and clothes and half a dozen boxes full of computers bits and parts. She had found one quite fast, and she spent the weekend packing and saying goodbye to the few friends she still had there. As she was walking in the narrow streets of Beacon Hill for probably the last time, she felt at peace with herself. She had made the right decision and her future at Queen Consolidated was clearly looking brighter than she first had thought.

But that wasn't counting with Oliver Queen’s manwhore ways.

Being that it was barely 9am, she wasn’t surprised to see that her boss still hadn’t arrived. Having only been gone for two days, she was taken aback by the amount of emails and messages waiting for her. Of course, with the gas leak at the steel factory, a huge amount of those were directly linked to the catastrophe. She had followed the news from the East Coast, and as far as she knew, there hadn’t been any new development. The number of victims had been high, like everyone feared: 86 people were presumed dead, with 50 of them still missing. The stock market had taken the news badly and QC had lost several points on Wall Street. Several investors were getting wary, the fact that there had been rumors that it could have been linked to industrial espionage had not helped at all.

She was just finishing sorting Oliver’s messages when he arrived, with Dig in toe.

“Well, good morning you two!” She welcomed them with a smile.

“Felicity, good to have you back. Everything went well in Boston?” Oliver stopped by her desk, a cup of coffee and a newspaper folded under his arm.

Dig grinned at her, mouthing a “welcome back.” He looked very intimidating wearing a formal black suit that she assumed was his official work outfit as Oliver’s bodyguard.

“Great. All packed, I found a company where I could store the things I don’t need right now. They’ll ship them once I have found a place to live permanently.” Picking up the small stack of notes on her desk, she handed them to him. “Here are all your messages. Is there any news about the explosion?”

“Nothing for now. They are still investigating to find out what caused it.” Shaking his head as he took the notes he sighed. “My mother and I spent the weekend visiting families. We are now gonna have to focus on reassuring our partners and shareholders for the next coming weeks.”
“What can I do to help?”

“For now, there’s nothing much we can do. I will know more after I meet with Walter this afternoon though. In the meanwhile, could you look into our archives and select five ad agencies we usually pick to handle our accounts? I’ll have to interview them by the end of the month.”

"Of course, but what happened to the agency we had?" Felicity asked curiously.

"Their contract is up and we've had some...issues with the team they assigned to us," Oliver said uncomfortably, walking toward his door.

"What kind of issues? Was it slander? Infringement?" She asked, waiting for clarification.

To her surprise, Dig snorted. "Too many females."

"Wha...oh! Oh. I'll get right on that," she said looking away from the duo as they walked into the privacy of Oliver's office.

Glad to finally have something to do apart from answering the phone and sorting mail, Felicity lost herself in work. Thankfully, the archives were well organized. It would have been much better if everything had been on the company’s network, obviously, but it also gave her the chance to wander a bit in QC’s dark corners. Once she had settled her choice on five companies that have had contracts with QC in the past, based on their efficiency, all that was left to do was write a brief summary for each of them and arrange a meeting.

Deciding that all of this could wait until the afternoon, Felicity went back to her office to pick up her purse, heading to the small café across the street. According to Sara, they made the best Caesar salad in Starling and also had a great selection of organic fruits for dessert. As usual, she ordered her meal for take-out, planning on eating in her office. Even if she was slightly more comfortable, she still didn’t have that many friends with whom she could share her meal, Sara having taken the morning off.

She wasn’t surprised once she was back at QC, to see that both men had left the office, probably heading to their own lunch. Setting her meal on her desk, she quickly used her sanitizing lotion before opening the Styrofoam box. Too busy checking her email inbox, she didn’t notice that the small container with the salad dressing got knocked sideways and it was too late to catch it. Half of her Caesar dressing ended up on her desk, getting dangerously close to the files she was supposed to work for Oliver.

“EEEEEEP!” Jumping out of her chair, she grabbed the napkins to absorb the liquid. *Catastrophe avoided*. Throwing the gooey tissues in the bin, she stared at the mess she had made for a few seconds. *I need to clean this. And I have no idea where they hide the cleaning supplies here.*

Biting her lips, her eyes wandering across the room, she stopped at one of the doors that led out of Oliver’s office. If she remembered correctly, it was supposed to be his personal bathroom. She quickly made her way across the room, thankful that at least no one had been there to witness her clumsiness at its finest.

“He must have some paper towels at the very…” Words got caught in her throat as she took in the sight in front of her.

Oliver was standing, one hand on the wall beside the shower. The other hand was currently wrapped
around the head of a dark haired woman, who was kneeling in front of him. Well I think it’s a woman, pretty hard to be sure since I can only see her back. Oh, high heels. Probably a woman, then. Unless he’s into… Stop right there, Smoak.

“Felicity!” Oliver had opened his eyes at the commotion of having someone barging through the door and it had taken a second for him to react. The woman at his feet turned her head as well, giving Felicity a clear view on…

“Oh my God, you’re circumcised!” She blurted out, turning around and hiding her eyes behind her hands. Please tell me I didn’t just comment on my boss’s penis…

She heard Oliver clear his throat and the sound of ruffled fabric as he asked her: “Felicity… could you give us a minute?”

“Oh sure, yeah… I’ll do that. Take as long as you need.” Walking away, she added under her breath, “Preferably long enough for me to make it to Greenland.”

She had barely made it back to her desk, in record time despite her shaky legs, when she was greeted by a joyful voice.

“Miss Felicity! What a pleasure it is to see you again!” Charming smile full on display, Tommy Merlyn approached her in a few steps, grabbing her hand, chivalrously kissing it.

Just what I needed… Perfect timing, Mister Merlyn.

“Mister Merlyn.” Taking a deep breath, she fiddled with her hair. “It’s good to see you again, too. Unfortunately, Mister Queen is… unavailable at the moment.” Avoiding his eyes, she made a beeline for her chair where she fell more than sat.

“I’ll just have the pleasure of keeping you company until he comes back then.” Winking at her, he half-sat on her desk, while Felicity proceeded to clean it with a pack of tissues she had found in her purse and some of her sanitizing lotion.

Interrupting herself in the middle of her task, she raised her head. “Oh, no. I mean, it could be a long time and…”

Tommy cut her off. “Non-sense, he called me 20 minutes ago to ask me to drop by.” Watching her cleaning her desk, he added “let me help you with that. You need water and soap, not mango-flavored hand cleanser.” Standing up, he moved to Oliver’s office.

“Wait, no! Don’t go in there!” Hurrying to get past him, she blocked the access to the bathroom.

“Hum… is Oliver in the bathroom?” He quirked an eyebrow at her. “I thought you said he was… Oooh. I see…” He snorted, crossing his arms on his chest.

“No, no. It’s nothing like that, he’s just getting a…” Do not say blowjob, do not say blowjob, do not say…

“Bikini wax!” She blurted the first excuse that came to her mind, her own eyes growing big as soon as the words left her lips.

At least it had the advantage of throwing Tommy off balance. “… a bikini wax?”
Felicity was spared the humiliation of having to explain what she had said by the sound of the bathroom door opening.

“Helena!” Smiling, Tommy quickly hugged the woman. Now that Felicity could properly see her, she could see she was stunning. Pale complexion, blue eyes, never-ending legs… the whole package.

“Tommy, what a pity. I was just leaving.” Hugging him back, Helena then turned towards Oliver. “I’ll see you around, I guess?”

She passed Felicity without acknowledging her, to her great relief. How does she manage to still have such a perfect lip makeup? No smudge, nothing…

“Well, I feel better now. Knowing you were with Helena, I mean. Your assistant had me worried for a while,” Tommy slyly said.

Oliver swapped his head at Felicity, who was doing her best at looking everywhere but at any of them. “Why?”

“Let’s just say that Miss Felicity did everything she could to keep from walking into that bathroom.” Sighing dramatically, he added “even if it included scarring me for life with a mental picture that will probably be engraved in my soul until my dying day.”

Looking at Felicity who was still quite red in the face, Oliver frowned. “What did you tell him?”

“Hum, I… well, you see… it’s silly really but…”

“Come on, Ollie. Let’s all forget about it. You guys need to work on her excuses for next time, though. Especially if I’m not the one she has to stop.” Patting his friend on the back, Tommy went to sit on the sofa, crossing his legs at the ankles.

“Oh no. There won’t be any more cover up. Nope. From now on, it will be strictly business.”

“Starting with not barging into your boss’s bathroom uninvited, I hope?” Oliver dryly asked.

Opening and closing her mouth like a fish out of water, Felicity wished the floor would open up and swallow her. Yep, she would gladly fall through all 16 floors, walk out of the building and never come back. 3,2,1.

Taking a deep breath, she was finally able to form a coherent sentence for the first time in what seemed like eternity. “I’m sorry, I thought you had left with Dig for lunch. And there was no sign anyone was there. I can promise you, that starting this very moment, I will never ever walk unannounced in any closed room you might be in with… company.” Walking backwards, she stepped out of Oliver’s office. “I’m going to leave you two, now. You’ll have the 5 agencies you requested by the end of the day.”

“Good.” Closing the door behind her, Oliver passed a hand over his face and glared at his best friend. “OK, are you gonna tell me what the fuck happened?”
“Hey!” Raising his hands in defense, Tommy grinned smugly. “You’re the one who was locked inside a bathroom with Helena Bertinelli doing something that caused your assistant to turn so red I’m pretty sure her skin tone will never be the same again.” He turned his head, dreamily gazing at the blonde who was sitting in her chair, looking sadly at her salad – sans dressing.

“She’s charming. And very loyal.”

“Don’t.” Oliver interrupted his reverie.

“I haven’t done anything!”

“Yet. But I know that look.” Quirking an eyebrow, Oliver settled down on the chair opposite Tommy.

“What can I say? I just found out I have a weakness for blushing assistants. Although to be fair, I thought that particular species had been extinct for a while.” Rummaging through the pocket of his leather jacket, he handed Oliver a car key. “Here you go. My Porsche keys. Why do even need them? Don’t tell me you crashed yours again.”

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “No. Believe it or not, this time it’s at the garage for maintenance only.”

“I hope your mechanics didn’t die of shock.” Standing up, Tommy passed a hand in his hair. “I should be going. I know you probably have more work than usual, with that explosion. Any progress in the investigation?”

Oliver stood up as well, walking his friend to the door. “No. They suggested we upgrade our security though, for risks of retaliation from a grieving next of kin or something.”

“Shit. That explains why your mother has Diggle following you around.” Patting his friend on the back, Tommy made his way towards the elevator, but stopped once he saw Felicity throwing her lunch in the garbage.

“Please, tell me you have something else to eat.”

“Nope. Well, I still have a banana…” Glaring at the fruit, she shuddered. “Not gonna be able to eat it after what I just saw, though.”

“I’m taking you to lunch then. I am a gentleman and a gentleman would never let such a lovely woman starve to death.”

Before Felicity could say anything, Tommy turned to face Oliver who was observing them quietly from the threshold. “I’m taking your assistant out for lunch.”

Felicity looked hopefully at Oliver, but he just shrugged and walked back into his office, leaving his assistant deal with his best friend.

“Mister Merlyn, …” Felicity started, taking a deep breath.

Interrupting her with a charming smile, Tommy handed her purse. “Please, call me Tommy. You’re gonna hurt my feelings.”

“… Mister Merlyn.” Insisting on his last name, she looked at him square in the eyes. “I don’t think
this would be appropriate. Not to mention, I am sure you have far more important things to do than taking your best friend’s assistant to lunch.”

“Maybe more important, but far less appealing I can assure you,” he responded to her icy stare with a seductive gaze. “Come on, one lunch, you pick the place and I promise that I will never tell anyone about that bikini wax.” He whispered the last words, throwing falsely worried looks around them.

Felicity quirked an eyebrow. “Tommy Merlyn is reduced to blackmail to get a girl to accept an invitation to lunch? Seems like your reputation is a bit overrated.”

“You mean you looked up information about me, Miss Felicity? I’m flattered.” Grabbing her elbow, he gently pushed her towards the elevator. “I knew there was something special between us from our first conversation.”

“We barely talked.”

“There was no need. You had me at ‘Mister Merlyn’.” Putting a hand over his heart, he pushed the button to get to the ground floor.

“And here I was, thinking calling you that was hurting your feelings…” Felicity sighed. “Oh well. I guess I’ll have to find something else.”

It turned out, much to Felicity’s surprise, that Tommy Merlyn was actually very good company. Between reassuring her over the bathroom drama (“don’t worry, almost every single female who works at QC has seen Oliver’s junk. You’re part of the club now!”) and the tale of mischievous Tommy and Ollie when they were kids, the hour went quickly.

They parted ways at QC’s entrance, Felicity mocking the pout on Tommy’s face at her refusal to give him her phone number.

“I haven’t said my last word, Miss Felicity!” He playfully warned. “This city is full of grown-up women who have tried and failed to resist the Merlyn Charm!”

Turning around, she grinned mischievously. “Then I guess you’ll have to try again once I turn 21!” Winking at his shocked face, she quickly turned around and stepped inside the building.

She was still smiling when she reached her desk and a quick glance towards Oliver’s office confirmed that he was still in a meeting with Walter Steel. Secretly grateful, she opened a new Word document, fully intending on finishing the task Oliver had asked of her in record time. Analyzing the pros and cons of each agency proved to be a bit harder than she had expected, and she was still struggling with the last one when she heard Oliver’s door being opened.

Jumping to her feet, she plastered her most professional smile on her face, greeting Mr Steel. After all, he was the VP of the company that was currently employing her and it was their first formal meeting.

“Miss Smoak, what a pleasure to finally introduce myself properly.” With a gentle smile, he shook her hand. “I read your summary about cogeneration, and it was extremely interesting. Oliver told me it was your idea. It made me a bit curious about you, I admit. I looked up on you. Your curriculum in
MIT is very impressive. “Oh, that accent... I could listen to it all day.

Blushing, Felicity started fiddling with her hands. “Oh, thank you. I’m glad I could be useful. And by that, really useful, not bring-me-a-cup-of-coffee useful. Not that there is anything wrong with that! It’s just that I’m more like hands-on approach kinda girl. But not hands-on in a not appropriate way! Don’t worry, I’m very appropriate. It’s actually my middle name.” She huffed out a small embarrassed laugh, praying something would stop her babbling, knowing she was unable to do so herself. “OK, I lied, it’s not. It’s Meghan. My middle name, I mean.” She was just going to add something more, no doubt creating even more damage, when a hand touched the small of her back. She took a deep breath, turning her head to face Oliver.

He gave her an amused smile, lightly shaking his head. “Walter was just telling me it would be a good move if I went, along with other executives, to meet some of our partners. To reassure them, show our confidence, you know, the usual.Appearances at all cost.”

“Oh?” She looked at both men, not sure where this was heading.

“Yes, we’re still figuring out who would be the best group to send, but Oliver is a sure choice. He’s a Queen, he is the face of this company,” Walter gently explained.

“You’ll have to come with me, though. I know you just arrived but don’t worry, this won’t be happening until at least next week.”

“Wait, how long will we be gone?” Felicity asked, intrigued, already thinking about logistics. She still needed to find a place to live, after all.

“Probably at least a week, or two. It’s all going to depend on how things are moving forward with the investigation and what kind of damage we are supposed to repair. If all goes to plan we will also use this opportunity to move along with the cogeneration and the whole green company rebranding.”

Walter interrupted him. “I’m actually late for another meeting. Miss Smoak, it was a pleasure to meet you.”

Shaking his hand once more, she just had the time to reply “Likewise” and he was already gone.

Facing her boss, she couldn’t keep the concern out of her voice. “But I still need to find a place to live, I’m supposed to start looking tonight. If I leave next week, how am I going to do that?”

“Don’t worry. We’ll figure it out. Has Dig returned yet?” He gave her a reassuring smile, already getting ready to retreat back to his office.

“No, I haven’t seen him since this morning. Should I call him, or...?”

“No, there’s no need. Send him through once he arrives though.”

_We’ll figure it out, we’ll figure it out... you mean I will have to find a solution._

Dig arrived shortly after that, and both men spent their time in Oliver’s office while she finished her report which definitely took her longer that she had thought.
She knocked on his door, bringing the stack of papers and hoping he wouldn’t have anything else for her to do. She was supposed to meet with Sara, who had already listed a few places for her to visit. With this whole trip that was supposed to happen, she really couldn’t afford to waste more time. She needed to find an apartment, and fast.

“Oliver? This is the report you asked for about the agencies.” She hurried to his desk, handing him the documents. “Anything else I can do?”

“No, thank you. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

She was just about to turn around when Dig’s voice stopped her. He was seated on the sofa, reading a newspaper. “Felicity? Oliver mentioned you needed a place to live?”

Surprised, she threw a small glance at her boss. “Hum, yes. I’m staying at a hotel for the moment.”

“There is an apartment to rent in my building. It’s small, one bedroom, but the neighborhood is nice. I can give you the landlord’s phone number?”

“Oh, wow, that would be great. I’m supposed to visit a few places with Sara tonight actually, I could also try to visit that one.”

Reaching in his pocket, Dig pulled out his phone and, grabbing a pen, he scribbled on a piece of the newspaper he was reading. Tearing the page, he handed her the phone number. “Just tell him you’re calling on behalf of John.”

“Thank you,” she beamed at him.

“Don’t mention it,” Dig smiled, picking up his newspaper to resume his reading.

Taking this as her cue to leave, Felicity grabbed her purse and coat, already calling Sara to let her know she would wait for her in the small café across the street.

It turned out that two of the apartments Sara had found were already rented. They visited the last one, but Felicity saw a cockroach in the kitchen and walked out right away. Very grateful for whoever in Dig’s building had decided to move out, she called the landlord who agreed for a visit the next day. Having nothing else to do, they decided to have a quiet movie night.

The two girls were currently sitting on Sara’s couch, eating a pizza they had picked up on their way to her small condo. Pretty Woman was playing on TV but neither of them were really paying attention.

“Wait, you what??”

“I walked in on him mid-blowjob.” Hiding her face in a pillow, she added: “and from his face it seemed like a really good blowjob.”

Sara burst out laughing. “Oh my God! Not only are you the only assistant who doesn’t sleep with him but… You also cockblock him with other women!”
Standing up, she bowed at Felicity feet. “I am not worthy.”

“Shut up,” Felicity giggled. “I can’t remember being that embarrassed in my life. Ever.”

“What did he say?” Sara sat down again, grabbing the pillow Felicity had been using as a shield.

“… He just asked me to give them a minute. He hasn’t mentioned it since then.”

“Yeah, Ollie is very open-minded when it comes to sex. He’s probably had an audience before.”

Not willing to dwell on that particular mental picture, Felicity swiftly tried to change topic. “But… he’s dating your sister, isn’t he? I mean, don’t you mind?”

Sara sighed, grabbing the bottle of wine and pouring herself another glass.

“Ollie has always been a cheater. Laurel prefers to look the other way. I’m not going to feel bad about something she is fully aware of, yet doesn’t want to acknowledge,” she shrugged.

Sensing there might be something more, but also that Sara didn’t seem comfortable discussing it, Felicity stood up, deciding to call it a night. “Well, I should get going. Thank you for your help, I’ll let you know how it goes with the apartment tomorrow.”

Walking her towards the door, Sara smiled. “My pleasure, really. It’s fun to have someone my age to talk to. Most of my friends left for college and went to live in another city. And the people I work with are either older or…”

“Back-stabbing bitches?” Felicity continued, with the shade of a smile on her face.

“I couldn’t have said it better!” Shivering, Sara frowned. “Are you sure you don’t want to call a cab? It’s chilly out there.”

“Nah. I lived in New England, remember? Besides, it’s just a couple of blocks. I’ll be fine,” Felicity waved, already walking down the stairs.

The short walk back to her hotel let her clear her mind. The past week had been quite a whirlwind, new city, new job, new people. Yet, she felt confident that she was exactly where she was supposed to be. At least for now.

Chapter End Notes

So, what do you guys think?
It’s a lighter chapter, next one will be as well. Like I explained above, I changed the rating to be safe, but in some future chapters, the M rating will be for a real reason. If anyone is uncomfortable with that, please let me know. I’ll find a way to make it work for you ;)
Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com. Don't be shy, come say hi ;)

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With A Little Help From My Friends

Chapter Notes

Song: With a little help from my friends - The Beatles

Hi guys! Thank you for your comments and kudos, I absolutely love talking with you about this story and where you hope it's gonna go and so on. It's a good way for me to test the waters ;)
As usual, special mention to my beta yellowpretendingtobered.

The next couple of days brought some kind of a routine for Felicity. Oliver started to give her more tasks, and was slowly but surely starting to see her as a real colleague. She was still learning, but he was now much more inclined to help her. She had actually discovered, much to her surprise, that Oliver was quite a patient man. Her babbling, which always tended to annoy people around her, was usually welcomed by an amused smile or a quirked eyebrow.

The bathroom incident, as Felicity called it, had never been mentioned again, to her great relief. She was more than ready to bury it deep down in her memory even if she was woman enough to admit Oliver Queen’s reputation was… truly deserved in some area.

She had visited the apartment, which was lovely, and had signed the lease right away, not willing to risk losing it. It was on the second floor of Dig’s building, with big windows and even a small walk-in closet. She had been surprised when the landlord had told her that a safety deposit wasn’t necessary but wasn’t about to complain; her savings had been running low, especially since she still had to buy furniture.

She had made arrangements to get the boxes she had stored in Boston delivered during the next weekend. Unfortunately she would be out of town with Oliver, so Sara had volunteered to receive them. The two of them were currently driving outside of town, planning to spend the morning at IKEA. Felicity needed at least a bed, as well as a table, chairs and all those little things like towels, glasses, curtains or, as Sara insisted to buy her, a plush shark. As long as it’s not a kangaroo.

They had just made it back to Felicity’s new home when Dig had joined them, helping them unload the car.

The three of them ended up battling with the building instructions for the secretary she was planning to install at the far side of the living room, near the windows.

Raising his arms, Dig threw the offending paper on the floor. “I give up. You’re the one who went to MIT. Figure it out, I’m going to order pizza.”

“Hey! I majored in computer sciences, not… obscure Swedish blueprints and how to translate them in English.” Picking up the instructions, Felicity stuck her pencil in her ponytail. “Sara don’t you dare leave me alone!”

Sara grimaced, having been caught on the act as she was tiptoeing to the kitchen. “I was just going to
help Dig with the… pizza ordering.”

Felicity glared at her. “I’m sure he can manage alone. So, apparently I’m supposed to introduce a ‘nail D’ into that rubber thingy…”

“Oh look, I found two of those!” Sara squealed, holding them proudly.

“Are you sure they’re D’s? They look like B’s to me.” Frowning, Felicity scrutinized the instructions. “You know what? I give up. I don’t need it right now, let’s just put everything back in the box, I’ll do this another time.”

“Oh thank God.” Sara didn’t waste any time, picking up the empty box and shoving all the pieces in it.

Fortunately, the table and chairs she had bought had been much more simple. By the time the pizza had arrived, they could at least sit comfortably.

“So, when are you guys leaving?” Sara asked as she grabbed her fifth slice. The other two had been done 10 minutes before but it seemed like Sara Lance had quite the appetite.

“On Thursday. There is this small diner or cocktail at the Queen’s Mansion the night before with some of QC’s business partners who live around here. Then we’re just going to travel around the West Coast. They want to focus on this area for now.” Felicity put down her food, taking a sip of water. “I’m really not looking forward to traveling with all those people I don’t really like.”

“Well, thank you. Although you could have let me know about your feelings before I built your table,” Dig slyly stated.

“Oh no, of course I didn’t mean you!” She threw him her napkin. “You know what I mean, I’ll have to be with all those executives in endless meetings and receptions and… Oh no.” Her eyes grew big as she suddenly realized something.

“What is it?” Sara asked, slightly alarmed, sharing a concerned look with Dig.

“I don’t have the appropriate wardrobe for all these functions! I have a few formal outfits, but not that many!”

“Aaaand I take it as my cue to leave” Dig stood up, pushing his chair back. “If you need help tomorrow with the painting, just give me a call.” He seemed in a hurry to escape what was, no doubt, going to turn into girl talk.

And right he was, for 3 hours later, both girls were lying on Sara’s bed, exhausted, surrounded by what looked like dozens of clothes.

“OK. So we have two little black dresses, that can be used day or night. A blazer to make it look professional as well as a pashmina for a glamour look. You own a pair of Mary-Janes, high heels and classic ballerinas. A red cocktail dress if you need to wear something fancier. You must take that grey dress with the yellow squares on the hips. It makes your ass look fantastic,” Sara summarized their treasure hunt, counting on her fingers.
“This is a business trip, I don’t need to show off my ass!” Felicity giggled, pushing her hair out of her face.

“An ass like that should always be showed off” Sara solemnly said. “Take two of your black dress pants, two pencils skirts and some of those librarian blouses. Also, don’t forget casual clothes, like jeans, t-shirts or sweaters.”

“Why would I need those?”

“You might visit a factory, or be invited to a boat party. Point is you need something comfortable.”

“I still need something to wear for the cocktail at the Queen’s mansion. It’s apparently very formal, not sure a simple black dress will cut it” Felicity bit her lips. “I do have that dress that my mum sent me but it’s very form-fitting. Wouldn’t that be out of place?”

“Oh, honey. Those cocktails are just an excuse to wear something slutty. Do your worst!”

On Sunday night, her suitcase was already packed. She was still staying at the hotel for a couple of nights, not wanting to be surrounded by the fresh paint smell. Sara had spent the entire afternoon with her, painting the bedroom and living room in a tender shade of mint green and Felicity was really pleased with the result. It gave a very homey feeling to the place and the light touches of pink she was planning to use for decoration would just give enough of a girly vibe. She had planned to head to a flea market, but couldn’t find the time. Etsy would have to do for now.

It turned out that work got much heavier than the previous days. Knowing Oliver was to leave for an extended trip, they had to make sure everything was ready and all the projects he had been working on had been either approved, or at least analyzed as to not be held back. Oliver and Felicity even had to pull an all-nighter on Tuesday night, having ordered Chinese. They had soon discarded both their offices and were currently sprawling all over the small conference room. Surrounded by papers, reports, documents and a few containers of now-cold Chinese food, Oliver was lying on his back, right on the table, listening to Felicity as she was reading the notes she had scribbled down. She was sitting with her feet underneath her, having abandoned her flats hours ago.

Quickly glancing at the clock, she realized that it was almost midnight. They were the last persons still in the building as far as she knew, Oliver having sent Dig back home, not willing to keep him awake as well.

Yawning, Oliver stood up, ruffling his hair and rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Felicity let out a small smile at the sight. Despite his borderline intimidating looks, he often had a simple boyish charm that really amused her. She knew it wasn’t a side of him most people were used to.

“Why are you smiling?” Jumping off the table, he reached for one of the boxes with the food, sniffing it. “Is this the orange duck?”

“Honestly, I have no idea. But judging by how long it’s been sitting there, does it really matter?”

Oliver chuckled. “Probably not.” Taking a bite, he offered her the box, with the chopsticks still inside.
Shaking her head, she grabbed her fork and took a bite. *Yep, duck.*

“Come on, you have to eat Chinese food with chopsticks. Let me teach you.” Laughing, he handed her the sticks and sat on the table right in front of her.

Felicity glared at him. “Do you really think I never tried to eat with sticks before? It just… doesn’t work. And then the food gets cold and I barely ate and I’m frustrated.”

“The food is already cold, Felicity,” he smirked at her.

Rolling her eyes, she sighed. “Fine. Teach me, Oh Grand Stick Master.”

Grabbing her right hand, he made her hold one of the chopsticks. “Don’t grip it so hard, your hand needs to stay supple and flexible. It’s like when you’re holding a…”

Felicity quirked an eyebrow, her lips twitching. “A…?”

“Hum,” Oliver coughed and she was surprised to see a slight blush appear on his cheeks.

“Oliver Queen, are you blushing?!” She burst out laughing at the idea that Oliver Queen could blush over such an innocent innuendo.

“Shut up. A brush. It’s like when you’re holding a brush, OK?” Placing the second stick between her index and middle finger, he continued: “and now you just… wiggle it.”

“Oh. Ooooooh. No one ever told me I had to wiggle it, Professor Queen! All those years I could have been eating sushi properly, if only anyone had thought to tell me that vital piece of information!” She sarcastically exclaimed, delicately wiggling her stick, which ended up dropping from her hand despite her best efforts.

Oliver looked as it fell down on the floor, trying to stay stoic but losing the battle as an amused grin grew on his face. Bending forward a little, until he was just close to her ear, he whispered. “And I thought you were good with your fingers, Miss Smoak.”

This time, it was Felicity’s cheeks that turned slightly pink.

Straightening, Oliver stood up, reaching for his jacket. “Come on. It’s late and we both need to rest. I’ll drive you home.”

***

“I didn’t know you grew up in Vegas,” Oliver said once they had left QC’s garage. He was driving slowly and carefully, not wanting her to think he was a reckless driver. He used to be one, but he had grown from that and matured enough to realize how dumb it was to take risks on the road.

“Yep. Born and raised. I moved to Boston once I got accepted to MIT.”

Resting her head against her seat, Felicity closed her eyes.
“I really don’t see you as a Vegas girl, no offense.”

Felicity laughed. “None taken. I actually take it as a compliment.”

“You never thought of going back there once you graduated? Most people go back to their hometown.”

“No. It was never the plan. The plan was to work for a company that offered the possibility of an interesting career. Usually those are either on the East Coast or here, in California.”

“So why did you pick California? Your parents must be glad though, it’s close enough to Nevada.”

“I just wanted a change of scenery.”

Sensing she didn’t want to discuss it more, Oliver remained silent. Soon enough, he pulled up outside her building, turning in his seat to face her. “Alright then. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Opening the door, she stepped outside the car. “Yep. Goodnight, Oliver.” She quickly walked up the few steps that lead to her building entrance then turned around as she opened the door, waving at him. He waited until he was sure she had made it safely inside, then started the car, heading to his own home.

In two days, they were supposed to leave with another dozen of employees. He really wasn’t looking forward to spending that much time with Isabel, who had volunteered to go as well, leaving QC in Walter and Robert’s hands. They were going to travel by jet, which was utterly ridiculous to him since most of their destinations could be easily reached by car.

At least he would have Dig and Felicity with him. Dig, so he’d have someone to watch sports with and Felicity so… he didn’t really know what, but he knew in the few days she had been his assistant, she had managed to make herself irreplaceable. Not only with her brains, but also her personality. She had been like a breath of fresh air, forcing him to see things differently. He had been doing his job without much passion, doing the strict minimum ever since his father had hired him. Felicity’s enthusiasm had been contagious and he had found himself finding gratification in what he was doing.

Wednesday saw the return of his father – just in time for the reception that Moira had organized as a way to bring QC’s employees together. Or at least the executive employees, as Oliver doubted Moira had invited the catering team. He wouldn’t deny that he spent most of his day avoiding Robert, still not totally over his betrayal. He wasn’t self-centered enough to think his father had only promoted Isabel to spite him and he knew she had skills – and the appropriate shark temper. Yet, the pill was hard to swallow that he would openly give his mistress so much power into what he had always been proud to call “a family legacy”.

Felicity and he had spent the day tying loose ends, making sure he was up to date in all of his projects. He had sent her home early, so she could get ready for the cocktail party. After making sure one last time that there was nothing more to do, he had left as well.

That’s how he found himself, two hours later, sipping a glass of champagne while making small talk with two women who worked, as far as he was aware, for the Applied Sciences Department. The
party was just starting, most of the guests had already arrived and small groups had formed in the Mansion’s reception hall.

He felt a small hand grab his arm from behind and he smiled automatically, recognizing the touch.

“Laurel,” he welcomed her with a smile. Kissing her cheek, he added “you look beautiful, as always.” It was true. She was wearing a silky dark blue dress, with a thin silver belt showing off her small waist. Laurel had always known how to dress accordingly to this kind of event, something his mother was, for some reason, always proud of.

“Thank you,” she smiled at him, keeping her hand on his arm. He felt annoyed by the gesture, even if it was probably nothing more than affectionate. He felt like she was marking a territory, something he never was comfortable about.

“Laurel, this is Eileen and Rosalia. This is Laurel, my girlfriend,” he said, introducing the three of them. “Would you like something to drink?” he asked, looking at Laurel, who was the only one without a glass.

“I’d love to, but your father was looking for you. He actually sent me, asking if you could meet him in his office. It seemed important.”

Sighing and squaring his shoulders, Oliver excused himself. He had been successful at avoiding his father all day, but he knew he couldn’t be that lucky any longer. He made his way across the room until he ended up in the much quieter hallway. His father’s office was on the first floor, near the library.

Taking the steps two at a time, he impatiently knocked on the door, willing to end this as soon as possible.

“Come in,” his father’s assured voice came through the door.

Walking inside, he found him contemplating the sight from the window. Night had already fallen, but the garden lights were on, making the view quite stunning.

“Oliver. I’ve been trying to talk to you all day.”

Sitting on the chair opposite his father’s desk, Oliver crossed his legs. “I have been quite busy at work. The board is sending us on a trip, as you’re aware.”

“Yes, I know. I have to say I am quite pleased to see you getting so involved. Even if it’s a bit sudden.” Finally turning around, Robert sat on his chair.

Oliver sighed. “What did you want to tell me, dad? We have guests downstairs.”

“I’ll get right to it, then. Son, you should know that this company’s well-being is always my priority. That’s why I promoted Isabel. It wasn’t against you. I’m sure you agree that you are far from being ready for these kind of responsibilities.”

Oliver snorted, rolling his eyes. “And there really was no other candidate up for the task apart from the woman you cheat on mom with?”

“I am not going to discuss my marriage with you. What happens between your mother and I is not
your business.” Robert’s voice grew colder as he added: “And I do not want to hear any kind of rumor about that at QC.”

“The rumors began long before you promoted her, you just weren’t there to hear them.” Oliver stood up, deciding he had had enough. “Did you have anything else to add?”

Sighing, Robert raised from his chair as well. “No. Try to be decent with Isabel, even if it’s just for appearance’s sake.”

“I’m sure she can defend herself quite fine. But don’t worry, if there is one thing you managed to teach me, it is how to keep up the appearances.”

With that, Oliver left the room, leaving his father behind.

Entering the ballroom for the second time, he scanned the room, trying to track down Tommy. There wasn’t a situation on earth that Tommy couldn’t make better and his company would probably cheer him up. That and, grabbing a glass from a waiter, great champagne were sure to make the night go faster.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw Laurel talking with her sister. Clearly not in the mood for an interrogation, he swiftly went the other way. He had made it to the bar, having already emptied his drink, where he met up with Eileen and Rosalia, who apparently never left each other.

Both women welcomed him with smiles, squaring their shoulders, obviously trying to show off their cleavage. Oliver was just wondering if he could kidnap Rosalia to “show her around” or if he could push his luck and try to get a two-for-one package when his best friend’s voice interrupted his thoughts.

“Thank God, Ollie you’re here. Ladies, you don’t mind if I borrow him for a while? It’s important.” The relief in Tommy’s voice had him raise his eyebrows.

As he excused himself, Tommy led him to a quieter corner.

“What is it? I was just going to test the waters and see if they did everything together.” Tommy looked at him, pressing his hands together as if he was about to start praying. “Man, have you seen your assistant’s ass? She’s always wearing those boring slacks and long blouses, so it’s hard to say but… Jesus Fucking Christ, Ollie, It’s a thing of beauty.”

“Felicity has arrived?” Looking for her across the room, he barely heard Tommy’s rambling when he spotted her, talking with Walter. He did a double take, not sure it was really her. She was wearing a golden bronze dress, that clung to her body like a second skin. She looked absolutely stunning. It was the first time he saw her with her hair down, the soft curls framing her face. She wasn’t wearing her usual glasses – another first.

As if he was far away, and not right by his side, Oliver heard Tommy’s voice slowly reaching through him.

“It’s like the Mona Lisa of posteriors. The Sistine Chapel of backsides. The Taj Mahal of bottoms…”
“What the fuck are you talking about?” He reluctantly forced his eyes to look at Tommy.

“Her ass, Ollie! Her ass! It’s the Versailles of buttocks, the…”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it.” Oliver cut him off, once he saw that the object of their attention was walking their way. Her smile was a bit shaky, and it was obvious to him that she was not that comfortable in these surroundings. Lowering his head, he whispered a few words of warning to his best friend. “Don’t say anything inappropriate, will you? She is nervous enough as it is.”

Tommy glanced at him, apparently intrigued by his comment for some reason, but Felicity’s arrival kept him from asking about it.

“Miss Felicity, you look even more beautiful than the last time I saw you!”

Felicity narrowed her eyes. “Mister Merlyn, you saw me three minutes ago.”

“Every minute away from you is like eternity.” Flashing his most seductive smile, Tommy was about to hand her a glass of champagne when he visibly hesitated. “You’re not really underage, are you?”

“I’m afraid yes, I am. Just a few more weeks though. I’m turning 21 at the end of this month.” Smiling, she took the glass of champagne from his hands. “I won’t tell if you don’t.”

Oliver stood there, watching their exchange. He had heard Tommy getting flirty with his assistant and had seen no harm. Tommy Merlyn would flirt with a green plant and probably make it blush. It was even fun to see how Felicity kept a stoic face at all of his attempts.

“I was actually looking for Sara. Have you seen her?” Acknowledging her boss for the first time, she looked at him hesitantly.

“Yep, last time I saw her she was on the other side of the room, near the piano,” Oliver pointed the general direction with his chin.

She wasted no time, leaving both men behind as she quickly waltzed her way through the crowd. Tommy let out an enamoured sigh, a small whimper escaping him. “It’s so pretty.”

Rolling his eyes, Oliver put down his glass and grabbed a crab cake. “Argh, stop it.”

“Stop what?”

“Talking about my assistant like that. It’s making me… uncomfortable.”

“… excuse me?” Tommy’s eyebrows raised so high that they almost disappeared in his hairline. “Mister "I’ve had sex with every single one of my assistants” before is uncomfortable?”

“It’s different. First of all, she’s not of age,” Oliver shook his head.

“She can’t drink, but she’s of age for everything else.”

“And I don’t…I just… Don’t play with her.”

“Ollie… is there another reason why you’re so protective? ’Cause last time I checked, you didn’t
seem interested.”

“I’m not. It’s not like that. But I need her. As my assistant. I don’t want to have to find another one because my best friend broke her heart,” Oliver explained. “And she’s a good girl.”

“Hey, you know me. I charm, I fool around but I don’t break hearts. Girls always know what they get when it comes to me. And you actually have quite a nerve to scold me about my attitude with women.” The smile on his face was still there, but Tommy’s eyes had gone much colder. Oliver felt slightly guilty over his behavior. Tommy was right, he wasn’t being fair.

“You’re right. I’m sorry. Just blame it on the four glasses of champagne I’ve had, OK?”

Tommy laughed, his playfulness already back. “You’re really losing your way if that’s all it takes you. But OK, let’s forget about it. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a phone number to get. And this time, I’m bringing food. Women love it when we bring food.”

Oliver watched him steal a plate from a waiter, lightly shaking his head with amusement. At least, he had been right about something: Tommy indeed had taken his mind off his father’s encounter. Deciding it was probably best to spend some time with his girlfriend, he followed him at a more leisurely pace.

He soon joined their little group, gathered near the piano.

“Ollie! Your assistant is here. I have to say I didn’t recognize her,” Laurel welcomed him with a smile.

“It’s the glasses. People are not used to see me without them,” Felicity chirped, fiddling with the glass she was still holding in her hands.

“Sure. The glasses,” Sara snorted. “And not at all this dress. You need to introduce me to your mother, I have to go shopping with her.”

“Well, if you ever go to Vegas, I’m sure she’ll love that.”

“That’s a great idea! We should all go to Vegas one of these days!” Tommy clapped his hands. “I’ll plan it all, I know you guys are gonna be busy with your California Tour. We’ll take the jet. I’ll set a date and let you know. Felicity, I’m afraid I’ll need your phone number so I can… inform you about flight schedules and all that.” He looked at her innocently, rubbing his palms. Oliver bit back a smile at the less than subtle attempt.

Looks like I’m not the only one losing my way...

“I think I’d rather go by foot all the way to Nevada,” Felicity smiled sweetly, her eyes sparkling with mischief. “I’m gonna head to the bar, if you’ll excuse me.”

The other two girls followed her, patting Tommy’s back on their way.

“Ouch.” Tommy locked his jaw, grimacing, yet nodding with appreciation at her witty banter. Sighing, he watched her walk away, shaking his head. “Man, I’m so turned on right now.”

Oliver laughed. “You’re a masochist, you know that?”

“Well aware.”

Oliver didn’t reply, finding himself having a hard time forming words once he actually caught a good
look at what his best friend had been raving about. *Wow. Sistine Chapel indeed.*

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Felicity's dress can be found here http://fr.tinypic.com/view.php?pic=2nqee5e&s=8#.VfQ5pxHtmko -back- and here http://fr.tinypic.com/view.php?pic=zim5j5&s=8#.VfRgRRHtmko -front-(I have been trying to post the pics but it's not working so... I had to find another way :p)

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you guys think?? Pleaaaase leave a comment ;)
I hope you will be happy to see Felicity and Oliver's relationship is shifting towards friendship?
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Find me on tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com or twitter @PimsiePim don't be shy, come say hi ;)


The only good thing about this business trip was that Felicity got to sleep later than usual. They were only expected at the airport around noon and having already packed, she could afford to sleep until 10AM. Which was more than necessary, since the party at the Queen’s Mansion had lasted well past midnight. She, surprisingly, had a good time spending most of the night with Sara, who introduced her to some colleagues. It was actually nice to see all those people in other surroundings and the finger food had been delicious. Sara and she had even sneaked up to the kitchen and stole an entire plate of crab cakes once most of the guests had started to leave.

It was 11:15 when Dig knocked on her door. They were going to pick up Oliver and then head straight to the airport.

“Sure you’ve got everything?” He asked while helping her with her suitcase.

“Yep. I’m so glad you’re coming with us. And not just because you can lift heavy things.”

Laughing, he put her suitcase in the car’s trunk. “Let me guess. It’s because I also bring coffee?”

“You got me there,” she smiled, taking a sip of the latte he had, indeed, bought for her.

Picking up Oliver didn’t take them more than a couple minutes, Oliver being ready to go once they had arrived. The small airport where QC’s jet was on stand-by was merely a few miles away from the mansion, and the three of them made it with 15 minutes to spare.

As they were waiting in the small departure room, Dig and Oliver quietly chatting, Felicity realized that there wouldn’t be a lot of people she knew. Isabel was obviously there, along with Mark. There was also Denis Lewis who had brought along his assistant. Ugh. Great. Mandy and Oliver on a small private jet. With two bathrooms. Wonder what could possibly go wrong. Two employees from the security department, judging by their outfit, had also tagged along. As well as a few other executives and their secretaries. All in all, it was a party of roughly 15 people.

“Where are we even going?” It suddenly dawned on her that she had been so busy wrapping things up in the office, she actually had no idea what the schedule was. Public Relations had been in charge of all the arrangements and she hadn’t even bothered to check the flight schedule they had sent her the day before.
“We’re starting with Seattle. One of our investors has their offices there. There’s a wind farm in Washington that we would like to expand; the plan is to convince them to share the cost,” Oliver explained, clearly amused. “I take it you didn’t look at the schedule they gave us?”

She didn’t have time to reply as one of their flight attendants announced it was time to board.

Once they were all seated - which barely took 5 minutes God bless private jets – she started drumming impatiently on her seat’s armchair. She had never been too fond of flying, and the wait before take-off was always nerve-wracking for her. Dig put a reassuring hand on her arm, trying to calm her down.

“Afraid of planes?” He asked, keeping his voice low.

“No. I’m OK with planes. It’s heights that I’m not OK with.”

Chuckling, he relaxed back in his own seat. “You should get a drink, it might help with the nerves.”

“Yeah, ’cause me being tipsy with… this crowd, sounds like a good idea,” she whispered. “Besides it’s mostly the take-off, once we’re above the clouds, I can pretend I’m just on a train, traveling on some nice fluffy whipped cream.”

“It won’t be long at all,” Dig reassured her, squeezing her hand.

And sure enough, they were up in the air barely a couple minutes later. Sighing, Felicity, pulled out her Ipod from her purse. Because Isabel decided the Executives should sit up front while the low level employees sat in back, Felicity didn’t feel guilty about not doing anything productive on the flight. Not to mention, if Oliver needed her, he knew where to find her. “With the peasants in the back” she thought.

The flight lasted a bit more than two hours and it was late afternoon when they all settled in their respective rooms at the Four Seasons. A small dinner was planned in order to meet Lucy Keiffer, the investor Oliver had told her about, in casual surroundings. Well, casual as in just a small dozen of people eating in a private room of the Four Seasons restaurant, that is.

Putting the three hours she had to good use, she researched who Lucy Keiffer was. It turned out Mrs Keiffer was CEO of a company specialized in wind turbines. She had invested into a wind farm implanted in the ocean itself. Her company also provided consultants and financial support with new cleaner energy sources. It already had shares in one of the wind farms QC had created down the California coast.

Once Felicity had changed her outfit into a more appropriate little black dress (thank you, Sara), tying her straightened hair in a high ponytail, she made her way to the small dining room that was being rented for the night. The upside of this small casual dinner was that there weren’t that many people and the atmosphere was more relaxed. The downside was that, apart from Oliver, she had no one to talk to. She wasn’t the kind who shined in society. She was smart, but awkward and definitely not in her element. Oliver, on the other hand, seemed like he had done it his entire life. Which wasn’t surprising seeing he grew up with the elite of Starling City. Well, at least the food looks good.

The waiters were just bringing the entrees when the conversation finally breached topics she was actually interested in, instead of the usual chit-chat about relatives and common friends.
“We are currently working on the next generation of clean energy sources. My chief of project couldn’t join us tonight, unfortunately. He will be there tomorrow for the visit and he’ll explain this so much better than I ever could.” Laughing slightly, Mrs Keiffer took a sip of red wine.

“I’m afraid I’m as clueless as you when it comes to all those scientific things. I’m more a business woman than a scientist.” Raising her glass as if to toast, Isabel smiled, exuding confidence.

“We’re really looking forward to the visit tomorrow. As Walter told you, we are trying to increase the portion of green energy we currently use, hopefully reaching 100% in a couple of years. We need technology with more energy capture and your company is very much ahead of all others in that area.” Oliver took a bite of steak, obviously not willing to let Isabel play the women-stick-together card.

“Yes, we are. We are currently working on a new prototype that should be tested in a month. My team calls it the Sweep Twist… something,” Mrs Keiffer waved her hand, looking sheepish.

“The Sweep Twist Adaptative Rotor,” a young man with thick brown hair who was sitting on her right finished the sentence.

“I have no idea what that means,” Isabel laughed.

“It’s a very fancy word that just means the blades are slightly curved, so they can adapt to any kind of wind. It is supposed to help the wind turbine reach full capacity in any kind of weather,” Felicity explained, happy to be able to take part in the conversation.

The man on her right looked at her, obviously surprised. “Yes… exactly.”

She grinned, trying to remember the guy’s name. “What did you say your name was again?”

“Barry. Allen.”

The night had turned out to be much more entertaining than what Felicity had feared. Barry had been invited after his boss had to drop out because of a family issue. He worked in the Sciences and Technology Department, being specifically assigned on their new project. He had been hired right after he graduated from CalTech and was just as much into sciences and technology as she was.

“No offence, but how did you end up working as an assistant?” he asked, his eyes curious. They were leaving the restaurant, both staying behind in the Hotel Lobby.

“Oh… stupid thing really. In short? I missed my interview. Oliver needed an assistant, I liked QC… so I took the job. Once there’s another job opening in the IT department, I’ll ask to be moved there, though.” As the other ones were retreating to the elevators, she shifted her weight from one leg to another.

“Well, it’s late. I will see you tomorrow though?” He asked hopefully, shoving his hands in his pockets.

“Yep.”

“It will make a nice change to have someone who understands what I’m talking about for once.”
They both laughed as he awkwardly walked away, hesitating. He seemed to finally make up his mind and slightly waved at her before stepping outside.

“Making friends, I see?” A deep voice had her startled.

“Dig!” she said, turning back, a hand on her chest. “you scared me to death!”

Laughing, he approached her, shaking his head. “Someone is distracted…”

“Noooo. It’s been a long few days, I’m a bit tired. That’s all. Do you have to stay? Where is Oliver?” Frowning, she tried to look past his broad shoulders, not remembering if she had seen her boss taking the elevator.

“He is in the lounge, having a drink with Isabel and Mrs Keiffer. He said we were to meet him tomorrow at 9:00.” Dig paused, letting a small grin appear on his face. “He specifically asked me to remind you the time, in case you still hadn’t read the schedule.”

Felicity glared at him.

“Hey! His words, not mine!” Dig chuckled, raising his hands in defense.

The whole group spent the day visiting SWK Ent. – Mrs Keiffer’s company. The morning was dedicated to the wind farms near Seattle, where they got the chance to talk with the workers. After a small lunch in a restaurant by the coast, they all headed to the Headquarter in Downtown Seattle. A thorough visit of their Sciences and Technology Department, focusing on their new wind turbine prototype followed, to Felicity’s great delight. Barry was there, providing technical assistance to the Chief Project Engineer who obviously knew more about business than technology.

A small informal dinner was provided by their host after this long day of visiting. Felicity’s feet were killing her and all she could think about was the long bubble bath that was waiting for her. Fortunately, dinner proved much more entertaining for her that night, having been seated right next to Barry. Soon, the two of them got lost in technical terms that no one around the table seemed to understand - or even care about.

“Well, Oliver, I’m really surprised at your assistant. I didn’t know Secretarial Arts offered a class in Technology, I have to say,” Mrs Keiffer laughed lightly.

“I didn’t major in the secretarial arts,” Felicity replied with a small smile.

“Oh? Well, I guess there are more ways to a job than a degree!”

“Exactly! It’s well known in the company that her shorthand skills are not the reason Mr Queen hired her,” Mandy suavely said. By the gleeful look in her eyes, it was obvious she knew fully well how that could be interpreted.

Felicity was too shocked to actually reply. *I can’t believe she would... especially knowing she is the one who keeps throwing herself at him!* Opening and closing her mouth like a fish out of water, she was saved more embarrassment when Oliver suddenly appeared on her left.
“Mandy is right, I’m afraid. Felicity’s skills as a secretary aren’t exactly top notch. She does compensate that by being the most hard-working and loyal assistant I’ve ever had the chance to work with. Not to mention she is so much smarter than I.” Chuckling, he pointed his glass at her.

“Although, you have to admit, you couldn’t write short-hand even if your life depended on it.”

Everyone let out a laugh at his words. If Oliver Queen had one talent, it was surely the ability to speak in public and take his audience wherever he wanted to. She smiled at him, silently thanking him for his support.

He lightly shook his head and mouthed. “We’re a team.”

“Hum,” Barry leaned, murmuring. “It didn’t even cross my mind. Are you and…”

“No!” Felicity quickly denied. “He’s my boss, that’s all. Mandy is a bitch with me because she wanted the job.”

“At least he defends you. My boss wouldn’t care what happens between low-class employees,” he snorted.

“Well, don’t tell anyone but…” she whispered. “He owes me one. I saved his ass and I feel like he’s probably relieved he got the chance to pay back.” Chuckling, she reached for her glass of wine. “Not to mention, it’s completely his fault if that’s how people see his assistants.”

“I’ve heard Isabel mention this last time she was here actually.” Barry took a sip of water as he continued “Oliver having had to fire his last assistant because she started stalking him or something.”

“That wouldn’t surprise me,” Felicity snickered. She was just about to take a mouthful of risotto when she stopped mid-movement, fork still between the plate and her lips. “Wait… last time?”

“Yeah, last month.”

“You mean Isabel – this Isabel,” she added, discretely nodding towards the brunette. “Was here a few weeks ago? Why?” Felicity frowned. The Venizzi report hadn’t been released at that time. Even if it had, the main goal of this trip was to reassure their partners and backers because of the explosion.

“I don’t know. I stumbled on them in a café. Don’t think they even noticed me. I didn’t hear a lot, just that he wasn’t competent and couldn’t be trusted with big responsibilities.” Barry froze, apparently noticing that Felicity had paled. “To be fair, it doesn’t really seem like a lie. At least at that time it wasn’t. I think Isabel just wanted to reassure Lucy that by buying parts in QC, she could trust her as a direct partner.”

The worry in Barry's voice was enough to shake Felicity out of her stupor. “You know what, you’re right. I’m still new to this whole business thing.” Drawing a shaky breath, she took a mouthful of risotto. “This is delicious, by the way.”

She spent the rest of the night making small talk with Barry, who didn’t seem to notice the difference in her behavior. Her mind was already full at work. I’m probably being paranoid. Or my brain has been so underused lately, it’s just desperate for theories and schemes. Of course it has to wake up when dessert is served. Can’t a girl enjoy her creme brûlée in peace??

It was their second and last night in Seattle. They were leaving in the morning, heading to Portland.
As dinner was over, she found herself once again lingering in the lobby with Barry.

“Well… it was nice meeting you. If you ever come back to Seattle, give me a call? That is, if you want to!” Shoving his hands in his pockets, he shifted his weight from one leg to another. “I mean… I’m sure our IT Department would be interested in someone like you. If you ever get tired of shorthand, I mean.”

Felicity laughed. “Well, I like Starling. You should come by one day. The weather is nice!”

Barry smiled, holding out his hand. “It’s been a pleasure to meet you, Felicity.”

Shaking his hand, she smiled softly. “Likewise. Bye, Barry.” Leaving him behind, she made her way to her room, her mind set on discovering exactly why Isabel had been in Seattle last month.

It was already 11 o’clock when she reached a conclusion: Whatever Isabel had been doing in Seattle, she had made sure to make it as discreet as possible. She hadn’t used any of the company’s usual transportation. No jet, no helicopter. She hadn’t even requested a private chauffeur or used her professional credit card to book a plane ticket.

Felicity was pacing her bedroom, chewing on her nail. She was facing a dilemma as she had reached her limits in researching information legally. She could pry into Isabel’s private accounts, but that might be crossing a line. On the other hand, her guts were telling her there was something fishy and her guts were never wrong.

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As Oliver’s lips travelled down her stomach, Sandra – or was it Rita? - let out a small moan, arching her back. He hadn’t planned on having sex that night, but as he was relaxing at the hotel’s small bar, Sandra – or Rita, he really should have paid attention to what she was saying – had approached him, wearing one of the most sinful dresses Oliver had ever seen, all made of black fabric and lace barely covering her body, yet still classy enough for a hotel like the Four Seasons. Two drinks later, they were stumbling in the elevator, where he had teared off her thong and made her come with his fingers. They were currently in the middle of round 2, Oliver being busy eating her out as a reward for a blowjob that had left his knees shaking. A blowjob that had happened in the middle of the hotel hall near his bedroom.

Lightly biting her navel, he soothed the slight ache with his tongue, fingers barely brushing her nether lips.

“Please, please, …please, Oliver,” the brunette panted, gripping his hair, pushing his head down.

He smirked, knowing fully well he would make her moan his name again and again during the night. There was just something in making a woman beg, in making it so good for her she would forget all modesty and become wanton and needy for him.

As he was spreading her thighs, bending her right leg and pushing it up so it rested on her chest, his phone started to ring.
He groaned a “don’t pay attention” while nibbling on her inner thigh, getting closer and closer to where she was waiting for him while fishing in his pants pocket to decline the call. He quickly put his phone on silence mode then tossed it aside on the nightstand.

He blew on her sex, watching her whimper in frustration. As he lightly licked his way from her opening to her clit, he brought a finger to nudge at her entrance. Circling it with slow, assured movements, he opened his mouth around the little bundle of nerves, making her gasp.

“Oh. Oh. Oh God yes, yes, yes, right there!” The grip she had on his hair was getting slightly painful, a part of him tempted to make her let go. His tongue started to flick repeatedly around her clit while he pushed another finger inside her. He could tell she was already close, which didn't surprise him in the slightest. He knew how to make women come. It was easy, and the reward was a very compliant girl afterwards, which made it easy for him to come in return. Win-win, really.

“You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your liiiiiife

See that girl, watch that scene, diggin’ the dancing queeeeen”

Oliver froze, just as Sandra-Rita was about to come. Her hands stilled completely in his hair as she raised her head to look at him in disbelief.

“What… what’s that?” She breathed, searching for the source of the music, her eyes landing on the nightstand where Oliver had thrown his phone.

“Your ringtone is Abba?” She asked, incredulous, raising her eyebrows. “Dancing Queen?”

Oliver rose to his feet, quickly grabbing his phone, cursing under his breath. “That’s not… I didn’t pick it, OK?”

There was only one person who would do something like that…

“Damn it, Felicity, what?!” He barked as he accepted the call.

“I need to see you. Like right now,” his assistant quickly explained, sounding out of breath.

“And it can’t wait until tomorrow morning?!”

“No, it can’t. I’m on my way to your room, I’ll be there in 5 minutes.” She hung up on those words, not leaving him any choice.

He stared at the phone in his hand as if it had personally failed him.

Tensing his jaw, he turned to the woman who was still sitting on his bed, hugging her knees. “I’m sorry but I have… an emergency it appears.”

“Oh. Oooh. You want me to leave?” She huffed out a dry laugh, then quickly sobered up when he didn't deny. “Really?”

“Believe me, I really don’t but it's not up to me, apparently.” He picked up her dress, helping her with the zipper.

Fortunately, she didn’t have much to pick. A purse and a light coat. She was gone in two minutes,
which left just enough time for Oliver to rearrange the bed the best he could and pour himself a glass of ice cold water from the mini bar, that he gulped right away.

He had just put the glass on the nightstand when there was a small knock on the door. Still fuming, he brutally opened the door, his mouth forming a thin line on his face. “This better be a life and death situation, Felicity.”

Moving past him, she handed him her tablet. “You be the judge, Oliver.”

Looking around, she noticed the room was empty and the bed was ruffled. “Good, I see Sandra has left.”

“Yeah, I just… “ he stopped reading what was on her tablet as he realized the implication of her words. “Wait. How do you know her name? I didn’t even remember it!”

She snorted and rolled her eyes. “She works for Mrs Keiffer. I suppose she didn’t mention that?” Taking off her coat, she sat on the bed. “She also seems friendly with our new VP.”

“What do you mean?” He cut her off, intrigued and... yeah, slightly nervous. Whatever it was that had her barging into his room at this time of the night, he was beginning to suspect that it was, indeed, a serious situation.

“It’s not the first time Isabel has met Lucy Keiffer. The two of them met at least twice in the past 3 months. And Isabel made sure no one in QC knew about it.”

Chapter End Notes

*bites her nails* so... what did you think? Any idea what's up with Isabel, Lucy and Sandra (yeah let's go with their first names)?

Thank you to yellowpretendingtobered, my beta and to all of you who read me! Remember, I looooove comments :p
The title of this chapter is Mambo N°5 - Not fully satisfied with it. If you have any suggestion, leave a comment, if it fits, I'll use it ;)

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
“Wait… what?” Oliver stared at her, too shocked to formulate any coherent thought.

Felicity sighed. “I guess I should explain from the beginning?”

“That… that would be my preference.” Oliver quickly went to the mini-bar and opened a small bottle of whisky, gulping the whole thing, hoping it would help him clear his mind. “Do you want anything?”

“Nope, I’m all set,” Felicity answered as she raised the cup of coffee she had bought on her way to his room.

She proceeded to explain what Barry told her at dinner, trying to be as clear as possible.

Oliver let her talk, only speaking when she was done. “Ok, so Isabel and Mrs Keiffer have met before. I don’t really see what the big deal is though, it’s not uncommon for our executives to meet investors and backers on their own.”

“I know that, Oliver. What is suspicious though is that there is no trace of that trip in any of QC’s bank accounts or in her personnel files. Nothing. She didn’t want anyone to know she was going to Seattle. Not to mention she visited her twice before the Venizzi report was even made, which means before we even knew we were going to need SWK. And way before this whole trip was planned, since it was, as you know, a direct result of the explosion.”

Oliver passed a tired hand across his face. “OK. How can you be so sure it was Isabel then? Maybe this Berry guy made a mistake. Since there is no trace of Isabel going here, the logic would say she didn’t in the first place.”

“I said there was no official trace she was here. I… Hum,” she hesitated, biting her lower lip. “I looked in her personal email accounts.”

“… can you say that again?” Oliver blinked.

“I had to make sure! I really couldn’t do it any other way, Oliver!” Felicity stood up and started
“You hacked into her accounts? Felicity this is serious, you could go to jail!” Standing up as well, he stopped her and put his hands on her shoulders. “What were you thinking?!"

“First of all, hacking is such an ugly word. I just… guessed her passwords. It’s pure luck, really. And second of all, how can you think I’d be careless enough to get caught? Have you met me?” Sighing, she removed his hands and resumed her pacing. “Do you want to know the rest of the story or do you want to call the cops on me?”

Standing there with his arms hanging limply, Oliver just nodded. “Keep going”

“So I didn’t find any air ticket. What I found is that someone named Stacy Karev rented a car last month, and from the gas stations receipts I found on her credit card, the destination clearly was the state of Washington. I also need to add that this was just when Isabel took a sick leave. Obviously, I kept digging and it was the second time Stacy Karev rented a car for a trip to Seattle, just when Isabel Rochev was apparently ill or on vacation.”

“… OK it’s fishy, I get it. How are you sure that Stacy isn’t a friend of hers, though?”

“Because I also… I had access to camera footage of the hotel she was staying in. And either she’s her long lost twin, or it is indeed our new VP.”

“… had access? What, you guessed the password right again?” Raising an eyebrow, Oliver crossed his arms on his chest.

“Don’t be silly. It wasn’t password protected, it was encrypted. I did have to H-a-c-k my way through, but I did it for good reasons,” Felicity started twiddling her hands. “I don’t access private things, you know, just… hum…”

“I get it. You just got a bit scary though. Remind me to never try to hide something from you,” Oliver laughed lightly. “Go on.”

“That’s how I saw some footage with Sandra. They met at the hotel lounge. Her face seemed oddly familiar to me, but it took me a few minutes to remember I had seen her tonight. That dress is hard to forget, I mean it barely covers anything. Not that you would mind, probably makes things easier.”

“Still doesn’t explain how you knew she was here,” Oliver quickly asked, not willing to dwell on what Sandra had been wearing, remembering way too well that it had, indeed, made things very easy for him.

“Oliver…” Felicity sighed, looking sadly at him. “I’m sorry but…”

“What?” He asked, genuinely confused.

“Knowing you, knowing that you were still at the bar where I saw her heading to… there was a good chance you’d end up with her. If my doubts were correct, and if indeed she was accomplice to whatever Isabel is up to… you wouldn’t have needed much persuasion, now would you?” She explained softly, her eyes never leaving his.

Oliver opened his mouth to argue back, but found himself lost for words. There was indeed a very high probability that he actually walked into a trap.
“But she didn’t ask anything, she didn’t snoop, so what would be the point? Maybe it’s a coincidence!” He finally said, in a defeated voice. His shoulders fell while he grasped the reality of what his mother had warned him about all this time.

“Oliver, don’t get me wrong. Come on, look at you. I don’t think there’s a single girl on this planet who…” Felicity stopped herself mid-sentence, slightly blushing. “So not the point. What I mean is I do not know what she was up to. But Oliver this cannot be a coincidence! Sandra works for Lucy Keiffer. Lucy and Isabel had previous secret meetings way before this whole trip was planned. Not to mention that time when Isabel threw you to the vultures with the press conference.” She took a deep breath and looked at him. “Oliver, talk to me.”

“Ever since that press conference, I’ve been wondering why she had done that. I never liked Isabel, but I can't deny that she is very professional and highly qualified. It didn’t make sense for her to take such risks in a moment where all eyes were on the company. I’ve had this… nagging feeling that there might be something more at play.” He sat down on the bed, putting his elbows on his knees, looking at her, knowing he probably looked like a lost boy.

“Something you couldn’t see, but felt lurking in the shadows?”

“Yeah… I don’t know what’s going on. I know I can’t trust her, though. But what would be the point? Do you think she would be plotting against the company? To try to sabotage it?” He frowned, having a hard time believing it himself.

“I… I honestly have no idea. Maybe? Maybe she’s frustrated that she will never get over the position of a VP? Maybe she has another agenda? I could look into this, but it would take much more time, and clearly a better setting than this poor excuse of a wifi,” Felicity let out a small laugh, as if she was trying to lighten up the mood a bit.

“There’s nothing we can do for now, though, is there?” Oliver asked her, rubbing his eyes.

“No. Just… steer clear of Isabel while we get a chance to find out what she’s up to.” She hesitated, biting her thumb. “Are you gonna tell your father?”

Oliver’s head snapped at her. “No! We don’t really know what her plan is, or if it really is something that might cause damage to the company. Not to mention, I already had a small… fight with him about her, he wouldn’t take my word. And if he tells her, then she will know that we're suspicious.”

“That’s what I thought as well. We should probably sleep it off, we’ll have a clearer head tomorrow.” Felicity threw her now empty cup of coffee in the garbage bin and picked up her coat, walking to the door.

Oliver followed her. “Hum… did you tell that Berry guy anything about it?”

“It’s Barry,” she scolded him. “And no, of course not. He seems trustworthy but I wouldn’t take that kind of risk.”

“Good. That’s good,” he nodded, relieved. Shifting on his feet, he avoided her gaze and mumbled. “Thank you. For looking out for… the company... and me.”

Felicity smiled, her hand patting his arm. “It’s my job, Oliver. We’re a team, remember?” Opening the door, she stopped herself and turned back, facing him. “Although, for the love of God… if I call
you in the middle of the night, it’s probably an emergency. So pick up the damn phone, or I swear next time I’ll choose something even more embarrassing than a disco band.”

He huffed out a laugh, shaking his head. “I’ll try to remember that. Although I don’t see what could be worse than Abba.”

She winked at him. “Don’t challenge me.”

Once Oliver had closed the door, he rested against it for a minute, his mind trying to grasp everything he had learned in the past 15 minutes. What he had told her had been true. He had had a weird feeling in his stomach for a couple of weeks. A part of him was actually weirdly relieved that he hadn’t been wrong even if he… if they still had no clue what was really going on. All he knew was that there were only a couple of people he could trust with that and that he would probably need their help to find out whatever Isabel’s endgame was.

Quickly undressing and way too tired for a shower, he slipped underneath the sheets. He needed a plan but also to be extremely careful with his next move, as he had no doubt Isabel would be observing him closely. Picking up his phone, he quickly texted Dig and Felicity, then turned off the bedside lamp, fully intending to get at least a couple of hours of sleep.

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The next morning, the three of them were seated in a booth of a little diner not too close to their hotel. Oliver had let them known last night that they would be having breakfast together and had preferred to do so in a place where there was little chance to be interrupted by other QC employees.

He let Felicity explain what she had discovered to Dig, who didn’t seem that surprised by the reveal.

“Ever since that press conference, I’ve had a bad feeling, you know that, Oliver.” Shaking his head, Dig sipped his coffee and put the cup down on the table. “I’ll snoop around. You have no idea how much members of the security know and talk about.”

“Dig,…” Oliver tried to speak but Diggle interrupted him right away.

“I know, Oliver. I’ll be discreet. The both of you should watch your backs though. Be careful what you say, when you say it, who you talk to. What’s the plan?”

“So far, there is no plan. We need to find out more. Why did she meet up with Lucy? How did she know we would need SWK to begin with?”

“I’ll look through both of their personal records, see if I can find any connection,” Felicity chirped. “It would be so much easier if we weren’t stuck almost constantly with her and her minions, though.”

“We’ll make sure not to spend any unnecessary time with them. I’m not really looking forward to being around her either.” Oliver took a deep breath, adding: “I sent an email to Walter, asking for more info about the Venizzi report. When it was finished, who took part in it,… some general info that might give us something to start with.”

“Do you trust Walter? He could help us?” Felicity asked, chewing on a slice of toast. Truth be told,
Walter really seemed like a genuine person, very loyal to QC. But she didn't know him as well as Oliver did.

“I trust him. He’s always been supportive of me and…” Oliver trailed off, smiling softly. “He kept reassuring me that I would find my own way someday but in the meanwhile he’d be there to help me. However with this… no. That would put him in an impossible position.”

“You’re probably right. We need to find out more before involving anyone else in it.”

Diggle glanced at his watch. “We should get going. We still need to clear our rooms and we’re supposed to be in the lobby in less than an hour.”

The walk back to the hotel was silent, each one of them being deep in thought. It wasn’t until they were in the elevators that they were forced out of their introspection by Mark, who joined them after having his own breakfast in the hotel restaurant.

“Oh, there you are! We were worried, no one had seen you all morning. Aren’t you hungry?” He asked, pressing the button to his floor.

“We ate in a diner. Felt like taking a walk in the city. It’s Felicity’s first time here, we showed her around a bit,” Oliver explained, plastering a social smile on his face.

“Well… that’s rather nice of you. Especially since the night must have been short for you,” Mark snorted.

“… Hum? Excuse me?” Felicity asked, caught off guard.

“Well, Mandy and I had a couple of drinks in that club and when we came back we saw you walking in Oliver’s bedroom. It was way past midnight. So I assume your night was short.”

“That is… that’s…” Felicity tried to explain but was cut off by Dig’s reassuring voice.

“I had an allergy reaction to the oysters we had at dinner. Felicity was kind enough to ask Oliver for Benadryl. He always has some with him.” Keeping his eyes on the floor numbers above their heads, he continued “but it’s good to know her colleagues are so concerned about her.” The elevator stopped and Dig turned to face the young man. “I believe this is your floor, Mark.”

Looking at the three of them, Mark stepped out of the elevator, clearing his throat under Dig’s cold stare. “Yeah… I guess I’ll see you later.”

As soon as the doors closed again, Felicity giggled. “I almost expected you to flex your muscles to prove your point.”

“He’s lucky his floor wasn’t higher or I would have” Dig smiled at her, just when the small ping announced that they, too, had reached their destination.

Oliver’s phone rang at that moment and he fished it from his inside pocket. “I’ll see you later.”

Pressing a button he answered cheerfully “Laurel. What a great surprise. How was the family dinner?”

Felicity parted ways as well, hurrying to her room. She still had to pack everything and was hoping
to catch a few minutes to read her emails.

The flight to Portland was unsurprisingly extremely short, which Felicity was very thankful for, as the atmosphere inside the jet couldn’t be more awkward. The top two executives were ignoring each other and the other employees were divided in small groups, barely acknowledging the others. She wasn’t even comfortable talking with Dig, in fear of being eavesdropped. Diggle seemed to share her opinion and stayed silence most of the flight, except for a few reassuring words during take-off.

She wasn’t looking forward to their stop in Portland as they were mainly there to reassure one of their oldest investors about QC’s solidity on the market. The only good thing about it was that she had to stay for a drink once their plane landed, but her presence wasn’t required for the cocktail night that was planned.

As she was knocking on Oliver’s door, 30 minutes before he was supposed to leave for the reception, she let out a small laugh thinking about how different it was working as an assistant compared to her original expectations. She had expected endless meetings, summaries and other random tasks, not digging into the past of one of the top leaders of the company.

Diggle opened the door, letting her inside with a gentle smile.

“… why are you wearing a suit?” Felicity asked, surprised. Of course, she was used to seeing him dressed up, but she also knew that once the day was over, he was quick to put on simpler clothes.

“The cocktail reception. I’m supposed to attend as well. Isabel thinks we need to show our strength. Apparently that also means my biceps.”

Felicity snickered. “I’ve never been more thankful to be so bad in sports.”

“Felicity, great, you’re here,” Oliver greeted her as he walked out of the ensuite bathroom.

“Yep, I got everything you asked for,” she smiled, looking through the papers she had brought.

“You should make small talk with Mr Jones, our main backer, and Mrs Jones, his wife. She seems to enjoy young men’s company, so just be your usual charming self. Here, that’s her picture.”

She raised her head, handing him the document and almost let the sheet of paper drop from her hand. I cannot believe Oliver Queen wears suspenders. I thought only grandfathers wore those. Mine did. But he never looked like this with them.

“My mum drilled me ever since I was old enough to wear a tux, Felicity,” he grinned at her, taking the papers from her hand.

“Oh no, did I…”

“Say that outloud?” He continued, while already looking through the documents. “Mmh mnh. You do that a lot. Don't worry, though. I got used to it a while ago.”

Diggle snorted, which earned him a cold stare from Felicity. “Hey! I have to go show off my muscles all night long, at least let me have that!”

“And now I won’t even feel bad about you. Nope, gonna enjoy my nice evening, digging up things about you-know-who,” she stopped herself, frowning. “I don’t mean Voldemort. Although that
could be an appropriate code-name, like they use in the army.”

“Let’s leave the code-naming for another day, shall we? Also, I’m sorry to ruin your fantasy but the code-names we use in the army are not Harry Potter related.”

“But we could be like Harry, Ron and Hermione!” Felicity pouted. “I make a fantastic Hermione!”

“Yeah and I make a fantastic Weasley” Diggle deadpanned.

“… OK maybe you have a point.”

“Alright, you two. Sorry to interrupt this very interesting and adult conversation, but it’s time to go,” Oliver cut them off, handing Felicity the papers she had brought him. “Thank you, Felicity.”

“You’re welcome,” she smiled warmly at him. “I should get going, then. I’ll see you tomorrow for breakfast and I'll let you know what I find out.”

“Good. Have a good night.”

“Night, Felicity.” Dig walked her to the door, whispering. “I’ll eat a couple of crab-cakes for you.”

“Or you could be a real gentleman and sneak some up for me?” she asked hopefully.

“You mean like you did at the Queen Mansion when you and Sara stole an entire plate?”

She gasped. “How did you find out?!”

“Felicity. It's my job to have eyes on everything. Not to mention you two were giggling like a bunch of school girls.”

As she was walking out, she turned back to glare at him. “Fine. Stuff your face with those crab-cakes, Weasley. But I’d be watching my back if I were you.”

Chapter End Notes

Sooo... what did you think?
I'll be updating next chapter this weekend. Then I'm taking a break until October 23. I'll be on a road trip across the West Coast with my best friend. I do have two chapters that will be ready to post as soon as I come back though. It's also why I'm updating three chapters in a week-ish.
The night had proven to be successful for Felicity. She hadn’t managed to get a lot of sleep, had probably eaten way too much (God bless room service) but she had found some very interesting facts about Isabel Rochev. Or Stacy Karev, depending on which identity she was using.

It turned out that her suspicions had been right. Isabel had been in touch with several of QC’s most important investors in the past few months. Always under the radar, always the ones who didn’t have a close relationship with Walter Steele or Robert Queen himself. Several of those partners were on the list of people they were supposed to meet on the business trip and Felicity couldn’t wait to see if Isabel would, like she did for Lucy Keiffer, pretend to have never met them before. Which brought other questions, ones that got her far more worried than Miss Rochev’s schemes: why those people? Would they play Isabel’s game and keep up the pretense? If yes, why? What was their interest in that? Or was it some kind of blackmail?

If the night had brought up many new elements, it had also caused her to face a whole lot more questions. Hopefully, Oliver would be able to answer some of them, providing intel on how QC worked from the inside and maybe more information about the ones Felicity had code-named the Deatheaters.

To say she was impatient to meet Dig and Oliver was an understatement. Felicity Smoak hated mysteries and couldn’t wait to solve this one.

As she walked inside Denny’s the next morning, both men were already seated at a table as far away as possible from all the other customers. Oliver Queen at Denny’s, if I ever thought I’d see the day… At least he is trying to be discreet, his reputation probably would never recover if the tabloids found out.

“Good morning, gentlemen,” she smiled as she took a seat, leaving her coat on the back of her chair. “So… how was your night?”

“Mine was quiet. You should ask him, though,” Dig replied, barely hiding his smirk.
Oliver glared at him, then turned his attention towards her. “It was… alright.”

Dig snorted. “Remember the whole ‘try to avoid Isabel’ speech you gave him? Well, let’s just say you apparently didn’t make your point clear enough.”

“What happened?” Felicity frowned, picking up a menu.

“She and I had a small… conversation when we got back to the hotel,” Oliver cleared his throat. “I didn’t say anything about what we found out, don’t worry.”

“What was it about then?”

“She just made some comments on how it was time to really have a woman taking the stand at QC. It pissed me off. My mother has always been a huge support for my father. It’s her family money that gave him the possibility to expand the business to begin with. She only stepped down to raise Thea and I,” he explained, shrugging. Obviously not willing to go into anything more specific, he put down his menu just as their waitress approached.

Once they gave their order, Felicity proceeded to let them in on what she had found out the previous night. She couldn’t help the small proud feeling that grew in her chest at the surprise on their faces once they realized how much she had been able to discover in just one night.

“So Lucy’s not the only one, then?” Oliver asked, between two mouthfuls of scrambled eggs.

“Nope. There are at least 6 of them that I have found out about so far.”

"Any clue as to why they were meeting?"

Felicity looked at Dig, shaking her head. “I really don’t know. I even considered the possibility she could be blackmailing them, but as for the definite reason… I have no idea.”

“Can you dig any further in her past? See if there is any connection?” Oliver chimed in.

“That was my next step. I will try to look into it as soon as possible. The most plausible reason would be that she might be trying to sabotage the company. I will also check her accounts, see if she has acquired any shares or stock options recently. Same with the deatheaters.”

“… pardon me?”

“Oh. I had to find a name for those investors. It was either that or the Nazguls. And you have to admit that sounds a tiny bit too dramatic.”

Diggle rolled his eyes while Oliver just shook his head, his eyes amused.

“Ok, next time you try to come up with proper code-names at 3 in the morning when you’ve been running high on sugar. I swear this hotel makes the best lemon meringue pie I’ve ever eaten.” Sitting back on her chair, she looked at Oliver. “Do you have any theory considering what you know about Isabel? What could be her endgame?”

“The only one I can come up with at the moment is the same as yours. Try to crash the company or weaken it, maybe for a hostile takeover bid. Your guess is as good as mine.”
“Well, we don’t need her to get any doubt. Try to avoid her, she might try to use your dislike of her to her advantage.”

“Yeah… about that…” Oliver shifted in his seat, clearly uncomfortable while Dig just smiled knowingly behind his cup of coffee.

“Yes? What is it?”

“I really don’t think I can stomach being with her all this time and not snap. I mean it’s almost 24/7.”

“I know. But there isn’t much we can do about it right?” She shrugged then froze once she got a proper look at the way Oliver was avoiding her eyes. “What are you not telling me, Oliver?”

“I’m not going to travel by plane with you anymore,” he mumbled, staring at his fork.

Dig snorted, patting him on the back. “I have to make a phone call, Carly tried to reach me last night.” Standing up, he picked up his phone from his jacket. “I’ll see you back at the hotel?”

“Yeah, see you later, Dig,” Felicity waved absently, her attention focused on Oliver who was still avoiding her gaze. “I’m sorry, I didn’t understand a word of what you just said.”

Taking a deep breath, Oliver finally explained: “I asked for an employee to drive my car here. I can’t keep going on like this with her, I’ll snap at some point.”

“What?! Oliver, you can’t give up! This is crucial for you and the company. You need to be there, take a stand!”

“I know! I know, OK?” He lowered his voice. “I’m not calling it quits, I just won’t be traveling by plane anymore. I will still rejoin you guys everywhere, but honestly the distances are more than manageable by car and I’ll need the time off from this crowd to clear my head. I’m not giving up, Felicity. I promise you.”

“What about Dig and I? We’re coming with you, right?”

“Err… wouldn’t it seem weird if the three of us suddenly decide to go on our separate mission? That would raise suspicion, don’t you think?”

She pinched her lips and stayed silent, refusing to let him try to justify his decision.

“Felicity…”

“No, Oliver. Let me get this straight. You can’t handle ignoring Isabel for a couple of hours so you decide to do all the travel by car, leaving Dig and I to deal with her and the rest of her minions. You think you going solo won’t be suspicious but God forbid you actually take your own bodyguard and assistant with you. Am I forgetting something?”

Oliver opened his mouth, obviously trying to come up with a proper reply. “I… Well it’s not…”

“It’s exactly like that. What I would like to know is why you don’t want us?” Felicity furrowed her eyes. “We haven’t known each other for long, Oliver. But it has still been long enough for me to pick up on that habit of yours. When pressure becomes too big, you run and find a way to blow off some steam. Whether it’s drinking with your best friend, partying all night long or…” She blushed
slightly, as a very vivid picture emerged from her memory. “Hum. Other things. But now? Now we’re in a serious situation; you can’t behave like that. I’m sorry if I’m asking a lot from you but I think it’s more than time someone does.” Standing up, she put her coat on and picked up her purse, shaking her head. “I’ll see you at the hotel.”

And with that, she was gone, leaving him behind, slightly fuming. He couldn’t help but feel unfairly attacked. He wasn’t bailing out, just needed a bit of time by himself. What was so hard to understand about that? He had been tremendously involved, working more in the past weeks than he probably had in the last year alone. They knew very well that it was hard on him to be face to face with Isabel, having to put up with her sneaky comments. They weren’t the ones who had to put the mask on and be cordial.

Leaving a couple of dollar bills on the table, he stood up and left the restaurant as well, fishing for his phone in his jacket. Checking his watch, he saw he still had more than time and headed to the small square that was right opposite the Denny’s. Fortunately, he didn’t have to wait long until she picked up.

“Ollie?”

“Laurel,” he smiled, relieved to hear the familiar voice. “I’m not waking you up, I hope?”

“No. Not at all. I’m surprised, that’s all. Is everything OK?”

“Yeah, yeah it’s fine. Good surprise, or bad surprise?” He sat down on a bench, watching a couple of squirrels running up and down a tree.

“Good, of course! You usually don’t call me in the morning when you’re away, that’s all. You sure you’re alright?”

“Yes. I’m fine. It’s just a bit nerve-wracking, you know. Being with the same people constantly. Just needed to hear a friendly voice, I guess.”

There was a small pause at the end of the line. “Is there any trouble with the other ones? I know you’re not exactly fond of Isabel…”

“It’s just that… Well, my assistant just gave me a bad time because I plan on doing the rest of the trip by car by myself, not with the group on the jet.”

“I see nothing wrong with that. I mean, you have the right to if you want to.”

“That’s exactly what I told her,” he laughed, relieved to see his thinking hadn’t been unreasonable.

“She seems like a strong head. Your assistant, I mean. You’re Oliver Queen, you are going to own that company one day. Surely you know better than her what’s good for QC. If you think it’s best for you to stay away and clear your head, you should do it.”

“You don’t think it could send the wrong message? Like… I’m not invested enough?” He breathed the last words, the ones that Felicity hadn’t said but meant clearly.

“Oliver, your name is on that building. How much more invested could you be?” Laurel slightly
laughed.

“It’s not my name,” he whispered. Never in his life had he realized how true those few words were.

“What? Oliver, don’t be silly. What’s gotten into you? Of course you’re a Queen, this is your legacy.”

“No, it’s my father’s name. His legacy. So far all I’ve had to do was bear this name and show up at reception parties.” Saying those words out loud, letting his darkest doubts out in the open felt like a huge weight lifting off his shoulders.

“Ollie, that’s not true. Look, that press conference, you more than showed that you can shoulder it,” she softly explained.

He let out a bitter laugh. Of course she didn’t know. It hadn’t been him that night who had handled the pressure. Had he been alone, he wouldn’t have had a clue what to do.

Misunderstanding his silence, Laurel continued:

“I understand that your father giving you this opportunity to represent the family officially must be a heavy weight to carry. It won’t always be like that. Your father had your mom to support him, just like you’ll have me when we marry. You won’t be alone in this. We’ll be one of those power couples.” She laughed, her voice betraying her enthusiasm. “You CEO, me kicking ass as an attorney, just like we’ve always planned to. Nothing has changed, Ollie, it’s just that we are getting closer and closer to this step in our lives. We’re a team, remember?”

_We’re a team, remember? We’re a team, remember?_ Those had been Felicity’s words that fateful night when they had found out about Isabel’s schemes. The night she had put that stupid Abba song on his phone, efficiently trying to ruin the mood and get his attention. It brought a smile on his lips. _She’s never gonna let me get away with this._

“Anyway, Laurel. Thank you for the chat but I have to go. We’ll talk when I get back? Since I’ll be on the road, I might not be able to call you that often.” Suddenly, he couldn’t wait to go back to his hotel, see what his stubborn assistant had been planning to do to make sure he didn’t follow through with his road trip plan. _Bring it on, Miss Smoak. Bring. It. On._

Oliver had barely passed the Hotel Lobby when he almost bumped into Dig.

“Oliver! I was looking for you.”

“What’s the hurry?” Oliver asked, genuinely intrigued, having noticed the slight frown upon Dig’s face.

“Carly called. She had a small car crash last night. Nothing really bad, but she does have a broken arm. You know she’s alone with Andy and…”

“Of course. Of course! Just go. Did you manage to book a flight? Do I need to inform HR?”

“Felicity took care of that. But if you could inform HR yourself, I would appreciate it.”
“Sure, I’ll call them right away. Take as long as you need, I’ll cover up for you.”

“Thanks. I really appreciate it.” Dig picked up his bag and threw it over his shoulder.

“Don’t mention it,” Oliver patted him on the back. “If there’s anything I can do, just give me a call, OK?”

“I will. Good luck for the rest of the trip.” Dig took three steps towards the front door then turned around as if he was having second thoughts. “I’d watch my back if I were you.”

“Isabel?” Oliver frowned.

“Worse. Felicity.” Smirking, his bodyguard waved at him then disappeared through the door.

Shaking his head, Oliver didn’t waste any more time, going up to his room. He quickly called the HR Office at QC to inform them that John Diggle was given an official leave of absence for a private family matter. Any disputes should be directed to Oliver personally. Packing barely took a few minutes, which was more than fortunate. Knowing Felicity, she wasn’t going to let him go without a fight, especially since Dig wasn’t staying. By leaving now, half an hour before the group was supposed to leave, he could avoid the confrontation. Even if that meant having to deal with her later that day. At least there would be people around them, which meant she probably wouldn’t try to murder him right away.

After one last glance across the room to make sure he hadn’t forgotten anything, he quickly dropped his key at the Front Desk and made his way to the garage where his car, a classic Corvette convertible (the perfect car for a road trip across the West Coast) was waiting for him.

**

Felicity took her time checking out. She even grabbed a latte from the coffee shop and leisurely walked out of the hotel lobby. The sun was high and bright already, forcing her to put on sun glasses. She made her way towards the hotel garage, knowing fully well this was where Oliver’s car was parked. She was just as aware that he probably wouldn’t linger any longer than necessary and would be in a hurry to leave. So predictable, Oliver...

The sound of her heels clicking on the macadam echoed loudly in the almost empty garage, only followed by the noise of her luggage wheels. She spotted his car right away, with the hood open.

Quickly hiding the small smile that was beginning to grow on her lips, she stopped near Oliver who was currently facing the motor, hands braced on the shiny black metal.

“Is something wrong?” She asked in fake concern.

Oliver must have been lost in thought because he jumped at the sound of her voice. A small flicker of surprise appeared on his face but wasn’t enough to chase the look of worry and incomprehension.

“I don’t know what’s wrong, it’s not starting. I had it checked last week and it made the trip overnight from Starling without any problem.” Frowning, he ruffled his hair then rested his hands on his hips.
“Mind if I take a look?”

“You?” His eyes creased in bewilderment.

“Yes, me,” she smiled indulgently. “I don’t want to brag or anything but… I know a bit about cars.”

“Well… be my guest. Just be careful, it’s a classic Corvette.” Moving out of the way, he waved towards the motor.

Bending over the open hood, she slightly nodded. “Mmhh Mhhh… I see.”

“What is it?” Approaching her, Oliver looked over her shoulder trying to identify what was apparently the source of the problem.

“The distributor cap has been removed and the main feed was pulled out.”

“What?” Getting closer, Oliver looked at the part of the motor she was pointing. “There’s supposed to be something there?”

“Yes. The distributor cap is what connects your key ignition to the motor. Without it, it won’t start. But I guess it’s your lucky day, I just happen to have a spare one in my purse!” Smiling sweetly at him, she ruffled in her bag, fishing out a small black object, along with 4 screws and the small screwdriver she always had with her for computer emergencies. He stared at her, mouth slightly open, then at the small items in her hand. Seeing he wasn’t making any move, she picked his hand, transferred her belongings to it and went to put her suitcase in the trunk.

Opening the door of the passenger seat, she put her seatbelt on. She couldn’t hear a thing coming from the front of the car but knew he hadn’t moved from his spot. Taking a deep breath, she checked if her ponytail was wind-proof, the car being a convertible with the roof down. She noticed a road map between both seats and picked it up. Felicity might be a technology girl through and through, she still loved the idea of those old maps that took way too much space. Back when she was young, her mother never had enough money to go on big vacations. So they always made small road trips, usually just long enough to make it down to the ocean for a few days then come back.

She had just unfolded this one, trying to figure out where they were on it when the hood was violently pulled back, the move making the rest of the car shake lightly with the counter shock. Willing herself to keep her face as impassible as possible, she didn’t raise her eyes when Oliver opened the door and seated himself behind the wheel.

“So, I think the best way to head to Medford is to take…”

Not saying a word, Oliver ripped the map out of her hands, violently crushing it into a tight ball, before throwing it over the window.

Glaring at her, he put the key in the ignition to start the car. “Anything to say, Felicity?”

She just shook her head, turning sideways to hide the smirk that had finally won over as the engine roared to life. Smoak 1 – Queen 0

Chapter End Notes
So this is where we're leaving those two for a small month... They are going on a road trip by themselves and well... so am I lol. We'll pick up right after Oliver started the car in the next chapter, but the chapter will be more in his POV. Spoiler? Oliver is pissed. Well, she did sabotage his classic convertible car ("wires are wires", right?); About that, I don't know much about cars, thank you google. Any mistake about that is purely 100% on me, don't hesitate to reach out if I'm completely wrong about something!

Expect a lot of bickering and fighting like an old married couple for the next couple of chapters. They are going to adjust to being constantly with each other and will probably be surprised at how much they secretly enjoy it, while doing their best to drive the other one insane.

Be nice while I'm away, I'll post the next chapter as soon as I get back home, promise! Xoxo

Please let me know if you liked it, and if you didn't... leave a comment too :p
Eye Of The Tiger

Chapter Summary

Since it's been a while, let's do it right:

Previously on His Girl Wednesday. Felicity Smoak ended up being Oliver Queen's assistant. Hardworking, crazy smart, she is the complete opposite of who Oliver Queen is: a careless playboy who is used to get everything he wants whenever he wants. When Robert Queen promotes Isabel Rochev to a position that was supposed to be his eventually, and when an explosion in one of the factories of QC happen, Oliver starts to realize that he might have to fight for this legacy he always thought would be his one day. With Dig and Felicity, he is going to have to find out what Isabel's schemes are concerning QC's partners.

We left Oliver and Felicity alone in Oliver's car after she had sabotaged it to prevent him from leaving her with Isabel and her minions. This chapter picks up right after, and is more in Oliver's POV.

Chapter has been edited, but this note wasn't. I just got back from my own road trip and it's been 22 hours of shuttle, planes, trains and buses, a glorious jetlag (9 hours). In short: if there's any mistake, I'm really sorry but I think you can understand XD

Thank you for your patience. I'm going to update chapter 12 this weekend as well ;)

Chapter Notes

Song: Eye Of The Tiger - Survivor

Thank you so much for your patience, I really hope you are going to enjoy the next chapters I have planned.
Special shoutout to yellowpretendingtobenered, my amazing beta.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I can’t believe it. My car. My Corvette. She sabotaged my car!

They had been driving for almost an hour in a tense silence. After he had pulled into traffic, he took the nearest entrance to the Highway. They were currently driving south on the I-5 and had just passed a small town named Salem, which had made Felicity giggle for some reason. He had glared at her, then and she had pinched her lips, but kept quiet. They hadn’t said a word to each other, Oliver stubbornly keeping his eyes on the road while Felicity enjoyed the scenery. Well, as much as it was possible to enjoy a highway scenery.

The anger that had taken over him in the garage hadn’t even started to fade out. Still boiling, he could barely think straight and was quite thankful the traffic was smooth. I hired a psychopath. That’s the only explanation. Straight out of that Misery novel. I guess I should be thankful she only
Oliver took an exit and drove another mile or so until they were on a rather empty road. A forest could be seen on the right side while a single gas station took place on the left. He slowed down and pulled the car onto the curb. He took a deep breath, parking and getting out of the convertible. Circling it, he went straight to the passenger seat and opened her door, not meeting her eyes.

Understanding the message, she got off the car, visibly bracing herself. Leaning on the side of his corvette, she waited patiently while he paced, fists closed and head down. He took a few calming breaths then stopped in front of her, meeting her eyes for the first time since they had left the hotel.

“You sabotaged my car!” he finally roared. So much for the calming breaths...

Felicity pinched her lips but stayed quiet, probably sensing that he had more to say.

“Of all the things you’ve done, this one just… You have crossed the line so many times with me. Hacking my phone or whatever you call this, and by the way how the hell did you even manage to change my ringtone?! Interrupting my nights, forcing me to take your calls, lecturing me about my choices… WHILE I AM YOUR BOSS!” Shouting, he pointed his finger at her, slightly poking her shoulder. “Things cannot go on like this, Felicity. There are lines you do not cross and attacking an innocent car is one of them!” He threw her one last furious glance then resumed his pacing.

“Attacking?” Please, I didn’t cause it any harm,” she snorted, rolling her eyes.

“You could have! What if I had an accident? What if you had messed with the engine. It’s a collectible car, not a stupid Ford Fiesta!”

“I know, Oliver. It’s a very precious car. That probably costs more than what I make in a year. I just made sure you wouldn’t be able to sneak away like a thief. Which you were trying to, by the way.” Crossing her arms on her chest, she glared at him and he could see in her eyes she wouldn’t back down.

“I don’t have to justify myself to you!”

“When it involves my abilities to do my job, yes, you do,” she explained calmly, obviously trying to keep the tone down.

“Oh, so that’s how you want to see it? That me travelling by car is damaging your work?” Raising his arms, he looked at the sky. “This is getting better and better.”

“Yes, Oliver, it is. You are so involved in your little world that you don’t see it affects me just as much. Do you really think that being your assistant doesn’t put me in Isabel’s radar as well? You’re having a hard time playing the part, well guess what? So am I! I’m the one who keeps digging up stuff about her!” She paused, catching her breath. “Digging things for you, doing much more than what I’m supposed to do. For you. Because I believe in you and I know that despite acting like a petulant child who didn’t get what he wanted for Christmas, you are much better for this company than she will ever be.”

“So you just decide to storm your way in? Not giving me a choice, not even asking me?”

“When was I supposed to ask, Oliver? When the group was to meet in the lobby? You would have
been gone for an hour by that time.”

“It’s… you’re twisting everything!” He tried to defend himself, but there was no point in denying that, indeed, he had wanted to leave before everyone else. Changing topic, he added, “It doesn’t change the fact that if I want to travel alone, I have every right to!”

“Then send me back to Starling!” She challenged him, her tone much sharper now.

“Maybe I will!” Raising his voice as he threw her one last look, he made his way around the car once more and slipped behind the wheel.

“Don’t mind me!” She screamed, losing her temper as well as she opened the door and sat on the passenger seat.

“I won’t!” He roared.

“Fine!”

“Fine!”

Both slammed their doors angrily, fully intending on ignoring each other for the rest of the trip.

As if the weather decided to suit their mood, the sunny landscape they had been following ever since they left Portland slowly changed to grey and cloudy the further south they went. Oliver was keeping his eyes stubbornly on the road, doing his best to ignore his passenger. What was supposed to be a relaxing trip across beautiful Oregon turned into a dense and heavy confrontation that none of them seemed willing to back down from.

Saying that he was relieved when they finally reached Medford was an understatement. All he wanted to do was go to his room, get a drink or two, have a nice dinner by himself and stay as far away from any crazy female as possible. Throwing his keys to the valet, he jumped out of the car, opened the trunk and got his suitcase, not waiting to check if Felicity was following him. The rest of their group had just arrived as well, for which he couldn’t be more thankful as he didn’t have to wait for his room key. One of the secretaries in charge of the trip handed it to him with a flashing smile that quickly fell from her face once she saw his expression.

“Hum… Here is your key, Mister Queen. Do you know when Miss Smoak is going to…”

He cut her off. “She should be here in a minute. Tell her I don’t want to be interrupted tonight. No visits, no calls. Could you ask the lobby to send a couple of aspirins to my room?”

Taken aback, the red-haired woman stuttered. “Of... of course. I first have to finish checking everyone in but then I’ll make sure to stop by. Although, surely your assistant could…”

“No way I’m trusting her with pills!” Realizing that he was taking it out on the poor woman, he softened his voice. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to snap at you, there was a lot of traffic on the way down here and it got me in a cranky mood.” Smiling slightly, he lightly squeezed her arm in reassurance. “Thank you for the key. I’ll manage the rest on my own.”

As he walked away, it suddenly dawned on him that indeed, Felicity was his employee. He was in a
position of power. *How right you are, lovely red-haired woman. She is my assistant. I can ask anything I want. At any time.* A small calculative grin appeared on his face as he stepped inside the elevator. *Payback’s a bitch, Smoak.*

Being Sunday, they hadn’t had anything planned which meant he could take the time to cool off and relax in his suite. They were staying in a decent hotel near the convention center that was conveniently located a couple of miles of the small airport but unfortunately away from the animations. He threw his jacket on the small sofa, kicking his shoes off and taking off his socks. He fell on his bed, grabbed the landphone on the night stand and slowly tapped it on his chin, wondering what his next move should be. Making up his mind, he quickly pressed 0, the direct line for the Front Desk.

“Andrew, reception of the Ramada, what can I do for you?”

“Hello. I’m Oliver Queen, room 502. I was wondering if you could tell me in which room my assistant is staying? She is not answering her cell and I’m getting worried.”

“Sure, mister Queen. What’s her name?”

“Smoak. Felicity Smoak.”

He could hear the employee typing on the keyboard. “Yes. She’s in room 517, sir.”

“Great, I’ll just go check if everything is alright, then.”

“Anytime, Mister Queen. Is there anything else I can do for you?”

“No, that will be all. Thank you.” He quickly hung up the phone, then picked it up again, dialing 517 this time. It rung a couple of times until she picked up.

“Hello?” She sounded out of breath and slightly intrigued.

“Felicity?”

“Oliver? Why are you calling me on this phone?” She asked, surprised. “Is there something wrong?”

“My phone’s battery is dead. And yes there is something wrong. I have this killer headache,” he explained, sounding calm and much more normal than the last time they had spoken to each other, which obviously raised her suspicions.

“… a headache?”

“Yes. Could you call the Front Desk and ask them to send some aspirins or something for me?”

“… sure. I’ll just do that. Using a phone, like the one you are currently holding in your hand” she replied, sarcasm pouring out of her words.

“Great. I’ll see you tomorrow, then.”

“Yes… wait, how did you know my room number?”

“Oh, I just called the Front Desk to ask them. Don’t keep me waiting.” He knew the smile could be
heard in his voice but he couldn’t help it. Hearing her loud protests, he hung up on her, letting his smile take over his face at the image that popped in his head of his assistant fuming and cursing him, ponytail shaking with the outrage. Well… tonight is gonna be much more fun than I thought.

Picking up the remote, he zapped through the channels, trying to find something interesting enough to capture his attention. Only a couple minutes after his call, he heard a knock on his door. Smirking, he stood up, padding his way to the door. Opening it, he found himself facing a young man who couldn’t be any older than 18.

“You asked for medicine, sir?”

“Yes” Oliver replied with a smile, stepping aside to let the boy walk inside the room. He went to his jacket to retrieve a few dollars for tipping.

The bellboy handed him the small paper bag he was holding. “There you are, sir. Some aspirins and topical anesthetic.”

“Wait, what? What the hell is tropical anesthetist??” He frowned, reaching in the bag.

“Well the person who called said they were dealing with a cranky infant probably teething and… if it’s not the right remedy, I can bring it back…”

Oliver stared at the young man who was eyeing the tip he was still holding in his hand, clearly thinking he wouldn’t get it for some reason. Shaking his head, he handed the poor boy the five bucks. “No, it’s fine. It’s… my assistant, she… well. Nevermind. Thank you.” Putting a fake smile on his face, he walked him back to the door, cursing under his breath. That bloody woman.

None of them showed up to have dinner with the rest of the group. Felicity apparently still working on Isabel’s past and Oliver was still standing firm on his idea to avoid as many women as possible.

He spent the evening watching Die Hard on TV, one of his favorite movies that he hadn’t seen in years. It made him realize how long it had been since he’d had a quiet night in. No party, no restaurant, no fancy dinner, no work. Just getting lazy in front of the TV. He missed it. He missed that feeling of normalcy. His life was always busy, with work, family, friends, girlfriend, girlfriends on the side. When had he started craving something else? Something more… simple? Something that didn’t involve Oliver Queen, or Ollie?

His cellphone buzzing interrupted his thoughts. Glancing, he smiled when the goofy face of his best friend appeared on the screen.

“Merlyn! Calling me on a Sunday night, what’s going on?” He welcomed his call.

“What can I say? I’m getting older!”

Snorting, Oliver picked up a handful of popcorn. “What happened to the “Tommy Merlyn will never grow old and boring” mantra?”

“I’d like to think of myself turning more into a sophisticated gentleman farmer, thank you very much.”
"Tommy, you don’t own a farm."

"Hey!"

"And no, playing Farmerama online doesn’t count."

"But…"

Oliver interrupted him once more. “Neither does cosplaying Little House on the Prairie with playmates.”

Tommy stayed silence on the line.

"God, you’re replaying it in your head, right?!" Oliver realized.

"You have to admit, that was super hot," Tommy replied dreamily.

Oliver let his thoughts wander back to that weekend when Tommy had rented a small old-fashioned farm and invited playmates. It had been a great weekend indeed.

Sighing, he admitted, “It was fun, yeah.” Shaking his head to clear his thoughts, he added: “I assume that’s not the reason why you’re calling me, though?”

“Nah. Just wanted to check on you. I was at your house for brunch and your mother seemed worried for some reason. Is all good over there?”

“Yeah, it’s fine. I told mom I would call her this morning, I forgot.” wonder why it escaped my mind, really… “I’ll call her tomorrow.”

“So… you’re sure everything is OK? You sound a bit off.”

“Yeah, just a headache.” And a bat-shit crazy assistant.

He quickly hung up after that, not willing to be interrogated by his best friend who, despite the appearances, wasn’t so easy to fool. A long shower and another aspirin finally got rid of his migraine and it wasn’t long until he was fast asleep.

***

As he was making his way to the Hotel restaurant for breakfast, Oliver found himself cornered in the elevator by Isabel and Mark.

“We couldn’t help but notice you didn’t come down for dinner last night. Trouble in paradise with your devoted assistant?” Isabel asked him sweetly.

Tensing his jaw, he straightened his shoulders, willing himself to not let her get under his skin. “No. The trip had just been longer than I thought.”

“Obviously. Which is why we decided that using a private jet was much more convenient.”
As the elevator reached the ground floor, both men stepped aside to let her walk out first. “Although I can admit the lack of privacy on a plane can be a real downside for someone like you.”

“Talking from experience, Isabel?” He said loudly as she was retreating.

Her body slightly stiffened, the only indication that she had indeed heard him but she didn’t comment and kept on walking.

Oliver rolled his eyes, silently cursing himself for not being able to keep his mouth shut. He was just about to follow her into the dining room when something bumped into him. Turning over, he saw Felicity, with her tablet in hand - did she surgically attach it to herself or something? – who was frowning at him.

“Why on earth would you be standing right there,” she motioned around her, “like some dumb dead tree?”

Oliver raised an eyebrow. “And why on earth would you walk in an area surrounded by people,” he mimicked her gesture and motioned around him as well, “eyes locked on that thing and not on your surroundings?”

She pinched her lips and breathed through her nose. “Some of us have work to do, Mister Queen.”

Glancing at her tablet he snorted. “And by that do you mean watching cute puppies videos, Miss Smoak?”

She narrowed her eyes at him and snapped her tablet against her chest. “It was spam, OK?”

“Sure it was. Come on, let’s have breakfast.” Taking her elbow in hand, he led her towards the restaurant.

An informal truce seemed to have been formed between them as they shared a small table. Once they had ordered their meal – eggs, bacon and toast for Oliver while Felicity picked pancakes and fruit salad – she pushed her tablet towards him.

“This is what I found last night.” Keeping her voice down, she made sure no one was within earshot. “I couldn’t find anything in Isabel’s bank accounts suggesting a suspect transaction. She hasn’t ordered to buy shares or anything like that recently. Lucy Keiffer bought shares of QC though, but nothing that would raise suspicions.”

Glancing at her tablet, Oliver felt confused as all he could see what numbers and more numbers. “Hum… sorry but what I am supposed to see?”

“Oh, sorry. That’s the stock exchange and the shares Keiffer has bought. It’s not that much so it wouldn’t attract anyone’s attention,” she quickly explained.

“Then if she didn’t buy a lot, why is it even relevant?”

“Because I found two other people who also bought shares, in small numbers, but still.”

“Let me guess… Isabel payed them a visit as well?” Oliver stopped himself once he saw their waiter approaching with their drinks.
Felicity waited until both of their coffees were set on the table and the employee far enough from their table to continue. “Exactly. I should try to dig up more but I’m not comfortable doing that using hotel wifi. I need more material.”

Oliver sighed. “That’s already impressive, Felicity. But you’re right, I wouldn’t want you to get into trouble. Try to find out as much as you can within reasonable boundaries, we’ll work on that once we head back to QC.” He took a sip of his black coffee and hissed.

“Too hot?” She asked with a small teasing smile.

“No. I think my teeth are still aching, despite that balm you sent me,” he glared at her.

She pinched her lips, trying to keep her smile at bay but her eyes twinkled with mischief. “Teething is a long process, I’m not surprised. Although at the age of 25 you might have set a record.”

Putting his cup down, he looked at her in the eye, engaging in a staring contest. She grinned innocently, blowing on her own cup of coffee.

Someone clearing their throat made them slightly jump out of surprise. Their waiter was standing by their table with two plates and seemed a bit uncomfortable at the idea of interrupting them.

“There you are, ma’am. Pancakes and a side of fresh fruits.” He put the plate in front of Felicity and turned to Oliver, “And scrambled eggs with bacon for you, sir. Anything else I can do for you?”

“No, that will be good. Thank you”, Oliver replied, already picking up his fork, efficiently sending the man away.

“So I checked our schedule…”

“Now that’s some progress,” he cut her off teasingly.

She raised her eyes from her pancakes and threw him a look.

“What? Just stating a fact!” He raised his hand in defense.

“Anyway. Like I was saying before you rudely interrupted me…”

“I wasn’t rude!”

“You were interrupting!”

“… Ok. I did interrupt you. Go ahead.” Waving his fork he looked at her expectantly, “I’ll behave, I promise.”

“Now that would be a first…” She said under her breath.

Oliver opened his mouth but she didn’t give him any time to cut her off again.

“As I was saying, we’re visiting some of our oldest backers today. You know them, I believe?”

“Yep. They could even be considered as family friends, which is why I was kinda surprised we put them on our list. They’ve always been loyal and trusting. They don’t seem like the kind of investors
we need to reassure or convince.”

“I know, I wondered about that too. Well I couldn’t find anything weird about them or any clue that Isabel might have tried to reach to them. Which again only shows that she has been in touch with backers that could be convinced to… join the dark side.” She stopped herself to take a bite of her pancakes. Frowning, she added a generous amount of maple syrup.

“That’s a lot of syrup,” Oliver noted.

“It’s because that’s a lot of pancakes to begin with,” she shrugged. “Back to topic though. I got in touch with Sara last night. You know, since she works for the HR, she might be of good intel. Apparently we’re only visiting them out of courtesy. You’ll probably only have to thank them for their support, assure them how valuable they are and blablabla.”

“What means today should be easy, I guess?”

“Yes. Tomorrow, though…” She grimaced.

“Yeah, I saw that. Redding, California. Huge share-holders, very wary about continuing their partnership.”

Felicity nodded. “They are not so much into eco-friendly resources, so it’s gonna be a tough nut to crack. They are more into good old fashioned oil wells. I couldn’t find any connection with Isabel either, so that’s already one thing you won’t have to worry about.”

“Well… let’s just take one day at a time. We’re having lunch with the Fraziers until probably late afternoon. We’ll tackle Redding afterwards.”

“Sure. Your room or mine?” She asked as she put a grape in her mouth.

Oliver stared at her for a second, loss for words. Did she just say that…?

“Oh God. I didn’t mean it like that… It’s… you know!” Taking a deep breath she continued, “it’s more comfortable to do it in a room.”

Oliver’s eyes grew slightly bigger at her words as he battled with a grin.

“Damn it! 3,2,1” She closed her eyes for a second.“Feel free to put me out of my misery at anytime.”

“I’m having way too much fun right now,” he laughed. “But let’s say my room, mine is probably bigger than yours.”

Felicity smirked. “Yeah I’m not gonna argue with that.”

Chapter End Notes

Soo... did you like it? I'm a sucker for bickering relationships, I have to admit XD
The Fraziers turned out to be a 60 year-old something couple that lived in a villa just outside of Medford. Both were very friendly and welcomed the entire group in their house but it was soon obvious to everyone that they had a soft spot for Oliver. Lunch was being held in their dining room and was probably the most laid-back meal Felicity’s has had since the beginning of the trip.

“So, Oliver, how’s Thea doing? She’s a teenager now, I haven’t seen her since she started going to high school,” Mrs Frazier asked while they were waiting for their dessert.

“She’s doing great. Growing up a bit too fast for my taste, though,” Oliver laughed, sitting back in his chair.

“Little sisters always grow up too fast. So do grand-daughters, I’m afraid,” Mr Frazier chimed in, looking lovingly at their own granddaughter who had been allowed to eat with them. She was an adorable 7 year-old metis with two cute little braids on and a huge smile. She also seemed to have a crush on Oliver. She hadn’t left his side ever since they arrived and even insisted on sitting between him and Felicity for lunch.

“I was on the phone with your father a couple of weeks ago, he mentioned things were getting serious between you and that lovely girl. I think he is getting quite impatient to be a grand-father as well,” Mr Frazier continued, laughing slightly.

Oliver visibly stiffened on his chair at the mention of his father but kept up the mask on his face. “I’m afraid he’ll have to wait a bit more before he has any grand-kids. It’s not planned in the near-future.”

“You have all the time in the world for this, my dear,” Mrs Frazier patted him on the arm, giving her husband a look.

Oliver was saved having to reply as dessert was brought. It was a simple chocolate cake with a raspberry mousse on top, two of Felicity’s favorite things in the world. *You and I are going to do some naughty things…*
“Anna picked the dessert, I’m afraid. It’s her favorite one. If it’s too rich, we also have fruits in the kitchen.” Mrs Frazier looked around the table, seeing that most of the women declined the plate the waiter was offering them.

“Oh no, don’t worry. I don’t really have a sweet tooth and the meal was absolutely delicious,” Isabel reassured her. “Just a cup of tea would be fabulous.”

“You don’t like chocolate cake?!” Anna asked in disbelief. *My thoughts exactly.*

Isabel laughed, “I know it’s hard to believe. When you grow up you might stop liking it as well.”

Anna looked horrified at the prospect and Oliver softly nudged her. “Don’t worry, all grown ups don’t end up hating chocolate cake.” He pointed his chin towards Felicity who was savoring her dessert.

The little girl giggled, then leaned towards her and whispered, “You know, you can have a second helping if you want to.”

Felicity swapped her head. “No, that would be rude,” she whispered back. “Besides, you’re almost done with yours too and I’m pretty sure your grand-parents wouldn’t let you ask for a second plate either.”

“I know. But if you do, they won’t dare to say anything, then we could split up.”

Felicity couldn’t help but chuckle. “Then I wouldn’t be making a good impression on them, would I?”

Anna frowned. “Oh. I didn’t think of that.”

As they were talking together, a plate with an untouched chocolate cake appeared between them. They turned their head to their right, where Oliver was looking at them with an indulgent smile. Both girls shared a look, then glanced towards Mr and Mrs Frazier who were deep in conversation with Denis Lewis.

“I’d hurry if I were you.”

Felicity grabbed the plate, quickly dividing the slice of cake, and transferred the bigger piece to Anna’s plate.

“But what about you? You don’t like chocolate cake either?” Anna murmured, while showing a huge fork of dessert in her mouth.

“I do. But I like you more,” Oliver winked at her.

The weather was exceptionally warm for spring, which allowed everyone to gather in the huge gardens once lunch was over. Most of them were sitting near the swimming pool, enjoying the warming sun on their skin, while Felicity preferred to take a stroll on the property. Having lived almost all of her life in an apartment, she took almost every chance she had to appreciate the outdoors. At least, the gardens. She wasn’t really into wilderness.
As she was approaching the rose bushes on the farthest side of the house, she heard giggles coming from the small maze made of bay trees. Smiling softly, she recognized Anna’s voice right away but was surprised when a much deeper voice joined the little girl’s squeals.

“I really think this is it, Anna. We’re lost. No one is ever going to find us, I’m afraid,” Oliver said in a serious and grim voice.

“You’re so silly! I know exactly the way out. And you’re so tall you probably can see above the walls anyway! Oh, look, there are already a few roses growing here! Aren’t they pretty?”

“Yes, very.”

“You can pick some up, if you want to. I won’t say anything to granny.”

Oliver laughed. “I’m sure she would figure it out if she sees some in my hands don’t you think? And what would I do with them anyway?”

“Well you would give them to Felicity, of course. It’s what boys are supposed to do. They offer flowers to their girlfriend.”

Felicity covered the smile that had appeared on her face with her hand, wondering how Oliver would handle the situation.

“Felicity isn’t my girlfriend, Anna,” he explained in a patient voice.

“Why? You gave her your dessert.” Even if they were still out of Felicity’s sight, she could almost see the frown on the little girl’s face.

“I gave it to the two of you. And I already have a girlfriend.”

“But she’s so pretty! Your babies would be so cute! I also have a boyfriend at school and daddy says that I don’t have to stay with him all my life. Maybe there is someone better for me out there. He also says he hopes I won’t find him until I’m at least 30. Which is really old.”

Felicity couldn’t help but blush at those comments, while also being amused at the idea of Oliver being cornered by a 7 year-old talking about babies.

“Argh… It’s… yes. She’s very pretty. But it’s not how it works, she is just a very good friend.”

“She is also very smart, I heard you say it to Granny. Daddy always says that being pretty is good, but being smart is more important,” Anna spoke confidently.

“She is really smart, yes.”

“You don’t think she is kind?”

“Felicity is all of that, yes, but…”

“But what?” The little girl asked seriously. “it’s-”

“Maybe we should join the others, don’t you think?” Oliver interrupted her. “I wouldn’t want your grand-parents to worry.”
“OK. But I won the game!”

“Yes, you did. Fair and square.”

Soon enough, the two of them made it out of the maze only to be welcomed by Felicity’s teasing smile.

“Having fun, you two?”

“Yes. Oliver isn’t very good in mazes, though. He kept on getting lost,” Anna looked at him almost reproachingly.

“I tried my best!” Oliver defended himself. “Also, I think you were good enough for the two of us.”

Anna seemed to ponder his words. “You’re right.” Turning towards Felicity, she added, “Don’t go in there with him. He is scared of spiders.”

Felicity chuckled, meeting Oliver’s eyes. “Is he now?”

“Yes, although he told me to not tell anyone.”

“And thank you for keeping your promise, Anna,” Oliver chimed in.

Anna looked at him, then put both hands over her mouth, giggling. “I have to pee. See you in the house!” Turning away, she ran towards the house, leaving them behind.

“I didn’t know you were so comfortable with kids,” Felicity said.

“I have a baby sister. She’s ten years younger, so I’ve had a lot of practice. Anna is really sweet, she reminds me a lot of Thea,” Oliver smiled, shoving his hands in his pocket.

They resumed their walk, getting even further away from the house.

“The Fraziers are very nice people. They seem to have known you your whole life.”

“They have, as far as I can remember. I think I even spent a summer here with Tommy when Thea was born. I think my mother couldn’t deal with two over energetic boys and a baby,” he laughed.

As a small wind came through the trees, Felicity shivered, having left her cardigan inside. Oliver took off his sweat-shirt and wordlessly put it around her shoulders.

Surprised, she looked at him. “Thank you.”

He just smiled at her and shrugged. “So, should I hire a personal guard for my car tonight?”

“That depends. Are you going to be your stubborn self or finally listen to reason?”

“You are the one calling me stubborn?!” Oliver huffed.

“… maybe we can share that trait. Although I’m much more reasonable than you.”
“Reasonable is the last word I would use to describe someone who thinks the best way to prove her point is to sabotage her boss’s car.”

“Oh, please. I wasn’t trying to prove a point by sabotaging your car. The topical anesthetic, now THAT was me proving a point!”

“I haven’t said my last word about that, by the way,” he chuckled.

“Do your worst, Queen.” Side-eyeing him, she added, “Just know that I hit back. Hard.”

“I’ve noticed.” Still smiling, Oliver shook his head. “I like it that you do.”

***

Once everyone left to get back to their hotel, Felicity and Oliver retreated to his room in order to get ready for the few days that they were going to spend in Redding. Walter had warned them that the Backstone family was considering selling their shares and withdrawing their support. Not only did they need to reassure them and convince them not to sell, but also try to persuade them to invest into their new eco-friendly plan, which was in complete opposition of their usual business.

As Oliver was busy reading notes Walter had given him, Felicity was occupying herself by creating diagrams about how much profit those new eco-friendly resources could bring them.

“The Backstones’ main concern is money. That’s how we need to convince them. Don’t waste time talking about global warming and stuff. Focus on how profitable those investments will be in the long-term. Based on the Venizzi report and different data I gathered from the EPA, the cost will be absorbed within 3 years and profits can be expected after that.” She showed him the diagrams she had found, pointing to the most important parts.

“This looks like Chinese to me,” he groaned, falling back on the office chair.

“I know, they are a bit too complex. I’ll make new ones, much more simple, then put them on a USB stick. You’ll only have to point to the parts in red, OK?” she offered.

“Red. I think I can at least remember that.”

“When is the presentation, by the way?” Felicity asked, shutting off her tablet. They had been through all the main points Oliver was supposed to talk about. All that was left for her was to make a few simple graphics for him.

“In the afternoon. Around 4PM.”

“Maybe I should drive, that would give you the time to read your notes once more?”

Oliver glared at her.

“Oh God, tell me you’re not one of those Neanderthal men.”

“I have never let anyone drive this car! Not even Tommy!” He protested loudly.
“Fine. Have it your way. I was just trying to help.” She raised her hands and got up from the bed, packing her belongings. “We’re expected in the dining room in 20 minutes, I should get going.”

“Already?” Surprised, he checked the alarm clock and saw that it was indeed close to 7:00.

“Yup.” She was already opening the door before he had a chance to get up. “See you there.”

Dinner, unsurprisingly, was as stiff as usual when there was no need to put up a face and keep up appearances. Oliver excused himself as soon as he was finished, barely taking the time to tell her that he was going to the hotel bar. She was still munching on a cookie and didn’t even have the time to ask him at what time they were supposed to leave the next morning. Shrugging, she decided to take her time to savor her meal, knowing she could still show up at the bar before going back to her room.

She made a small stop at the souvenirs shop, keeping up with a tradition she’s had ever since she was a kid. She always bought a postcard of every place she travelled to. She barely had the time to do so in Portland and Seattle and didn’t want to miss the opportunity to do it for Medford. The city might have been small but she had had a good time there. After a small chat with the cashier, who was wearing a Doctor Who t-shirt, she finally made her way to the bar area.

It was one of those bars that were obviously made to look like a traditional English pub. It had this old vibe, a lot of beer taps and the furniture was made of dark wood and thick curtains were hanging from the few windows. A quick look around told her Oliver wasn’t there. Frowning, she went to ask one of the waitresses.

“Excuse me, I’m looking for my boss. Tall, dirty blonde hair, blue eyes. He's wearing dark grey pants and a blue sweat-shirt?”

“Oh, Ollie!” The waitress smiled, blushing slightly under her heavy make-up. Jesus Christ, I leave him alone for 20 minutes and the waitress already knows his name.

“He’s in the backroom, playing pool.” The woman pointed to the back of the room that was protected by a big curtain. Following her lead, Felicity made her way across the pub and carefully pulled back the curtain, wary of what she could find behind it. Quickly glancing around, she let out a breath of relief, seeing Oliver was indeed playing pool and all the participants were fully dressed. Now that’s what I call significant progress.

“No, sweetheart. You really have to bend more.” Felicity rolled her eyes at his words. Oliver was currently showing a brunette how to shoot properly.

She cleared her throat, trying to get his attention but the music was loud enough to swallow the noise.

“Oliver,” she calmly called, facing his back. “Oliver,” she repeated, but he ignored her.

“OLIVER!”

He jumped in surprise, turning on his feet. “Felicity? What are you doing here?”

“You didn’t tell me when we are supposed to leave tomorrow,” she explained, rather stiffly. Truth be told she really wasn’t comfortable with the whole ‘Ollie’ persona.
“Right. Around 8:00. No, make it 8:30. The night might be long,” he answered, winking at one of
the three girls that were currently batting their eyelashes at him.

“Ollie, who is this girl? You didn’t tell us you were accompanied,” the only blonde girl of their party
asked, leaning on his shoulder.

“Oh God, no. I don’t accompany him. I’m his assistant,” Felicity quickly explained. “Don’t worry,
you can get back to… whatever you were planning to do. Pretend you didn’t even see me.”

“I always wanted to have an assistant. It must be so nice to have someone who brings you water or
anything you want,” chirped the brunette that Oliver had been teaching as she leaned down to line up
her shot.

Felicity’s nostrils flared slightly at the idea of being seen as this kind of assistant, while Oliver
smirked and raised his eyebrows at her.

She decided to ignore the both of them. “Fine. I’ll meet you downstairs at 8:30 then. Is there
anything else your assistant could do for you, Mister Queen?” She sarcastically asked, placing a
forced smile on her face.

Oliver looked at her, amused, tapping a finger on his chin. “Actually, yes, there is. Could you stop at
a drugstore for me?”

Disconcerted, she eyed him suspiciously. “Tonight?”

“Yes, tonight. I ran out of condoms,” he smiled at her innocently, while his cheerleaders giggled
behind their hands.

Felicity’s eyes almost popped out of her head as soon as his words registered in her brain. No, he
didn’t dare…

She couldn’t help the blush that crept on her face but she would be damned if she let him get
away with this. “You know, I would, Mister Queen but as you know very well... I don’t have a car.”

Fishing in his pocket, he handed her the keys. “Problem solved, Miss Smoak.” Openly smirking, he
waited for her reaction, obviously dying to see how far she was ready to go in this little game.

Staring at the keys in his hand, she quickly made her decision and snatched them. “Alright then. I
guess you’ll still be here?”

“I promise I won’t go anywhere until you get back.”

Throwing him one last dirty look, she finally turned back and approached the curtain. She was just
about to open it when his voice reached her once more.

“Oh, Felicity! I’m sure you probably remember but… make them jumbo sized, the other ones are
way too small for me!”

She almost tripped over her own feet and pushed back her glasses on her nose with a shaky
hand. That bastard. Jumbo size, jumbo size… I’m gonna jumbo size you so hard you won’t be able
to sit for a week, Queen.
She made it in record time, thanks to the nice souvenirs shop employee who directed her to a nearby drugstore. Taking a deep breath, she entered the backroom where Oliver was currently taking a body shot off of the blonde girl currently laying on the pool table. *This guy is a walking cliché.*

“Felicity! Already back!” He cheerfully welcomed her.

Smiling stiffly she handed him his car keys. “Not even a scratch, don’t worry.”

He put them back in his pocket, hand already reaching for the small package she was taking out of her purse.

“There you go. Condoms, jumbo sized, just like you asked.”

He smiled at her, eyes gleaming with mischief and laughter.

“And also your treatment cream for your genital herpes. I noticed you ran out of it when I unpacked your bags.”

His smile froze on his face, just as his three companions shared embarrassed looks. He stared at her for a few seconds, jaw rigid and lightly nodding his head.

“Well, I guess I’ll see you tomorrow morning, then? Have a great night!” With one last wave, she confidently stepped out of the room, feeling Oliver’s eyes on her back. She knew he wasn't about to let it go, and bit back a smile as she remembered the face he had made at the mention of his 'genital herpes'.

The elevator was already closing when a hand appeared out of nowhere to stop the doors, startling her. She hadn't expected him to follow her. At all.

“Oliver! You scared me to death!”

He stepped inside and looked at her. “Genital herpes, really?”

“Come on. With your manwhore ways, it’s more than a safe bet,” she snorted, searching for her key inside of her purse.

“Man…whore ways?” He repeated incredulously.

“What else would you call it, honestly?” She quirked an eyebrow, just as the elevator reached their floor.

Stepping outside, she made her way to her room, Oliver still in toe.

“Whatever the… that is… my private life is none of your business!”

“It is when you make me go on personal errands at night.” She lightly tapped his cheek before sliding her keycard in the lock. “Goodnight, Oliver.”

She closed the door on him, finally letting the smile take over her face.
Oliver stood there, lightly gaping at the nerve his assistant had. Finally shaking his head, he made his way to his room. It was only when he was stepping out of the bathroom after a quick shower that he remembered about the girls who were still probably waiting for him downstairs. He grabbed the phone, asking the Front Desk to put him through the bar’s direct line and quickly asked the employee to apologize to the ladies in the backroom and to put everything they might order on his credit card. He was considering joining them when his eyes fell on a few documents Felicity had left for him to read on his desk. Sighing, he grabbed them and slipped under the sheets, preparing himself for a very different night than what he had had in mind merely thirty minutes before. He was in the middle of his read when he stopped himself, looking at the ceiling of his room.

“Genital herpes,” he laughed, shaking his head. *That woman will be the death of me.*

Chapter End Notes

So... I'm clearly trying to show Oliver is growing up. Ollie is still there buuuumt...
Did you like it? *biting nails*
Oliver and Felicity left the hotel much earlier than the rest of the group. Even if their destination, Redding, was only a couple of hours away, they were hoping to get there early enough to make sure everything was ready for Oliver’s presentation. They were meeting a few members of the Backstone family in their headquarters and if all went well, they might get an appointment with the patriarch of the family who, despite being well into his seventies, was still ruling the clan with a firm hand.

As they had been briefed, this stop was, so far, the toughest one. The Backstones already warned Walter that they were seriously reconsidering their partnership with QC. The gas explosion, which they still didn’t know much about, and QC’s new direction towards cleaner, greener energy sources were seen as the two companies getting further away from each other.

“Remember, focus on the financial aspect. I worked on those graphics last night to make them clear and simple. Focus on the things in red and you’ll be fine,” Felicity reminded him as they were driving down the interstate. They had put the roof back up, not willing to arrive there disheveled. They both wore comfortable clothes, having planned a small stop at their hotel to change into more appropriate outfits.

“Remind me again how long we’ve been partners with them?” Oliver asked, eyes firmly on the road.

“Mmmhh…” Felicity quickly tapped a few keys on her tablet. “12 years. You also supported them when there was that oil leak in the pacific ocean in 2004. Might be good to remind them of that. Smoothly, of course.”

“Smooth is my middle name, didn’t you know?” Oliver smirked, quickly glancing at her and wiggling his eyebrows.

Felicity chuckled. “Eyes on the road, Mister Oliver Smooth Queen.”

Oliver smiled at her one last time then focused on his driving for a while, the silence between them being comfortable and even reassuring. Felicity was still busy doing God knows what on her tablet, checking a few papers every now and then. After a good 15 minutes, she put the papers back in their
folder and turning around, left it on the back seat. Turning off her tablet, she slipped it back into her purse, sighing. Feeling unwell, she rested her head against her seat, closing her eyes.

“Everything OK?” Oliver asked suddenly.

“I get easily sick in a car. I shouldn’t have read that long. I just feel kinda dizzy,” she replied, her eyes still closed.

“Do you want me to stop? We’re way ahead of schedule.”

“No, no. Don’t worry, I’ll be fine. I just need to relax, it will pass,” she mumbled, both hands resting on her lap.

Fortunately, Oliver didn’t push it. Even though she couldn’t see him, she could sense that his driving was careful and knowing he was probably trying to be as considerate as possible made her smile.

It was only when the car stopped moving that she opened her eyes. “What are we doing here?” Slowly looking around her, she sighed. “You really didn’t have to. I’ll be fine, I don’t want us to be late.”

“Don’t be silly. We’ll be there by noon and the meeting is at 4. We have plenty of time. Come on, get out, get some fresh air. I’ll get you a coke.” Opening the door, he swiftly walked inside the shop, leaving her no choice but to get up as well. Noticing, on the corner of the building, a small table with two benches on either side of it, she slowly made her way there, taking big gulps of fresh air.

She was barely sitting down when Oliver came back to her, holding a small bottle of coke and a bag of chips. “Here, drink this slowly. Once you feel better, you should try to get some chips as well. Something sweet and something salty usually helps me when my stomach is acting up.” He opened the bottle for her, putting it on the table, and sat on the bench as well.

Giving him a small smile, she picked up the bottle, drinking a few sips. “Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it. Do you need anything else?”

“No. This is already more than enough.”

“OK. Let me get your papers, I might as well re-read those documents now.”

While he was gone, Felicity took the chance to get a look around her and noticed that they were almost in the middle of nowhere. There was barely any traffic on this portion of the road, only a couple of cars had passed since they had arrived.

She almost didn’t notice Oliver was back before he sat back again on the bench next to her, mumbling. “So, to make it short: I remind them of the profits QC made them realize in the past years; move onto how financially interesting it will be for them to back us up. I’ll use your graphics to prove that with all the help we get from the state of California, the tax cuts and so on, they will get their investment back in the next couple of years. Also, when the moment is right, smoothly remind them that we backed them up in times of trouble and it might be time to give that trust back.”

Felicity smiled, nodding approvingly. “In short? Yep.”

He snapped his head back at her. “Anything else I’m missing?”
“No. I really don’t think so. Just be your usual self. You’re really good when it comes to speaking in public. I don’t doubt you’ll do great.”

Oliver smiled softly. “I hope so. I don’t want to mess that one up.”

“You won’t.” Reaching over, her hand found one of his and she lightly squeezed. “You have a natural talent to charm people. Just use it.”

He glanced down at their joined hands, making her blush when she realized that it wasn’t exactly appropriate. Crossing her arms on her chest, she cleared her throat. “I already feel better. We can go, now.”

“No. We have plenty of time, I’d rather make sure you’re alright. Besides we’re not going anywhere until you feel good enough to eat something.”

She rolled her eyes at him but didn’t add anything, knowing fully well she wouldn’t be able to eat anything right now.

“Fine.”

They both fell back in a comfortable silence, only interrupted whenever Felicity would put the bottle back on the table or Oliver would turn a page. Unfortunately, if she had no problem with silence, Felicity really had a hard time dealing with inactivity. Putting her elbows on the table, she rested her head on her joined hands.

“I noticed you already knew those documents quite well. I’m actually surprised you found the time to read them so thoroughly last night.”

He glanced at her. “I studied them after you went to your room.”

“Oh. So those three charming ladies declined your company?” She teased him.

“Nope. I didn’t go back to the pub. Thought this,” he motioned the papers he still had in hand, “was more important.” Smirking, he added, “See? I can be responsible when I want to.”

“I’m impressed.” Smiling, she picked up the bag of chips and opened it. Offering it to him, he took one, shoving it in his mouth as she did the same. “I never asked you but… how long have you been working at QC?”

“About three years now. I first worked with Walter, my dad didn’t have the patience to deal with me. Then I was moved to the Marketing Department.”

“Why Marketing?”

“No idea. It seemed like the best solution. It’s also a good way to make sure I get in touch with every other department,” he shrugged, stealing another of her chips.

“Do you like it?”

“Working in Marketing?”
“Yeah. Or at QC. Both, actually.” Grabbing a handful of chips, she put one on her mouth, waiting patiently for him to answer. He seemed to consider her question, looking thoughtful.

“Yes. Yes, I do. I’ll be honest, at first it was just a way for me to keep access to my trust fund. But I’m just realizing that it’s a chance to be involved in such a big company, that can make a real difference in the world. My grand-father started it. My dad, with my mother’s help, made it what it is today. It’s a bit overwhelming to think I’ll have to mark it like they both did. This whole project, this new direction we’re taking… this could be it, you know?”

“It’s a way to make it yours as well and not just something you’re going to inherit,” Felicity nodded.

“… exactly.” He looked at her in wonder, tilting his head.

“… do I have something on my face?” She asked him hesitantly, shifting under his gaze.

“No,” he laughed. “You’re just really good at reading people.”

“Most introverts are.”

“I never saw you as an introvert… you’re way too much into confrontation for that,” he said, surprised.

Felicity quirked an eyebrow. “I’m not into…” She stopped herself as she remembered her behavior from the last few days. “Damn. Maybe I am. I guess we all change at some point.” She laughed slightly, shaking her head. “My mum would be over the moon. She always thought I was too reserved.”

As Oliver was about to say something more, she shook the empty bag in front of him. “See? I ate it all!”

Probably understanding she didn't exactly want to elaborate, he got up, picking up their belongings. “Alright. Do you need anything before we leave?”

“Nope. I’m all good. Let’s go.”

***

After a quick stop for lunch, they arrived at their hotel around 2PM, before the rest of the group. They were supposed to meet in the Lobby at 3:30, which gave them plenty of time to change their clothes. A conference room had been booked at their hotel and Felicity got there in advance to make sure all the tech was working properly. It wasn’t exactly part of her job description, but she knew that no one was qualified to do so. It wasn’t until she had checked that whatever was on her laptop could be shown on the white screen that was on one of the walls that she stopped herself to get a good look around the room. She was surprised to see that there were just a few seats available. Frowning, she was about to ask one of the hotel employees to bring some more when she almost bumped into Mark.

“Fancy seeing you here,” he welcomed her, his lips forming a thin line on his face.

“I’m just making sure everything is ready for Oliver’s presentation,” she defended herself, still on her
guard around him. “I think there might be a problem though. The room is rather small and there are not enough chairs for everyone.”

“Oh, no. Isabel thinks it’s best if the Backstones are met in a small comity. So it will only be a couple of executives,” he smiled sweetly, fixing his bowtie. From what she had seen, Mark had an unusual sense of fashion. He seemed to have a soft spot for colorful bowties and vests. He always looked neat and crisp with a little touch of originality.

Tearing her eyes from his bowtie – blue with red polka dots – his words finally registered.

“What? Why?”

“I don’t ask her to justify her decisions. See the bright side, you’re getting free time. Your boss will have to make it on his own, this time.”

“That’s not what was planned! I’m supposed to be here!” She started to panic. Oliver was good with his speech but they had planned for her to be there to handle the technical questions.

“Aw, sweetie. I’m sure he’ll manage just fine without you. And if he can’t, Isabel will be there, don’t worry.” The sarcasm in his voice and the glee he wasn’t even hiding confirmed that Isabel had probably done it on purpose.

But I’m just supposed to be a low-key assistant. Why does she feel threatened? What does she know?

Trying to hide her thoughts, she just shrugged and went to pick up her handbag that she had left on the table. “I’ll just wait for Oliver, then. I need to explain how to work the laptop.” Also, there is no way I’m leaving you alone in this room.

Fortunately, Oliver showed up a couple of minutes later, efficiently breaking the ice cold atmosphere between the two. Seeing her standing awkwardly, he understood right away that something was up. She just discreetly shook her head at the question in his eyes.

“Apparently, the meeting will only be for a few executives. No assistants allowed,” she explained, keeping her voice as neutral as possible. “I’m just going to show you how this works,” she added, pointing to her laptop and the white screen behind her.

Whose decision is it? That’s not what was planned,” Oliver asked Mark.

“Izabel thinks it’s better to keep it between top executives,” Mark explained, somehow less confident now that he was facing Oliver. “I’ll just… I’ll go see where she is.” He hurried to the door, obviously not comfortable under Oliver’s furious glare.

“Let’s not waste time. It’s done on purpose but we don’t really have a choice. You know everything you have to say. You’ll find the graphics there,” Felicity quickly said, pointing to a file on the desktop. “You’ve got this, Oliver.”

He opened his mouth to reply but was interrupted by a tall, bulky man who was in his thirties. “Queen! Surprised to see you there on time!”

Placating his most professional smile, Oliver turned around, ready to welcome the newcomer. “Bradford. Good to see you again. I didn’t know you were supposed to be here.” Shaking his hand, he added, “I thought your sister was going to join us.”
“She was, but she changed her mind. Pregnant women, you know how they are,” Bradford laughed.
“And who is this charming lady?”

“My assistant. Miss Smoak, this is Bradford Blackstone.”

“Nice to meet you, Mister Blackstone.” Pushing her glasses back on her nose, Felicity turned to Oliver. “I better go.”

“What? Such a lovely girl like you? You’re not gonna leave us between men, are you?” Bradford’s smile was warm and he sounded more teasing than inappropriate.

“Well, assistants are not supposed to attend this meeting, Mister Backstone,” Isabel’s voice interrupted them. “I can assure you I will represent the fairer sex. That will be all, Miss Smoak. Unless Oliver needs anything else?”

Oliver gave her a hard look then turned his head to Felicity. “No. Thank you, you can go.”

Throwing him one last reassuring look, she walked out of the room, chewing on her lower lip. She didn’t doubt he could manage just fine without her, especially since he seemed well prepared. Nonetheless she was still uncomfortable and nervous.

Having nothing to do, she headed back to her room, not willing to be witnessed pacing and biting her nails. This meeting was very important for the company and, even if they hadn’t mentioned it, for Oliver. It was one of his first big tests that he couldn’t afford to fail. Keeping the Backstones as backers would prove that he was worthy of his position and could handle more responsibilities.

One hour and a phone call to Sara later, Felicity was spread on her bed, surrounded by her tablets and laptop. To her surprise, Sara had brought up some new information. Mark had requested to have some information about her, including her resume. Now that explains why she kicked me out of the room. It also turned out that there had been rumors about Isabel who wasn’t supposed to be promoted this quickly. Apparently it even had caught Walter himself by surprise. What the hell happened in Russia to get Robert Queen to make this move so fast?

The small alerts she had on the stock exchanges had also showed that Isabel’s Deatheaters had been buying more shares in the last couple of days as well. Always in small numbers, not enough to attract attention. But they were clearly following a pattern that seemed to be gaining more parts in QC. Knowing what Isabel had been trying to do with Oliver, Felicity’s main theory was that Isabel was planning a hostile takeover. But who was her direct partner? So far, she had found nothing that could tie Isabel with another company big enough to be able to buy off QC.

A small knock on her door startled her. Sticking the pen she’d be chewing in her hair, she eagerly got up from the bed and padded across the room. Checking in the peephole, she let out a sigh of relief to see that it was Oliver. Opening the door, she was slightly surprised to see him quite relaxed, having let go of his suit jacket and tie.

“So, how did it go?” She asked right away, inviting him inside.

“Surprisingly good,” he smiled proudly. “Brad was intrigued by our new project. I convinced him the profits he would get would be much higher than the original costs. Those numbers from the Environment Department you found played a big part. He wants to check them and actually asked if I could meet up with the rest of the clan by the end of week.”
“Oliver, that’s amazing!” She patted his shoulder. “Did he have questions? Details, Queen! I need details!”

He chuckled as he sat down on her bed. “Honestly, I just did what I planned to do in the first place. Approached him with the financial part, like you said to. Your graphics were much more simple to understand, by the way.”

“So we have to add another visit to this trip?” She went to the mini-fridge and offered him a bottle of water.

“Not really. He just wants me.”

Felicity stopped as she was reaching for her own bottle.

“Just you?”

“Yep. He said they don’t want to be bothered in their family house with tons of guests, his sister being pregnant and all that.”

“Isabel must have been so pissed.”

“She was. You should have seen her face,” Oliver smirked as he tipped his bottle against hers. “Cheers!”

“So when are we going?”

“What do you mean, ‘we’?”

Felicity glared at him, not impressed. Nice try.

“Despite what you seem to believe, I can do things on my own.”

She snorted. Oh, please.

He huffed a laugh and shook his head. “Very well… if that’s how you want to play it. We are going this weekend. We’ll have to pass on Fresno, which wasn’t a big step anyway.”

He stood up, getting ready to leave. “Since you’ve been so helpful today, I generously decided to not get back at you right away for that little stunt of yours from last night.”

She almost choked at his words. “Generously?!?”

“I know, I know. You’re lucky to have me as your boss,” he smirked, lightly tapping her nose with his index. “Just know that I haven’t said my last word, Miss Smoak.”

Glancing down at her nose, she raised her eyes and despite her best efforts couldn’t keep the smile off her face. “As I already said… Do your worst, Mister Queen.”
So... you know how much I love getting feedback. Don't be shy, even a couple of words can make my day :D
I really hope the direction I am taking with Oliver makes sense with you all. He is taking charge, and with quite success.

That being said, you can always find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi!
Hi guys! Again, a thousand Thank You for your comments, kudos, reaching out on tumblr, reblogging, retweeting... If I didn't answer any of you, please don't be mad at me. I've had lots of issues with my laptop. It seems fixed (*crossing fingers*) but it's still glitchy.

From now on, I will also be posting the lyrics of the song title I use for each chapter. I honestly don't even know why I didn't think of it before XD.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Bad Moon Rising"

I see the bad moon arising.  
I see trouble on the way.  
I see earthquakes and lightnin'.  
I see bad times today.

[Chorus:]  
Don't go around tonight,  
Well, it's bound to take your life,  
There's a bad moon on the rise.

I hear hurricanes ablowing.  
I know the end is coming soon.  
I fear rivers over flowing.  
I hear the voice of rage and ruin.

[Chorus]  
All right!

Hope you got your things together.  
Hope you are quite prepared to die.  
Looks like we're in for nasty weather.  
One eye is taken for an eye.
“Thank God we don’t have to go to Fresno. The temperatures there are abnormally high for the month of April. More than 100 degrees! I hate it when the weather is so hot. It gets my hair frizzy because my skull gets kinda sweaty.” Felicity took a sip of water then resumed her monologue, “Isn’t it ironic? Most women would love to have curly hair. Well, most women with straight hair. Women who have curly hair want them to be straight. Do men feel like that too? Your hair is straight, would you like to have some curls? Or maybe…”

“Felicity?” Oliver cut her off.

“Mmmh… yep?” she turned her head, giving him her full attention. Her glasses were slightly askew and her usually neat ponytail was long gone.

“You’re babbling non-sense again.”

She gasped. “That is not very gentlemanly of you to say that!”

Oliver smiled at her, taking in her so unusually disheveled appearance. “I think we have already established that I am not a gentleman?”

“There you go, Miss Smoak. It’s done,” the nurse interrupted them as she stood up from her stool.

“Wait… already?” Felicity looked at her in disbelief, her eyes swapping from the grey-haired woman to her own arm where a little bandaid had been placed on the spot where she had gotten a shot.

“Yes, I promised you that you wouldn’t feel a thing, didn’t I?” With a gentle smile, Nurse Nancy gently patted her leg. “Doctor Jones will stop by in a couple of minutes, I’m sure you’ll be able to leave within the next hour.”

Still holding Oliver’s hand, Felicity let out a breath of relief. “I really didn’t feel the needle. How did she manage that?” she mumbled while watching Nurse Nancy pulling off the curtain that was around her bed.

“It’s her job and she’s probably very experienced at it. Not to mention you were too busy scolding me on my lack of manners to notice anything.” Lightly squeezing her hand, Oliver leaned towards her. “How are you feeling?”

“Better. The epipen already took care of the worst. I’m sure I’m still red in the face though, I’m all warm and phew it’s really hot in there, isn’t it?”

“I’m so sorry, Felicity.”

“Hey, it’s not your fault OK? We’ll be able to leave soon enough and I’m sure we’ll make it just in time to the Backstone’s family ranch.”

“I still don’t understand how that could happen… I mean HR knows that you have a severe nut allergy, they always, always, triple-check those things when we have work meals planned ahead.”

“Now is not the time to dwell on that. I’m gonna need to change my clothes and you need to call the
Backstones, just in case we run a bit late. We really had the most awful bad luck ever this week, haven’t we?” Business Felicity was back and already busy untangling her hair. “Could you get me my bag so I can fix the mess-of-a-tomato I look like while we wait for the Doctor?”

“You’re not a mess,” Oliver couldn’t help but chuckle as he took her in one more time, before leaving her alone. “And if it makes you feel better, I promise you’re much cuter than the average tomato.”

4 Days Earlier

“So I just got our new schedule.” Chewing on her pen, Felicity welcomed Oliver as he took a seat across from her. “We have the next three days free so we can plan your meeting with the Backstones. We are still supposed to be in Sacramento on Friday for a video conference with your father, though. Then while we’re heading to Sorora, the rest of the group will go to Fresno.”

“How can you even be so efficient this early?” Oliver asked her, rubbing his eyes.

“It’s 8AM, it’s not that early. And this,” she picked up her cup of coffee, “is my third espresso. That helps.” Taking a sip of coffee, she added, “I was thinking it might be a good idea to head straight away to Sacramento.”

Discreetly waving at a waiter, Oliver nodded absently. “I was thinking about that too. Maybe we could use our time there to dig in the City Hall’s archives or meet a counselor about potential tax cuts?”

“Great idea! With your last name, I should be able to get us an appointment, even on short notice!” Munching on a piece of toast, she quickly got up, already fishing her phone from her coat’s pocket just as a waiter finally approached their table. “Be right back.”

Oliver was savoring his own coffee, waiting for his omelet, when she walked back inside the small restaurant, at a much slower pace.

“That’s it. We have an appointment for Thursday afternoon! It’s quite amazing, all I had to do was say your name and,” she paused and snapped her fingers, “bingo! Just like that, they managed to find someone to answer all of your questions regarding Californian tax cuts for cleaner energy sources!”.

Oliver let out a small smile. “QC supported the governor during his campaign.”

“That’s already one good thing out of the way. I had Dig on the phone yesterday night. Carly is doing better, he thanked me for the flowers I supposedly sent… do you have anything you’d like to share with the class about that?” she teased him, stealing a piece of toast from him.

“Surprisingly enough, I do have manners and I am sometimes able to make a phone call to a flower shop.”

“I would still keep that quiet. It could ruin your reputation if word got out Oliver Queen is a
“I can’t believe there is no Ipod dock.”

“Felicity, it’s a classic car, there were no Ipods when they were constructed,” Oliver patiently explained. They were currently driving south, having left their last hotel merely fifteen minutes before.

“What is stopping you from installing one? Or at least a decent radio?”

“… It. Is. A. Classic,” he calmly seethed through clenched teeth.

The depth of quiet anger he exerted was enough to draw a compromise from Felicity. “OK. Let’s make a deal. I stop bothering you with how outdated this car is…”

Oliver quickly turned his head to glare at her. “Don’t you dare insult my car!”

“… My bad. I know this is a sensitive topic. So I will stop bothering you with how your car is a… classic,” she placated him.

“And what am I supposed to do in return?” Oliver asked suspiciously, while checking in the mirror before making a turn to the left.

“Nothing, that’s the great part of the deal!” Felicity answered cheerfully while rummaging through her messenger bag.

Narrowing his eyes, Oliver tried to get a look at what she was doing.

“Eyes on the road Mister Oliver “Smooth” Queen!” she snapped at him.

Chuckling, he obeyed, relaxing in his seat. “Fine, fine. Don’t try to distract me though. I know you’re plotting something!”

Sighing, she raised her head from her bag. “I’m just going to use my laptop as our own personal MP3 player. I have some speakers in one of my tech bags but that will have to wait until our next stop.”

“Speakers? You have speakers? Who even travels with speakers?!” Oliver laughed in disbelief.

“IT Girls who don’t drive cars that were made almost a century ago, that’s who.”

“Hey! She’s not…”

She cut him off. “So what do you say? Bon Jovi or some good ol’ time rock n’roll? Wait… ‘she’? It’s a she? Oh My God… you named your car, didn’t you?!”

Oliver felt a slight and embarrassing blush creep on his cheeks. “It’s… It’s not what it looks like.”
Felicity howled with laughter “I think it’s exactly what it looks like! Come on, spill the beans, Queen.”

“No.”

“Oh, come on! I won’t say anything!”

“No.”

“Fine. I’ll just ask Tommy,” she smirked.

“Then I’ll give him your phone number.”

Felicity gasped. “You’re not playing fair!”

“You’re nagging me!”

Felicity eye-sided him and let out a resigned sigh. “OK. You want to keep it a secret. I can accept that.”

“Thank God,” Oliver mumbled under his breath.

“Is it Rosalie?”

“Felicity!”

She groaned. “OK, fine. But I get to pick the songs, then.”

**2 hours later**

“I told you this was a bad idea.”

“What?! Like it’s my fault?!”

“Felicity, I knew the way, you’re the one who insisted to use that shortcut your app was advising.”

“There was nothing wrong with the shortcut! There is something wrong with your car breaking down in the middle of nowhere, on the other hand!”

“And we wouldn’t be in the middle of nowhere if we had followed my plan to begin with!”

Felicity opened her mouth to talk but a quick glance at him convinced her to stay silent. The two of them were sitting in the unmoving car that they had managed to park under some trees, a bit outside of the road. The radiator had been overheating apparently, probably due to the unusually high temperatures in California. Fortunately, the hottest hours of the day were already behind them, which also meant that in a few hours, the sun would set. And they were indeed on a very deserted road, in the middle of nowhere.

Sighing, Felicity turned in her seat, facing Oliver. “what should we do? I have no signal and my battery is almost dead. Laptop is down as well.”
“I’ll just walk back to the last intersection. It seemed more inhabited.”

“… what and leave me all alone?!” Felicity protested.

“Are you up for the walk? It’s not close, I’d say it’s at least 5 miles away.”

She groaned, hitting the back of her head on her seat. “I’m not staying here alone.”

“I’m not comfortable with that idea either, to be honest.” Oliver opened his door and stood up, stretching his arms above his head. “Just take what’s necessary.”

She joined him at the back of the car, mentally listing the things she wasn’t comfortable leaving in the car. Laptop, tablet, cellphone, work documents, …

She handed him her messenger bag that he filled with some of her tech while she put the rest in her purse. See? That’s why women have big handbags. It can really be life-saving.

Oliver raised his head and looked worriedly at the sky. “There are some big clouds coming our way. Do you have a trench coat or something?” he asked while picking a thin jacket from his travel bag.

“No… I’ll just take my regular coat.”

With one last look at her belongings, she adjusted the strap of her bag on her shoulder. “I’m ready.”

Closing off the car’s truck, Oliver picked up the messenger bag and threw it across his shoulder “Let’s go, then.”

Thankfully they were both wearing comfortable shoes and were able to walk at a reasonable pace in a comfortable silence. They had left the car for about one hour when Felicity felt the first drop of water hitting her hair. Looking warily above her, she grimaced when she noticed the heavy clouds that were just above their heads. Oliver must have sensed it too and after throwing a quick glance at the sky, he shook his head “Come on, it might just be a few drops.”

“Oh no, you did not just say that,” Felicity said, horrified. “That’s the best way to make sure we’re gonna get drenched!”

As if the skies were just waiting for her words, all hell broke loose and torrents of water fell on them. Both stopped and stared at each other.

“I don’t want to appear like some kind of weather guru buuuuut… It seems like you’re the one who jinxed us,” Oliver pointed out, much to her annoyance.

“Shut up and walk,” Felicity groaned, accelerating the pace in a futile attempt to avoid the rain.

It took them another hour to finally reach what looked like the outlines of a small town. The rain had just stopped, leaving them cold and shivering despite the lingering heat. They both let out a sigh of relief, as the sun has set and they were walking in almost complete darkness. Oliver was the first one to spot the light of neons down the road they were currently following.
Pointing in the direction, he gently nudged Felicity’s shoulder. “Look. With a bit of luck, it might be a motel.”

It turned out that it wasn’t a motel but one of those shabby bars with some loud country music blasting out of the windows. It seemed to be quite full, but not in the way where there wasn’t any room. It was animated, loud, but also dry and warm. Once they finally made it there and stepped inside, they realized the place wasn’t as bad as they had feared. Sure there were people talking loudly, playing pool or darts. Loud laughing and glasses banging could be heard above the music but the place had a safe vibe and offered food which was a good start.

Not wasting any time, they quickly made their way to the main bar where the barman welcomed them with a long whistle.

“Look at you! You look like my dog when he takes his bath!”

“Yes, we… our car broke down and we had to walk here,” Oliver cleared his voice. “Any chance we could send a mechanic or something?”

“There’s old Joe but it’s already closed. If you don’t mind paying him an extra, he might do it, though.”

“Of course. Money won’t be a problem. Is there also a motel nearby where we could spend the night?”

“Eeeerrr…” the barman scratched his head. “I’d be surprised. It’s the festival and as you know, it’s pretty big, here. ’M afraid everything is full miles around.”

“Festival? What kind of festival?” Felicity couldn’t help but ask, her curiosity piqued.

“Ye know, the Corn-Dog Festival! Every year we break the world record of the biggest corn-dog. People come from all over to see this! We make giant corn-dogs, we carve corndogs in redwood, we make corndog-shaped baskets… There’s also the corn-dog chain of love, where people form a big circle and you put the corndog in your mouth and you have to pass it to the person next to you… really? You never heard of it? That's weird.” The barman shrugged as Oliver and Felicity shared a look. Turning around, he shouted towards a group of women, “Louisa! Do you still have rooms?”

One of the women who were playing pool turned around. She was probably in her fifties, her hair still dark and was wearing heavy make-up. “Nope. We're full. Why?”

“These two need a room for tonight. Car broke down.”

“You had a cancelation, though. Remember the Jonestons? They couldn’t make it this year because their grand-mother fell in her pole dancing class?”

“Oh right! We have one room left!”

“Wait… I thought this was a bar?” Felicity asked dumb-founded. She glanced at Oliver who seemed as confused as her.

“Yeah, it is but when the town gets crowded, we use the floor upstairs as a… Bed and Breakfast. Without the breakfast cause we’re usually too hungover.”
“Oooo… Kay. We’ll take it.”

“You’re gonna have to wait, I’ll have to put some sheets on and stuff, though.” Rubbing the back of his head, he picked up the towel he had on his shoulder and proceeded to slap one of the customers who was leaning on the bar. “Take care of the bar for me, will you? And get old Joe. Last time I saw him he was heading to the bathroom. This one,” he pointed towards Oliver, “needs a tow.”

“No need to look, son. I’m right here.” A man who looked more like Santa than a mechanic appeared behind them. “I’m Joe.”

“Hi. Oliver. And this is Felicity,” Oliver replied, shaking his hand.

Joe quickly nodded. “So where is your car?”

“It’s about five or six miles away, East. We left it underneath trees right after the bridge,” Oliver explained.

“OK. If you don’t mind paying the price, we’ll go right there and get it back. You’ll have to wait tomorrow for me to take a look at it, though.”

“Fair enough. As long as we can get our things and change into dry clothes, that’s more than enough for tonight,” Oliver smiled at him then turned towards Felicity. “Do you want to come with us or would you rather stay inside?”

Chewing her bottom lip, she considered her options. She didn’t really like the idea of being all alone in a bar, but the idea of going outside in the cold again was way too depressing. Besides, the bar was full and Oliver wouldn’t be gone for long. “I’ll stay here.”

“Don’t worry, sweetie. We’ll be quick and you’ll get him back to warm you up in no time.”

Felicity felt herself blush from head to toe at the implication. “Oh no… no no… it’s…”

“Don’t be shy, sweetie, it’s perfectly natural. Two young and healthy specimen like you!” Joe laughed loudly, lightly tapping her back.

“No, no, there won’t be any warm up between us tonight, we don’t… it’s not… I mean I’m not…” Felicity babbled, twisting her hands.

“What Felicity is trying to say is that she’s on her period,” Oliver chimed in innocently.

Felicity gaped at him in horror while Joe looked slightly uncomfortable. “Ah… Hum. I’ll go start the truck,” he eventually mumbled before leaving the both of them behind.

“How dare you?! I’m not even…”

He interrupted her, smirking. “I told you I hadn’t said my last word… Sweetie.” He lightly tapped her nose and with a last wink, followed Joe outside.
Sooooo?
Oliver trying to get back at her, it was bound to happen. None of them have said their last words though...
I was really stuck with this chapter, which was the first one I had to write in over a month. The flashforward thingy really helped, and I kept it that way lol.
The song I picked really, really plays nice with the whole vibe I wanted to give to the bar, the town and so on. Also, as Felicity says at the beginning of the chapter... They're really in for a few rough days. I can promise you there will be some very light moments, though ;)

Don't forget to leave a comment, tell me what you liked, what you didn't, what you hope, what you don't hope or whatever you feel like telling me! I always pay attention to what you guys tell me :)
Chapter Notes

SURPRISE!
Well, yes I'm updating sooner than I told you I would... I just finished the chapter I was working on (it's chapter 16 and it's going to be a much longer chapter, btw. So it might take a bit longer to edit) and I'll be honest: I just cannot wait to get your feelings on chapter 15. My adorable beta, yellowpretendingtobered, loved it and I really hope it's going to be a good one for you as well.

Song: December, 1963 - The Four seasons

Find me on Twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

December, 1963 (Oh, What A Night)

Oh, what a night
Late December, back in '63
What a very special time for me
As I remember, what a night

Oh, what a night
You know, I didn't even know her name
But I was never gonna be the same
What a lady, what a night

Oh, I
I got a funny feeling when she walked in the room
Hey, my
As I recall, it ended much too soon

Oh, what a night
Hypnotizing, mesmerizing me
She was everything I dreamed she'd be
Sweet surrender, what a night

And I felt a rush like a rolling bolt of thunder
Spinning my head around and taking my body under
Oh, a night

Oh, I
Got a funny feeling when she walked in the room
Hey, my
As I recall, it ended much too soon

Oh, what a night
Why'd it take so long to see the light?
Seemed so wrong, but now it seems so right
What a lady, what a night

Oh, I felt a rush like a rolling bolt of thunder
Spinning my head around and taking my body under
Oh, what a night (Do do do do do, do do do do)
Oh, what a night (Do do do do do, do do do do)

It took them less than thirty minutes to find the car and bring it back with Joe’s truck to his garage. As Oliver stepped inside the bar for the second time that night, he frowned, looking through the crowd and trying to spot his assistant. It took him a minute or so to see her sitting in one of the small booths by herself, with an empty glass in front of her. Her hair had dried a little and was slightly curly, framing her make-up free face. Oliver stopped a few feet away from her, caught off guard by something he couldn’t exactly pin-point. It was only when she raised her head and noticed him that he finally understood: she had changed her clothes and was now wearing a slightly oversized neon pink hoodie.

“Oh God. ‘Corn-bitch looking for her corn-dog?!’” Oliver read the inscription on the sweat-shirt, completely failing at keeping his voice sarcastic as he couldn’t help but chuckle at how ridiculously un-Felicity this was.

“Shut up. That’s all they had and it was dry and warm!” she mumbled, throwing him a dirty look under her eyelashes.

Oliver laughed, taking a seat across from her. He had changed his clothes in Joe’s truck as soon as he got the chance. Rummaging through his pocket, he finally found his phone.

“Don’t even think about it, Queen,” Felicity threatened him, narrowing her eyes.

“Oh, come on. We need to keep a souvenir of that!” he lightly cursed when he realized his phone battery had died as well. “Damn it.”

Smirking, Felicity raised her hand, waving at one of the waitress. “Our room won’t be ready before another hour. Bob-the-barman told me he had to call a housekeeper.”

A cheerful brunette appeared, picking up the pen she had stuck in her hair and holding a notebook. “Hiya. What can I get you?”

“I’ll have another tequila sunrise,” Felicity answered.
Scribbling down, the waitress nodded, then turned towards Oliver. “And for... Wow. Oh. Wow.”

Gazing at him, she let her eyes travel down his body. Oliver straightened on his seat, winking at her.

“And a double scotch for him” Felicity chirped, throwing him a warning look. The seductive smirk Oliver was already wearing slipped from his face under his assistant's cold stare. *OK, so no flirty, flirty then.*

Oliver cleared his throat, amused by the fact she knew him so well. “Yes, please. No ice.”

“Hum... OK. I'll get your drinks right away.” Winking at him, the waitress bouncingly walked back to the bar.

“You do know I shouldn’t let you drink alcohol, right?” Oliver teased Felicity while settling more comfortably on his seat.

Felicity sighed. “I think we both know that would go against your own code of honor. Keeping a girl from drinking, I mean.”

“Touché,” he shook his head, chuckling. “They didn’t card you? You look kind of young.”

“Honestly? I don’t think they really care as long as I’m not driving.” Playing with the straw in the empty glass that was still in front of her, she smiled. “It was actually the barman’s idea to get me an alcoholic drink, to warm me up. His words, not mine. Although he just gave me a tequila, but it tastes kinda bland.” She stopped herself, frowning. “What is it with men here so concerned about me being cold?”

Oliver opened his mouth to answer but was interrupted with the waitress arrival. She put their glasses on the table, smiling flirtingly at him. “There you go... if you need anything, just let me know, OK? My name is Cassie.”

Oliver huffed out a small laugh but, seeing Felicity's huff of annoyance, decided to not enter her game. “Thank you, Cassie. We will.”

He was just about to raise his glass to tilt it against Felicity’s when he noticed she was already gulping it down. “Cheers, I guess?” Taking a small sip of his own drink, he let the warming taste of it linger on his tongue before swallowing the burning liquid. “So, Joe told me it was probably just the radiator. He’ll fix it tomorrow but since he is taking part in one of their,” he made a vague gesture with his hand, “corn-dog activities, he won’t be able to do it in the morning. We might have to stay here a...”

The sound of loud aspiration coming from Felicity’s straw stopped him. She smacked her lips and put her glass back down, her cheeks noticeably pinker.

Probably noticing he was staring at her, slightly shocked, she asked defensively, “What?”

“Hum? Nothing?” he shifted on his seat when he saw her raising her hand to call the waitress again. “Maybe we should slow down on the tequila sunrise?”

Felicity swapped her head back at him. “Hey! I’m off duty, I’m cold, I’m wet and this thing is making me feel all warm and fuzzy. So, unless you have another way for me to feel all warm and fuzzy, I strongly suggest... Ugh. I didn’t mean... Not like that obviously. I’m not asking you,” she pointed her finger at him then back at herself, “to warm me up.”
Holding both of his hands in the air, he huffed out a laugh. “OK, OK. You’re right. It’s none of my business. And yes. We’re both off duty.” Raising his glass at her, he threw his head back, finishing the drink in one big gulp. “And I think we deserve a night to celebrate, don’t we?”

Grinning, she stood up holding out her hand. “Come on, they have darts in the backroom!”

Quirking an eyebrow, he snorted. “You mean you can play darts?”

“You’d be surprised all the things I can do with those little hands of mine, Mister Queen,” she smiled proudly. “Come on, playing alone is no fun!”

“Alright. I’ll humor you. But I kick ass at darts. I hope you’re not a sore loser.” Standing up, he proceeded to follow her lead to a quieter corner near the pool tables. They stopped by the bar area to order more drinks on their way as well as pick up the darts.

“Well, as the saying goes: Ladies first.”

They had just started their second round when they were joined by other patrons. They were all in their mid-thirties and soon introduced themselves. Danny and Sofia had been married for a couple of years and were enjoying a few days without their 3 year-old son who was spending the week with his grand-parents. There were also Fred and Victoria who had been best friend most of their lives. The six of them got along right away and the alcohol helping, it didn’t take long for them to quit playing darts and start a game of truth or dare. The bartender had stopped by their table one hour before to inform them that their room was ready but they had been having too much fun to actually leave.

“OK. My turn!” Felicity slurred, obviously trying to keep her balance on the high stool. “Oliver, truth or dare?”

“Dare,” Oliver answered, giggling, knowing he was probably just as intoxicated as his blonde companion. He was wearing a bright pink t-shirt with the same exact print as Felicity as a result of his first dare and one of the stupidest smiles Felicity had ever seen on her boss’s face - her words.

The rest of their table cheered as Felicity hummed quietly, eyes unfocused as she was trying to come up with a good idea.

“I daaaaaare you,” she said, pointing at him with her finger, “to sing at the karaoke.”

“That’s the worse you can do?” he snorted. “You’re losing your game, Smoak.”

“But you don’t get to pick the song, of course,” she smirked mischievously.

“Ooooh I like that! Let me get the list!!” Fred got up from his chair, being the most sober one of the group.

“Whatever, guys. I can handle this,” Oliver smiled confidently, putting his arm on the back of Felicity’s stool. “My turn, then. Felicity, truth or dare?”

Looking at him, she frowned, probably not liking the flicker of mischief in his eyes. “… truth?” she
hesitantly said.

“Truth? OK,” Oliver lightly scratched his chin, smiling mischievously.

“Wait, no, no. I was asking myself out loud!”

“Tsss, Felicity, that’s not how it works,” Victoria scolded her. “You said truth, you have to go with it, now.”

“Yep, I’m sorry, sweetie, but it’s the rules,” Oliver gave her his most innocent grin.

“STOP! I need to go to the restrooms. I’m calling a time-out, guys,” Sofia squealed, already standing up. “Besides, we need to wait for Fred. Felicity, are you coming with me?”

“Yup. It’s a universal rule after all. Girls always go to the restroom together,” Felicity nodded, following her new friend to the other side of the bar. She was only a few steps away when she came back to her table, slipping her purse off her shoulder and handing it to Oliver. “Can you hold this for me?”

“Sure.” Putting it on his lap, he took another drink of his glass while All Star by Smash Mouth started playing in the speakers.

“So, how long have you guys been together?” Danny asked, taking a sip of his beer.

“Felicity and I?” Oliver asked, surprised. He was just about to deny it when Victoria interrupted him.

“Yeah. You make a nice couple. Although to be honest, when I first saw you enter the bar I thought you were a weird combination. She looks sweet and adorable and you just have that… weird haircut.”

Oliver blinked. “… what’s wrong with my haircut?”

“Oh no offense, really. I’m a hairdresser and with a jaw like yours? You need short hair,” she nodded confidently. “Preferably a bit of scruff rather than this clean look. You kinda look like a rich frat boy to be honest.”

Taken aback, Oliver found himself at a loss of words for a couple of seconds.

“But now, I see it. You guys really complement each other,” Victoria smiled. “So well that Cassie didn’t even try once to give you her phone number and believe me… that one won’t even be stopped by a wedding ring.”

Oliver frowned, only realizing that, indeed, his night had been much more quiet than usual. He was used to flirting with women, who were just as good at hitting back on him but not once had he been approached that night, apart from Cassie’s first interaction. He couldn’t help but enjoy it, being finally able to act outside of what was expected of Oliver Queen, the charming gentleman. He had gotten the chance to know people he would have probably never met. People who knew nothing about him, his family, his legacy. People who weren’t expecting anything from him. People who weren’t with him for his reputation, but genuinely because they saw someone fun to hang with. He was wearing the stupidest shirt ever - secretly thankful Tommy would never see it —, was more than tipsy and the girl by his side was a real pain in the ass and miles away from the hot bomb that would usually accompany him. Yet, in that moment, everything felt surprisingly right. And that feeling was
liberating. Not to mention, the possibilities he could see from this were endless. Especially when they involved pissing off the bubbly blonde who had been taking more and more place in his life.

“We’ve only been seeing each other for a month, actually,” he nodded. “I’m not proud to admit that at first…” Sighing, he avoided his friends’ looks playing with the zipper on Felicity’s purse.

“… that at first…?” Danny asked, leaning closer and putting his arms on the table.

“Argh. No, you’ll see me… us differently” Oliver shook his head, efficiently putting an embarrassed look on his face.

“Come on, dude! We already told you about that turkey baster last Thanksgiving, I don’t think you could top that!” Danny snorted.

“Yeah, we’re open-minded people around here, Oliver! You can tell us!” Victoria lightly tapped his arm, trying to encourage him to speak up.

“OK. I haven’t shared that with anyone, guess what they say about it being easier with people you don’t know is true…”

“It really is. I would know. I’m a hairdresser, believe me, there is nothing you could tell me that I haven’t heard!” Victoria laughed while Danny nodded.

“See, I like to think I’m an open-minded guy as well. But it took me a while to accept that Felicity… well… she’s different, you know,” Oliver admitted.

“We noticed. She seems to really get you!”

“No. I mean she is different,” Oliver insisted, looking at the other two.

“As in…?” Danny frowned, obviously not understanding where he was getting at.

“She hasn’t always been Felicity,” Oliver answered slowly, letting his words sink.

“…”

“… what do you mean? Like… she changed her name?” Victoria asked, intrigued.

“Her name. And… other things. Other… parts, I should say.” Avoiding their eyes, Oliver focused on his drink, trying to keep the smile off his face.

It took his companions a few seconds to understand what he was implying.

“She used to be a man?!” Danny gasped, the disbelief in his voice matching the expression on Victoria’s face.

“You’re kidding! No way! She really doesn’t look like a guy!”

“Yeah, even before she always looked somehow… feminine and delicate. Her surgeon did a fantastic job, though,” Oliver explained. “Please… just don’t mention it, OK? I shouldn’t even have told you but she’s still ashamed somehow to share that part and you really seem like good people… I just… I don’t know. I thought that you would accept it.”
“Of course! It must be so hard and it’s such a huge decision to... go on with... the whole... thing...” Danny trailed off, his face starting to show some signs of discomfort. “You mean... they cut... they... like, cut all of it? Is it all gone?”

“Yup. I wouldn’t be able to... I mean. It looks 100% real and natural, it’s impressive actually.”

“Wow,” Victoria breathed, taking a shaky sip of her glass.

“Yeah. Wow.” Danny squirmed on his seat. “I mean... I heard about amputations and phantom limb pain... Does she still feel it?” he grimaced, glancing down at his crotch. “Wait, don’t answer that, I don’t think I wanna know.”

***

It took Felicity and Sofia much longer than they had thought. “Phew. That was crazy out there, the line was so long we had to use the men restrooms,” Sofia giggled as they finally made it back to their table.

“Yeah. I used to do it all the time back in college,” Felicity laughed, drinking the last of her cocktail. Noticing Danny coughing awkwardly and Victoria averting her eyes, she wondered aloud, “What? What did I say?”

She turned to Oliver with a questioning look and was met with an innocent smile. Which, of course only convinced her something was up.

“Nothing. Nothing. Just... yeah of course. It’s not... surprising and... hum,” Danny answered, his eyes travelling down her body to glance at the apex of her thighs.

What the hell??

“Hey, I didn’t know that there was also a painkiller vending machine in your restrooms guys! Makes sense for us and cramps but Felicity and I were laughing as to why a guy would need Ibuprofen? Oooooh!!! Maybe it’s for hermaphrodites! I heard some people were born with both reproductive organs! Although usually there’s a surgery when they’re young and they pick the most developed ones,” Sofia frowned. “It must be kinda weird to realize one day that you could have been a totally different person”

Danny’s head swapped back at his wife. “Heeeyy! I wonder where is Fred! He should be back with that... thing he went to get!” he said with forced enthusiasm.

“I think I saw him ordering more drinks at the bar,” Sofia answered, looking confusingly at her husband who was apparently trying to communicate silently with her.

“OK. What is going on?” Felicity asked, the embarrassed looks exchanged around the table not fooling her.

Oliver sighed. “It’s my fault. I told them, Felicity. And they understand, like I told you people would.”
She raised her eyebrows, her voice higher with the confusion. “They understand what?”

“Look, don’t be mad at him,” Danny tried to placate her. “He was right. It makes no difference to us, and Sofia will agree.”

“OK. What the hell is going on here? What will I agree with?!” Sofia asked, as confused as Felicity and probably even more frustrated than her.

“I told them about your changing sex a couple of months ago, Felicity,” Oliver looked at her, mischief in his eyes. Leaning, he murmured in her ear, “Payback.”

It took a few seconds for his words to register in her brain and she huffed out a laugh but quickly sobered up at the serious and compassionate faces surrounding her.

“Oh God, Felicity! I’m so sorry! I didn’t offend you, I hope?!” Sofia brought a hand to cover her mouth. “Danny always tells me I should think before I speak but honestly… you look nothing like a man!” Turning to her husband, she hit him on the chest, “and you, couldn’t you stop me?!”

Felicity stared at Oliver, mouth slightly agape. He grinned at her, bringing his arm around her shoulders. “Oh no, Sofia, don’t feel bad. Even I had a hard time with it, that’s what kept us apart to begin with. I’m not proud of that, but Felicity is such a forgiving person. Aren’t you, sweetie?”

Shaking her head and collecting her thoughts, Felicity cleared her throat. “Yeah. No offence, really, Sofia. You couldn’t have known. Like you said, I know I really don’t have any masculine features… “ she gulped, forcing the next word out of her mouth, “anymore.”

She put her hand on Oliver’s thigh, making sure it looked like a gesture of endearment while squeezing as hard as she could. Him shifting on his seat and trying to smoothly move away from her proved to her she was doing good enough.

Smiling sweetly at him, she explained. “It’s funny, because we actually met in the plastic surgeon’s waiting room. I was there for my pre-surgery check-up and Oliver was there for his micro-penis.”

Oliver choked on his beer and put it down on a table in a hurry, coughing.

“It’s actually hi-la-rious,” she continued, slapping his leg, “cause you know I was, in all modesty, pretty well-endowed and just skwiiiiiiik had it all cut cause I honestly didn’t really know what to with it.” She laughed outloud, patting Oliver’s thigh vigorously enough to leave a bruise, “and this one is… well… was, let’s be fair the surgery helped a bit,… you get the picture,” she giggled, waving her hand in the air.

“I’m gonna go get those drinks with Fred!” Danny scrambled to his feet.

Sofia and Victoria shared a look. “Wow. I would have never thought that Oliver… I mean you, Felicity, that you… You know.”

“Don’t worry, Sofia, we get the same surprise everytime. Don’t we, sweetie?”

Oliver cleared his throat, his eyes throwing daggers at her. “Yeah… everytime.”

“Theyeeere you go, guys. Round of triple shots for everyone!” Fred put the platter on the table, slightly avoiding looking in Oliver and Felicity’s direction, no doubt having been told about the
Felicity grabbed a glass and gulped it right away, reaching with her hand for the list of songs that Danny was holding in his hand. “I guess it’s time for a certain someone to deal with the consequences of their choices, don’t you think?”

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... Payback's a bitch. And payback of a payback is even more of a bitch apparently...
Funny note: DetectivePanda (... it's not your exact username but I really suck at remembering names and nicknames, i'm sorry): When I asked you if you would get easily offended by Oliver hitting hard to get back at Felicity? I had just written that part lol.

Thank you to all of you for your amazing feedback, it is so important for me, you have no idea. It helps me to know which direction I can take, if the tone is right, if you get the humor, if it works with the characters...

Oh and the town where they ended? I have no name for it. Send me suggestions if you have any, it can be real or made-up ; the one that fits the best will be used :)

Hi guys!
I want to thank each and every single one of you... the response for last chapter was incredible! I never had that many comments, and it felt amazing to read them. So, so, sooooo pleased to know that you liked it. I had alot of fun writing it, my beta yellowpretendingtobered had a lot of fun reading it... I'm glad we shared that with you :)

That being said, I also wanted to share a few words. We all know what happened in Paris last night. Some of you might know, I'm Belgian. France and Belgium are very close. Our countries are next to each other, we share a common history, culture, language. I am devastated by what happened, and I know a few of you are from France. I just wanted to let you know that you are in my thoughts, that I know that your values, which are also Belgium's values, will prevail. Hate has tried to take over Europe in the past and has failed. It will fail again.

Now, I do hope this chapter will bring a smile on your faces. It's not a funny-funny one like last one, but it's light and I think now, more than ever, we really need a bit of lightness in our lives.

(remember: we left those two with their new friends who think that felicity used to be a man and Oliver has a tiny teeny little sausage)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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**Last Friday Night**

*There's a stranger in my bed,*
*There's a pounding in my head*
*Glitter all over the room*
*Pink flamingos in the pool*
*I smell like a minibar*
*DJ's passed out in the yard*
*Barbie's on the barbeque*
*This a hickie or a bruise*

*Pictures of last night*
*Ended up online*
*I'm screwed*
*Oh well*
*It's a blacked out blur*
*But I'm pretty sure it ruled*
*Damn*

*Last Friday night*
Yeah, we danced on tabletops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

_Last Friday night_
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

_Last Friday night_
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois
_Last Friday night_
Yeah I think we broke the law
Always say we're gonna stop
Op-oh-oh

This Friday night
Do it all again
This Friday night
Do it all again

Trying to connect the dots
Don't know what to tell my boss
Think the city towed my car
Chandelier is on the floor
Ripped my favorite party dress
Warrant's out for my arrest
Think I need a ginger ale
That was such an epic fail

Pictures of last night
Ended up online
I'm screwed
Oh well
It's a blacked out blur
But I'm pretty sure it ruled
Damn

_Last Friday night_
Yeah, we danced on table tops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

_Last Friday night_
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

_Last Friday night_
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois

Last Friday night
Yeah I think we broke the law
Always say we’re gonna stop
Oh whoa oh

This Friday night
Do it all again
(Do it all again)
This Friday night
Do it all again
(Do it all again)
This Friday night

“You are the dancing queeeeeeen
Young and sweeeeeet only seventeeeneeeeen
See that girl watch that sceeeeneeee
Diggiiiiiiing the dancing queeeeen”

“Whaa…” Felicity humphed as the annoying song reached through her foggy brain. Forcing her eyes open, she tried to look for the source of the irritating noise but the light in the room made her shut them tightly and hiss in pain. “What the heck?”

Burying her head in her pillow, she desperately tried to gather her thoughts, scrambling for pieces of normalcy. Because this, the head-splitting migraine, the unknown room (the small glimpse she had had, had been enough to confirm that this wasn’t her room) were everything but normal for Felicity. Let’s think. I woke up yesterday morning, had breakfast. We took the road. Oh yeah… rain. And that bar. Drinks. Probably too many of those. WAY too many of those.

“I can’t believe I have a hangover,” she groaned, the sound muffled by the pillow. She knew the best thing would be to get up, drink as much water as possible and swallow a couple of aspirins but her body felt like it had been in a mud-fight with Ronda Rousey herself. As she willed herself into a more conscious state, she became more and more aware of the surrounding sounds. The quiet purring of the heater, some muffled voices from other rooms, a quiet snore, dogs barking in the distance. Instead of keeping her alert, those sounds were slowly but surely lulling her back to sleep. Just 5 more minutes. Just 5 more minutes. Just 5 more mi…

Felicity violently raised her head. A quiet snore?!

Blinking from the blinding sunlight that was barely muted by the curtains, she moaned miserably as
she tried to identify the source of the noise. Pushing her hair from her face, she tentatively glimpsed to the right side of the bed. *Frack.*

She could only see a figure underneath the sheets... just like she was. *Frack. Frack. Frack. Frackity Frack.* The only body part visible was the back of a head. A dirty blonde kind of head. A very, very Oliver Queen kind of head.

Her heart beating wildly, Felicity tried to gather her thoughts and remember what had happened last night. *Bar. There was a bar. Then he went to get the car. We had a couple of drinks, played darts. OK. Nothing inappropriate here.*

As she was trying to smoothly get out of bed, moving inch by inch and being as quiet as possible, she heard him stir next to her. Stopping abruptly, she held her breath, not daring to move. Waking up next to her boss was already high on the list of the most embarrassing things she had ever done... having said boss waking up and seeing the same scene with his own eyes would have made it to the top. She let out a breath of relief when Oliver just grunted and shifted an arm underneath his pillow. Pulling back the duvet, she tiptoed across the room, hoping she could reach the small bathroom before he woke up. Unfortunately, just like in the rest of the building, the floor was made of old, cracking wood. Despite her best efforts, each step she was taking was accompanied by a loud crack. She was just about to open the door when the dreaded words reached her.

“Felicity? What are you doing in my room?” Oliver mumbled sleepily.

Pinching her lips, she closed her eyes for a second, summoning all her courage to actually turn back and face him.

“Hum. I think that this is... our room. Hence why I’m in here. With you.” Her eyes shifted across the room as she forbade herself to let them wander to him. Sleepy, ruffled hair Oliver was... something she wasn’t ready for.

Passing a tired hand over his face, he asked, “Did... did anything happen?”

Felicity couldn’t help but feel slightly offended. “I’d like to think you would remember if, indeed, anything had happened. Not to mention, we’re both still fully dressed. You even still have a shoe on.” She pointed with her chin to his left foot that was not covered by the blankets. Sure enough, his shoe was still on, while the other one was oddly laying next to his head.

He frowned, lifting the sheet to have a visual confirmation. “Thank God.”

Felicity raised her eyebrows. “Yeah don’t worry, your virtue is still safe... Whatever is left of it, anyway,” she added under her breath while searching through her handbag. Since he was awake, there was no need to be silent anymore. She finally found what she was looking for, holding the small bottle of pills as if it was her most treasured possession. “Aspirin?”

“Yeah, that’d be great.” Oliver sat up on the bed, having apparently as many difficulties as she had to deal with the light. He turned his back to the window, keeping his eyes down as much as he could while she quickly took a couple of pills, gulping them down with her bottle of water. She handed them to him, figuring that after sleeping in the same bed, they probably could share a bottle of water.

“Thanks.” His voice was raw and throaty, much deeper than what she was used to. He didn’t lose any time, taking the aspirins and swallowing them with a big sip. “Felicity?”
“Mmmh?” she replied, distracted by the movement of his throat.

“Why are you staring?” he asked as he laid back down again, holding a hand over his eyes.

She shook off her trance. “Oh, right. Sorry. I wasn’t staring by the way. Just making sure you wouldn’t… choke yourself to death.”

Oliver slowly raised the hand that was currently hiding half of his face and narrowed his eyes at her. “… what?”

“You know, with the pills and the swallowing… it would be bad. For my resume, I mean. To have my boss dead in my bed. Even if technically, it’s our bed. Not our bed, as in ours. Our bed as in… our bed. That we shared.” She pinched her lips, counting mentally while feeling her cheeks burning. “Platonically, obviously.”

“It’s already hard to keep up with you half of the time,” Oliver mumbled sleepily, “but I can’t even give it a try right now.”

“Right. I’m gonna go take a shower, then. Maybe it will clear my head.” She half walked half stumbled to the bathroom, letting a huge sigh of relief escape her lips as soon as she closed the door, resting on it for a few seconds. As if I needed any incentive for innuendos…

Enjoying the calm, Oliver distractedly listened to the sound of the shower. He had finally kicked out his one shoe and was checking his phone. He had 3 missed calls from Tommy, but no text. Since the two of them had a code that involved texting in case an emergency happened, he wasn’t too worried. He would just call him once his brain would feel less fuzzy. He had just put the phone back on the night stand when a piercing scream came from the bathroom. Caught off guard, it took him a couple of seconds to recognize his assistant’s voice yelling his name.

His heart missing a beat, he jumped to his feet, running to the bathroom door. He was about to knock it down when he directly collided with a very wet and half-naked Felicity.

“Why are you wet?” he blurted out, keeping his hands on her shoulders to help her find her balance.

As she was opening her mouth, with a furious look on her face, she seemed to register his question and took a step back. “I just took a shower, you idiot! You get kinda wet when you take a shower! That’s the principle of taking a shower!” she rolled her eyes, holding back the towel she had hurriedly draped around her.

“I thought something had happened, why did you scream like that?! I was going to bust the door open, I could have found you… in a compromising situation!” He blushed slightly with the last words, secretly hoping that she wouldn’t notice it without her glasses. And if a very vivid mental picture of Felicity underneath the shower popped inside his head, he did his best to push it back in a corner.

“You told everyone I used to be a man!” she shouted, slapping his shoulder.

Oliver looked blankly at her, trying to make sense of her words.

Felicity waited, probably seeing in his eyes that he was trying to rationalize her words.
“… what?” he finally asked, dumbfounded. He looked at her as if she had grown an extra head then let his eyes wander curiously over her body. Body that was still barely covered by a white towel that was stopping way too high on her legs. And damn it, did she have legs… long, toned,… perfect.

“I never noticed you had legs,” he blurted out, unable to stop himself.

Felicity paused, her outrage seemingly forgotten for a moment. “Well, yes I do. And while we’re at it, I also have a face which is way up north!” she snapped her fingers in front of his eyes, effectively getting his attention.

Oliver shook his head, trying to gather his thoughts. “… you used to be a man?” he finally asked incredulously. His eyes travelled back south again, to her perfect legs and there was no way she could have been a man, she had a tiny waist and-

Felicity groaned, interrupting his thoughts. “UGH. No! Of course not!!”

Oliver snorted, trying very hard to keep his eyes from wandering again. “Now why would I tell them that if it’s not…” he stopped in the middle of his words when a very blurry memory made him smile smugly. “I got you back.”

Huffing, she threw her arms in the air. “Yay, congrats!”

She threw him one last exasperated look as she moved past him. “Shower is all yours”.

***

Felicity heard the bathroom door close one more and wasted no time, quickly finding some comfortable clothes she could wear and getting dressed as fast as possible. We’ve had way too much close encounters in the last 24 hours to add that one on the list. As she was putting her socks on, she let her mind wander back to last night. She now remembered clearly what Oliver had done while she had been in the bathroom with Sofia. Oh God. I patted his leg. I will never drink tequila with my boss ever again. She was tying her left shoe when she let out a sound of surprise as her brain came up with what she had told their new friends. “Oh.”

Giggling, she put her foot down and sat on the bed, proceeding to comb her hair

“And he thinks he got me… now that’s cute,” she said outloud. Wonder how long it’s going to take him to remember that part…

She distractedly listened to the sound of the shower that stopped after 10 minutes, tidying the room and going through her bags. Once Oliver stepped inside the room, she was already busy with her tablet in hand, going through the schedule she had planned for them. Obviously she was going to have to change all of it, with them being stuck in… wherever they were.

“Hum, Felicity?” Oliver cleared his throat.

“Yeah?” she raised her head, and felt herself blushing slightly with the sight in front of her. He just had wrapped a towel around his waist, his hair was still damp and a few drops were slowly making their way on his shoulders, travelling down his
“Felicity?” Oliver slightly coughed.

She snapped out of it, mentally cursing herself. “Yeah, sorry. What?”

“Could you… could you just turn over so I can change? I mean… I have nothing underneath,” he explained, waving towards the lower side of his body.

Smirking, Felicity mumbled, “not exactly flash news to me…” while she obediently turned her back to him to give him enough privacy to get dressed.

“What was that?” he asked her while moving across the room. The sound of a zipper was heard, followed by the ruffle of some fabrics.

“Nothing,” she replied, trying to sound as neutral as possible, but miserably failing.

“Felicity, I can hear the smile in your voice,” he gently scolded her. “You can turn.”

“It’s because I’m naturally cheerful,” she smiled at him innocently, knowing she shouldn't be having that much fun to his expense... but then again... he had started it.

He quirked an eyebrow at her as he picked up his shoes to put them on. “I can’t really deny that… but I know you well enough to tell when you’re hiding something from me. Spill the beans, Smoak.”

“What if I told you I’d rather it was a surprise?” she held her index up.

He was just about to push it when his ringtone interrupted him. “We’re not done,” he told her as he went to answer his phone.

“Tommy! Sorry, I was just about to call you!”

Felicity couldn’t hear what the other man said, but she was close enough to hear that he was talking rather loudly. Standing up, she gestured towards the bathroom and mouthed to Oliver, “I’m gonna dry my hair”.

He silently nodded at her, turning his attention back to his best friend.

“… OK slow down. I don’t understand a thing you just said.”

“I said: Dude… What the fuck happened last night?” Tommy articulated, sounding incredulous.

“… you were there too?” Oliver asked, trying to search through his still very fuzzy memory.

“Of course not, what would I do in… wherever the hell you are! I’m talking about the video and the pictures you sent me!” his best friend explained, obviously trying to be as patient as possible.

“… pictures and videos?” Oliver sat down on the bed, feeling that if Tommy Merlyn himself sounded incredulous, he was in for a ride. “I don’t know. I barely remember anything myself. Our car broke down, we had a couple of drinks with a few other patrons. Played darts. Truth or dare…” he recalled, mentally going through the few mental pictures he had left.
“Anything to say about that sweatshirt of yours?”

“What’s wrong with my sweatshirt?” Oliver looked down at the clothes he was currently wearing.

“Not that one, dimwit! Well I sure as hell hope you’re not wearing it again because I’m not sure our friendship could ever recover from that.”

Oliver stood up and reached the stack of dirty clothes he had dumped near the door. Quickly going through them, he finally noticed the pink sweat shirt he had been wearing. “What the… Corn-bitch?!”

“Exactly!” Tommy took a deep breath, “please, tell me you were drunk and it was a dare.”

“Of course it was!”

“Ok. I can work with that. Although, corn-bitch, dude…” Sighing, he continued, “I’m still opening the files you sent me by the way.”

“I never send you pictures or anything when I’m drunk,” Oliver frowned.

“Well I sure got them so you must have picked a new habit.”

Both men stopped at the same time as they both realized. “Felicity!”

Tommy howled with laughter. “I knew she had it in her!”

"That bloody woman!" Groaning loudly, Oliver stomped his way to the small bathroom, knocking heavily on the door. "Felicity!"

A sheepish Felicity opened the door, grimacing. “I take it you remember?”

Not letting him answer, she continued while twisting her hands, “it’s your fault, though. Hadn’t you said that, I would have never ever felt the need to overbid you.”

“But that’s a step too far! It’s my privacy!” he shouted, outraged by the fact she would send pictures of him while he was inebriated.

“Just like it’s mine!” she shouted back. “If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen Oliver!!”

“Who else knows apart Tommy?” he asked, breathing through his nose and willing himself to stay calm.

“Tommy knows?” she asked, her mouth opening in a little O of surprise.

“Of course! Oh my God… who else knows too?!”

“No one knows apart from Sofia, Fred, Danny and Victoria.” She looked at him, confusion written all over her face. None of what she was saying was making sense to him and it was obvious from her face that she wasn’t understanding him any better. “I don’t even get why you’re so mad since Tommy probably knows it’s not true anyway.” Squaring her shoulders, she faced him one last time. “Now, if you don’t mind, I’m gonna go finish getting ready and then you will take me out for breakfast.”
Oliver stood there, watching her retreat, when he remembered his best friend was still on hold. “Felicity, this is not over!” he shouted at the closed door.

“Yeah, Tommy, sorry about that.”

“Are you kidding me? I was just about to make some popcorn.”

Oliver rolled his eyes, picturing him laying back on his office chair, his feet on the desk.

“Come on, dude, let her get ready. She’s clearly not the kind of girl you want to piss off,” Tommy paused. “Oh no. No. You didn’t!”

“What?” Oliver asked, alarmed and wondering what else could possibly happen to him.

“You’re in the same room! You and Felicity…?”

“Wait, no! No, of course not! Nothing happened. I told you, the car broke down, it was super late, they only had this one room available,…”

“You do know that this sounds like the pitch of a very bad rom-com, right?”

“Shut up. It’s true. All rooms are rented because of that corn-dog festival. Hence the sweat shirt I was wearing, by the way,” Oliver explained, trying to stay as calm as possible.

“Oh. Oh. At least there is a reasonable explanation for that. Is that… is that…” Tommy mumbled to himself while pressing a few keys on what sounded like his keyboard. “A MECHANICAL BULL?? Dude, what the fuck?! We had… We had a code!! You rode a mechanical bull and you let someone take pictures of that??”

“I’m gonna kill her.”

“No, you’re not.”

“Yes, I am.”

“No, you’re not.”

“I promise you: yes, I am.”

“Oliver, no you won’t. Want to know why?”

Oliver sighed. “I swear to God if you say it’s because her ass is like the Sistine Chapel of bottoms, I’m gonna…”

“No. It’s because she’s riding the bull with you.”

Oliver paused.

“Ollie? You’re still here?”

“… yeah,” he cleared his throat, hoping clearing his head would be just as simple. “So she didn’t
“Take that pic.”

“Obviously, not. I hate to say this to you, mate, but… have you considered the fact that maybe… you really are the one who sent them?”

Groaning, Oliver sat down on the bed, hiding his head in his hands and letting the phone on speakers. “Is there anything else I should know about?”

“Apart from the fact that I would really like to know why you serenaded your assistant at the karaoke?”

“Oh God. Tell me you’re lying.” Although, the souvenir of one of his last dares made him realize that Tommy was probably saying the truth.

“I wish… my poor ears are never gonna get over that. They are scarred for life. And you know how much ladies like my ears.”

“OK. Tommy, I think I’ll call you back later, unless there’s anything else?” Oliver tried to gather his thoughts and decided he really needed coffee before tackling whatever had happened the night before.

“Well, I would also really like to know what the hell you were doing in bed with a goat,” Tommy asked, partly disgusted, partly horrified and partly… intrigued.

“WHAT?”

“Nah, that’s just me messing with you,” his best friend laughed out loud. “But the fact that you freaked out just proves it could have happened. My sweet Miss Felicity is a hell of a party girl, who would have thought!”

“That’s… not funny, Merlyn. Not funny at all,” Oliver fumed, wishing he could find a way to travel back in time and ignore Felicity’s stupid app that had led them to the middle of nowhere.

“I promise you, one day… I’ll be telling this story and it will make you laugh,” Tommy softly said. “But apparently, not today. Say hi to Miss Felicity for me, and good luck!”

Oliver didn’t have time to reply as Tommy hung up the phone directly. He picked up the phone once more, hesitating. There were apparently pictures and at least one video on the device but he couldn’t bring himself to watch them yet. He was so lost in thought that he didn’t even hear Felicity approaching him. “I didn’t mean to spy on you but you were talking pretty loud… I take it there is some… forensic evidence or something about last night?”

She was chewing her thumb, looking at him hesitantly. She had put her coat on, waiting for him to do the same. As he stood up and picked up his jacket, he frowned and turned towards her. “Are you going to tell me what you thought Tommy knew? The thing that only… Sofia and God knows their names, knew?”

She took a short breath, her eyes shifting. ”It’s nothing, really. We should just go have breakfast. We need to eat something.”

“Felicity…”
“I promise. It’s a tiny, little thing!” she reassured him while hurrying him through the door.

As he followed her, her words kept replaying in his head as if they were trying to tell him something. He was just opening the door that led back to the bar when he stopped, causing her to bump into him. “You told them I have a WHAT?!”

Chapter End Notes

OK so... This Oliver is more like Daniel from Ugly Betty. I just kinda pictured him "dumb" when he has a hangover. Or at least, very slow and gullible lol.

Also, how many of you thought Dancing Queen was the karaoke song? I'm such a tease :p I promise next chapter answers that question! But isn't it interesting that Oliver hasn't changed his ringtone back? ...

I promised a long chapter, but it worked well in two parts: so I'm updating Part II right away (if it's not up when you're reading this, it will be in a couple of minutes).

Thanks for reading, and as you know... I love comments :D
Chapter Notes

I promised a long chapter... I just divided it in two parts :) 

Don't forget, you can find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com

They were both sitting at a table near a window, in a small little café that was right across the bar. Felicity was nursing her cup of coffee between her hands, trying to warm her fingers while Oliver was literally pouting, arms crossed, staring stubbornly at the window.

Sighing, she put her cup down. “Now, come on. Be fair. You looked for it.”

He pointedly ignored her.

Felicity tried to placate him. “Oliver! You told them I was a man. A man! I should be the one offended! You only have to go pee with one of these guys and they’ll know right away that your penis is…” she fumbled with her words. “Very nice. Plus-sized penis, actually.” The familiar blush invaded her cheeks as she replayed her words... Oh God, Not again. Stop. Commenting. On. Your. Boss. Penis.

Oliver’s mouth twitched as he obviously tried to bite back a smile. “A very nice penis? Why, thank you, Miss Smoak.”

She smiled at him and lightly tilted her head. “You know what I mean. And you also know you don’t really have the right to be mad at me.”

Sighing, he picked up his cup of coffee. “I know. Let’s just… forget all about it. We’re going to finish our meal, then stop at Joe’s garage to see how things are working and keep our fingers crossed that we will be able to leave tomorrow morning.”

“Good plan. I like that plan,” Felicity nodded.

“… There still are pictures and videos, apparently,” Oliver lightly scratched his ear, shifting on his seat.

“Right.” Felicity pressed her lips together, nodding her head. “Ok so we’re still finishing breakfast, then analyzing the evidence. Then we forget all about it. Deal?”

“Deal,” Oliver agreed while shoving a huge fork of scrambled eggs in his mouth. Felicity was already done, her plate having been cleared by a busboy a couple of minutes ago. She had only been able to stomach a banana and a slice of buttered toast, but Oliver was obviously much more experienced when it came to dealing with a hangover.

She was currently going through their emails, which were the usual work-related notes. Memos about upcoming meetings, employees and consultants asking for an appointment. She frowned when
she spotted an email from Walter concerning the gas explosion. Clicking it open, she quickly read the first few sentences. It was apparently a preliminary conclusion on the causes of the accident.

“What’s wrong?” Oliver asked her, having apparently noticed the serious expression on her face.

“Walter sent us a copy of the new details they have about the explosion. Your father will apparently tell us more about it during the conference, but so far everything seems to confirm it was man-made.”

“… You mean it’s arson?” he put his fork down, pushing his plate away while bringing his chair closer to hers to have a better look at the screen.

“They still don’t know for sure. But the ground zero area presents abnormalities, according to the firefighters first report. It could have been arson or an honest mistake. Or even neglect of maintenance,” Felicity explained, pointing to the screen as she read.

Oliver sighed. “Do they have any idea how long the investigation could take?”

“No. Honestly, apart from that there isn’t anything new. All he says is that we will probably have more info during the video call with your father,” she shrugged, closing the email. “I received a few alerts concerning QC’s stock shares, though.”

“The ones that are slowly being bought off?”

“Yep. Still the same pattern. I just… I have found no connection whatsoever with another company that could be big enough to try to take over QC. There aren’t that many that could do it in the first place, so that list was pretty small. Yet… nothing that can tie any of them with Isabel Rochev.” She tapped her fingers on the table, frustrated. “I know there is something, I just don’t know how to dig it up!”

“What kind of companies did you look into?” Oliver inquired as he put his arm on the table and rested his head on his closed fist.

“The usual. Kord Industries, Wayne Enterprises,… The top ten of the country.”

Oliver tilted his head, looking at her. “What if it’s not in the country?”

Felicity’s fingers stopped abruptly over the keyboard as she slowly turned towards him. “What do you mean?”

“What if Isabel is working for a company that is not based within the United States? Could you still find information about them?”

“Oh my God. Of course!” she slapped her forehead. “She wasn’t born in the US, was she? And she and your father just got back from…”

“Russia!” they both said in unison.

“I can’t believe I didn’t even think of this. I mean she has been living in the USA ever since she was a toddler, but that doesn’t mean…” she trailed off while typing on her keyboard. “Bingo.”

Oliver took a close look at the screen where a younger Isabel was staring blankly at him.
“She has a Russian passport?”

“Yep.” Pressing a few more keys, she scrolled down the page which was, unfortunately, in Russian. “I suppose you don’t speak Russian?”

“Nope,” he shook his head. “but Raisa could help us.”

“Oh God. Tell me it’s not one of your leggy model girlfriends,” Felicity rolled her eyes. *Trust Oliver Queen to have a Russian girl in his repertoire.*

He glared at her. “Raisa is our governess. She raised me.”

“Oh. My bad.”

“Anyway. She is Russian. She could translate this for us. She is more than trustworthy.”

“Yeah, we could do that but… wait a second…” Frowning, Felicity scrolled back up to the top of the page. “I can’t read Russian but… they use Arabic numbers, just like we do.”

“And how is that helpful?” Oliver trailed off, trying to see where this could lead them.

“Well, this Isabel Rochev might be exactly the same as our Isabel Rochev. But those numbers? They represent her date of birth. And it’s not the same one. That’s why I never found anything about Russia concerning her! Officially, they are not the same person.”

“You mean she has three identities, if we count the other one you already found out about? Stacy whatever?”

“Yes. How doesn’t she get confused?” Felicity raised her eyebrows. “I can barely keep up with myself as it is. And I just have one identity.”

“Can you work your magic and find out if there’s any connection between the Russian Isabel and a possible hostile take-over from a Russian company?”

“Yeah, but that takes… argh. I can’t do this now on public wifi. I was testing my limits with the Russian Passport database, but that kind of research is just too big.” Chewing her lower lip, she groaned, “I hate doing this, but it will really have to wait until I get better settings.”

Oliver comfortingly pressed her shoulder. “You’ve already done more than I thought was possible. We have a new lead; we’ll just focus on that as soon as we’re back at the office. Maybe we should ask Dig, he could help us?”

“Good idea! Who knows, he might have heard of something.” Felicity picked up her own cellphone, already texting him with the new information they had found. Her shoulders slumped a bit when she was done. “I guess all we have to do now is wait?”

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “Yeah. You don’t like that, do you?”

“No. I hate mysteries. They need to be solved,” she grumbled as she put her cellphone back in her bag.

“Speaking of mysteries…” Oliver cleared his throat. “Are you ready to find out what we did last
Felicity moaned, dropping her head on the table. “Do we have to?”

“Would you rather have Tommy tease you about it until one of you dies?”

“Well, if he really plans on teasing me with that, his day will probably come pretty soon,” she mumbled. “But you’re right. We do need to find out.” She slowly raised her head and offered her hand.

Oliver stared at her, eyes moving from her hand to her face.

Rolling her eyes, she sighed. “Your phone!”

“Oh!” grabbing his jacket, he fished his cellphone from his pocket and handed it to her. Plugging it with her usb cable, she launched it so whatever content was inside of it would show on the laptop screen.

Taking a deep breath, she looked at him. “Ready?”

“Ready,” he nodded grimly, squaring his shoulders.

Wincing, she clicked on the picture files, secretly hoping there was nothing inappropriate hiding in them.

The first picture was innocent enough. Felicity was laughing, holding a dart in her hand, obviously trying to aim. The dreadful pink sweatshirt was clearly visible. Her cheeks were pink and her hair was in a messy bun.

Oliver smiled, keeping her from clicking on the next picture. “I remember that. We had just started playing. Our phones were still charging.”

“And I kicked your ass in the first game!” she snapped her fingers at him. “How could I forget about that?!”

“Maybe because I slaughtered yours in the next ones,” he snorted.

“That’s only because I was way too drunk. Also… we now know who started this whole picture thing.” She narrowed her eyes at him and clicked on the screen.

The next couple of pictures were more or less the same. Some were of Oliver playing, others of Felicity. There was also one photograph, taken by Victoria, where Oliver had his arm around her shoulders and was munching on a straw that suspiciously looked like the ones Felicity had had with her tequila sunrises. Both of them were looking at Fred who was mostly out of frame.

“Oh no,” Oliver whispered.

“What?” she asked worriedly, scrutinizing her screen but seeing nothing embarrassing.

“That’s when he dared you to ride the bull.”

“…”
“Do you…”

“Yeah, I remember now,” she coughed, hiding her embarrassment. “Thank you for coming with me, by the way.”

“You really didn’t want to go,” he laughed slightly. “I guess the picture we sent Tommy is next?”

“Probably. It can’t be that bad, right? I mean, he didn’t say anything other than we were both on it, right? He didn’t mention any… naked body parts, right?” Felicity asked, trying to play it light but miserably failing as her hands started twisting again.

He quirked an eyebrow. “… no. Knowing him, he would have definitely mentioned it if there had been naked body parts… why would there be in the first place?” Oliver looked at her weirdly. “Felicity Smoak… have you done bad, bad things on a mechanical bull before? Is that why you didn’t want to ride it in the first place?”

Pinching her lips, she vehemently shook her head, avoiding his eyes.

Oliver’s grin grew the size of Texas. “Whenever we play Truth or Dare again, I can guarantee you that question will be the first one I ask.”

“Yeah, that won’t be happening. Ever.” She glared at him then turned her attention to her laptop once more. The next few pictures were all the same kind. They were rather innocent, slightly embarrassing but nothing that could cause any harm.

“Phew. That was not as bad as I had feared.” Felicity sighed with relief, sitting back on her chair in a much more relaxed stance. Smirking, she threw him a look. “Ready to face your karaoke show?”

Oliver shut his eyes just as a few memories surfaced. “I don’t think so, if it’s anything like what I remember.”

“Yeah… I’m not waiting any longer to watch this anyway. Did I pick the song? I have no recollection of that.” Felicity checked if the sound was at a reasonable volume while Oliver explained, “I don’t think so. You grabbed the list but Fred said he already had made the perfect pick.”

The two of them stared at the screen as a clearly inebriated Oliver made his way onto the small stage under a chorus of cat calls and whistles. As the first notes started, Felicity gasped, holding a hand to her heart while Oliver groaned, tilting his head backwards and staring at the ceiling. “Yeah… it’s exactly like what I remember”

Now I had the time of my life

No I never felt this way before

Pausing the video, Felicity exclaimed. “You’re not bad. Not bad at all!” Trying to keep a straight face, she lost the battle as a smile spread her lips so wide it actually started to hurt. Pressing play again, she muffled a giggle behind her hand. Oliver Queen was singing a song from Dirty Dancing and from what she was seeing… he didn’t even need to read the lyrics. “Oh my… You know that song by heart!”
“Shut up. It’s one of Thea’s favorite movies, OK?” Oliver grumbled. As soon as he had seen himself grab the mic, he had lowered his head, holding a hand above his eyebrows. “Not to mention, in case you forgot… it’s a duo,” he smirked when her humorous smile turned into an expression of horror as a woman’s voice could be heard on the recording. Holding her own mic with two hands, Felicity joined the on-stage Oliver enthusiastically – and slightly off-key - on the second verse under the small crowd’s cheers. She stumbled over her own feet when Oliver held out his hand for her to rejoin him in a pirouette but managed to get her bearings just in time for the chorus, Oliver’s arm firmly around her waist to help her stay up.

\[I\text{ had the time of my life}\]

\[N\text{o I never felt this way before}\]

\[Y\text{es I swear it’s the truth}\]

\[A\text{nd I owe it all to you}\]

“Oh God. Oh God. Oh God Oh God Oh God,” Felicity repeated over and over as her eyes stayed glued to the screen, unable to press stop as she was witnessing herself trying to replay the choreography of Dirty Dancing. “Did you just…” she laughed nervously, glancing at him. “Did you just ‘hey baby!’ me? And try to glide on your knees like Patrick Swayze?”

His eyes on the screen, he frowned, head tipping on the side, as the onscreen Felicity was doing weird moves with her arms. “At least I’m not the one who gave up the choreography and went with La Macarena instead.”

“This is a nightmare. That’s why I don’t remember anything. My memory blocked it to preserve my sanity.” Letting out a shaky breath, she added, “why are you getting off that stage?! I swear to God, Queen, if you left me all alone up there, I’m gonna… Oh. Ooooh! That’s why I hurt everywhere!” Understanding drew upon her as she saw herself trotting her way to Oliver who was waiting for her, arms outreached.

Oliver grimaced. “That’s not gonna end up… Yep.” As Felicity attempted to jump in his waiting arms, no doubt to reproduce the famous lift, Oliver tripped and both stumbled across a few patrons, landing on a table in a mix of limbs while the music was still playing. Having ended on top of Oliver, Felicity howled with hysterical laughter, losing her balance and falling backwards on the only chair that had survived their arrival, then let herself fall on the floor, holding her sides as the laughter fit slowly subsided into hiccups. Oliver was gazing down at her, still perched on the table, protectively holding her glasses in his hand, a shit-eating grin on his face.

He shifted uncomfortably on his chair. That moment, somehow, had been perfectly engraved in his memory. So perfectly that he actually hadn’t believed it had happened, in the middle of all the blurry images he had kept from the night. Even now, he couldn’t make sense of it. Why, of all the things that had happened that night, had his brain chosen to remember that little scene so perfectly? He had never seen Felicity so carefree, and hadn’t been able to tear his eyes off of her. The video finally ended as he held his arms out to help her back on her feet, and neither of them broke the embrace, gazing into each other eyes as their laughter slowly died. Oliver delicately put her glasses back on, tucking her hair behind her ears.

Neither of them broke the sudden silence for a couple of seconds, still staring at the now empty screen.
“I say we stick to the plan,” Felicity nodded her head, avoiding his eyes.

“The plan?”

“Yeah. We saw the evidence and now we forget all about it.”

“It’s a really good plan,” Oliver confirmed, nodding his head enthusiastically. “I like that plan.”

Chapter End Notes

There is a shift in their relationship. Throughout the rest of the story, we will get other glimpses of what happened that night. Details or things they remember at some point... things like that.

For the "Serial Killer Haircut Support Group": your moment will be in next chapter. Be brave!
Smile

Chapter Notes

Song: Smile - Uncle Kracker

Oh my... Guys we reached 1000 kudos, this is unbelievable!! Thank you so much to each and every single one of you. Thank you for the comments, retweets, reblog, likes,... everything!

Now, the moment most of you have been waiting for... I hope you're all ready to say goodbye to that dreadful haircut? I know, I know it's going to be hard...

Also, this chapter is longer, hope that will make some of you happy ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Smile"

You're better than the best
I'm lucky just to linger in your light
Cooler than the flip-side of my pillow (that's right)
Completely unaware
Nothing can compare to where you send me
It lets me know that it's okay (yeah, it's okay)
And the moments when my good times start to fade

[Chorus:]
You make me smile like the sun,
Fall outta bed
Sing like a bird,
Dizzy in my head
Spin like a record,
Crazy on a Sunday night
You make me dance like a fool,
Forget how to breathe
Shine like gold,
Buzz like a bee
Just the thought of you can drive me wild
Oh, you make me smile
Even when you're gone
Somehow you come along
Just like a flower poking through the sidewalk crack
And just like that
You steal away the rain
And just like that

[Chorus]
Don't know how I lived without you
'Cause every time that I get around you
I see the best of me inside your eyes
You make me smile

You make me dance like a fool,
Forget how to breathe
Shine like gold,
Buzz like a bee
Just the thought of you can drive me wild
Oh, you make me smile

It turned out that Joe would only need a couple of hours to fix Oliver’s car. Leaving in the late afternoon was out of the question though as they didn’t want to have to drive by night if they could avoid it. They would just leave the next morning, which left them enough time to make it to Sacramento for Oliver’s appointment with one of the counselors as well as the conference call with Robert Queen.

They were just leaving the garage when they ran into Victoria and Fred whose arms were full of decorations and flags.

“There you are! We’ve been looking for you everywhere!”

Oliver and Felicity looked at each other, confused.

“The mini-golf tournament!” Victoria hissed. “Tell me you didn’t forget! You guys signed in yesterday!”

“You have got to be kidding me…” Oliver grumbled, passing a tired hand over his face. “Look, Victoria, we might have had too much to drink last night and…”

“Non-sense, we all had too much to drink. Besides, Joe already told me you wouldn’t be able to leave today.”

Felicity opened her mouth but was cut off by Fred. “Come on, guys. It’s the first time we are doing one of those, we need as many participants as possible. It will be fun!”

“I understand but we have work to do…” Oliver trailed off until Felicity poked his arm.
“I never took part in a mini-golf tournament…” she whispered, pouting and playing with her earring.

Sighing, he shook his head. “Fine.” He rolled his eyes when Felicity let out a squeal of delight. “We’re in.”

“Perfect! It starts in one hour, which gives you plenty of time to come to the salon,” Victoria beamed at him.

“The salon?” Felicity asked as confusion made her scrunch her nose.

“Yeah. Remember Oliver’s last bet?” Fred asked innocently.

Searching her memory, Felicity mumbled, “… No. I remember you’re a hairdresser, hence the salon, but what does it have to do with… Oh. Oh yes. Now I remember.” Smiling wildly, she turned to Oliver who held up a hand.

“No. I was drunk and you’re not supposed to have dares that happen once you sober up.” He shook his head, crossing his arms.

“Hey! A dare is a dare! You said you’d let her cut your hair, then let her cut your hair!” Felicity joined her new friends, facing Oliver.

“Not to mention… your haircut hurts me. In my soul.” Victoria bit her lips, lightly shaking her head as her eyes landed on his hair.

“There is nothing wrong with my hair!” Oliver huffed out. “Felicity, tell them!”

Felicity averted his eyes, focusing on a pigeon that was currently eating some bread crumbs. “Mmmh?”

“Felicity!”

She winced. “Oliver. You are a very attractive man. But this haircut makes you look like Ted Bundy.” She sighed, putting a comforting hand on his arm. “It won’t take long, right Victoria?”

“Of course not! 30 minutes and it will be done, I promise,” Victoria smiled reassuringly at him. “Meet me there in 15 minutes? Just walk down the street, it’s on this side of the road. Can’t miss it, it’s the only beauty salon.”

“Please. I can’t… I can’t go to a beauty salon,” Oliver almost pleaded.

“Fine. We’re gonna say it’s a barber shop mostly frequented by middle-aged women,” Victoria rolled her eyes as she turned around. “We need to drop these but I’ll be there in time, don’t worry!”

“Take your time, really, there’s no rush!” Oliver shouted as they watched the pair walk away. He folded his arms once more as he faced Felicity. “Thank you so much for your support and loyalty, by the way.”

“Hey! Would you rather I lied to you?”

“… I wouldn’t be offended if you had lied about this. Ted Bundy, really?”
“It’s just hair, I’m sure it’s going to look great!” Felicity tried to cheer him up.

“We have a very important meeting, in case you forgot.”

“Oliver, you’re a guy. If you really don’t like it, all you have to do is ask her to shave it off.” Felicity put her hands on her hips. “Aren’t you a whiny little boy when you’re hungover!”

Oliver gasped. “Now I’d love to see how you would react if someone wanted to cut your hair without you having a say at it!”

“In case you didn’t notice, I wear it in a ponytail, so I think I could survive having a couple of inches less,” she dryly said as she grabbed his arm to get him to walk. “Come on, let’s go.”

He begrudgingly followed her, staying a few feet behind and mumbling on about how Thea loved to play with his hair.

“Your little sister is almost a teenager. Believe me… soon enough she’s going to want to play with other boys.”

“Ewww! Don’t… I don’t want to hear that about my baby sister!”

“Then be a man and stop complaining,” Felicity answered distractedly as she stopped to look at a window’s shop, her eyes lingering on a cute pair of panda flats. Shaking her head, she resumed her walking while Oliver sped up to be at her side.

“So… you think I’m attractive?” he lightly said, shoving his hands in his pockets.

“What makes you say that?” Felicity avoided answering, trying to walk faster but failing to get any advance on him. Damn him and his long legs.

“You said so yourself, not five minutes ago,” he smirked.

“I was trying to soften the blow, Oliver.” She stopped abruptly on the sidewalk. “Oh. We’re here.”

Oliver groaned. “This is a nightmare…”

“I think you’re going to fit in perfectly,” Felicity said, trying to keep from smiling. The whole place was what most people would expect from a provincial beauty salon. The big window was framed with old-fashioned curtains and the clientele was very middle-aged. There were two women under heating helmets while another one was getting curlers.

“Please, Felicity. I promise you I will go to my barber’s as soon as we go back to Starling,” Oliver pleaded with her, a look of panic on his face.

“What’s wrong, Oliver? Don’t tell me you stopped enjoying women’s company? I had to endure it when you gave me the tour of the company on my first day, remember? Consider this as karma biting you in the ass,” she smiled sweetly, opening the door and ushering him inside.

The small ding-ding announcing newcomers made everyone turn their heads. What had been, just a few seconds before, animated conversations turned to complete silence as the clients and workers stared at them. Oliver shifted uncomfortably on his feet, moving closer to Felicity and trying to hide behind her.
She rolled her eyes and plastered a smile on her face. “Hi. We have an appointment with Victoria. She said we could wait for her?”

The hairdresser who was busy with the curlers seemed to shake off her trance. “Oh. Sure. Just take a seat.”

Felicity took the last chair in the small waiting area while Oliver stood there, arms hanging and looking completely lost.

One of the oldest women under the helmets patted the empty seat next to her. “Come here, young man. You can keep me company. My name is Helen.”

He hesitantly sat down next to her, trying to avoid bumping his head against the helmet that was attached to the seat. “I’m Oliver. Nice to meet you.”

“I’m sorry, dear, I left my glasses in my purse. It’s just behind you, could you grab it for me?” Helen asked him. “It’s hard for me to get up, I had a hip replacement recently.”

Oliver hurried to his feet. “Of course!” Turning around, he paused in front of the several handbags in display. “Which one is it?”

“Mmmh? Oh the big red one,” the older woman answered distractedly, too busy staring at his backside. Felicity tried to muffle her laugh by hiding behind a magazine while Helen was holding a silent conversation with one of her friends. “No, no, I’m sorry, dear. Not that one, I meant the black and red one.” Oliver turned over again and when he raised his arm to place the purse back on its hook, his sweatshirt lifted a bit, showing some skin on his lower back.

“This one?” Oliver asked, holding a purse.

“Yes, thank you. Aren’t you a delicious young man?” she smiled at him as she took the bag, patting his stomach in the process. “My, my, my… don’t we have a nice, firm stomach!”

Oliver blushed, glancing at Felicity who was still trying to hide her amusement.

They only had to wait about five minutes but those minutes were probably the longest in Oliver's life. Only his pride, and Felicity's glare, kept him from running away.

“Great, you’re here. As you can see it’s a bit crowded here. Big day for the town!” Victoria chirped as she entered the salon. “I suppose you don’t necessarily want me to wash your hair?”

“No! No need to wash it!” Oliver replied instantly, alarmed. “Let’s just get done with this.”

“OK, then,” Victoria showed him a seat opposite the big mirrors, between two clients.

Oliver sat down, his foot nervously tapping while Victoria took a big cape and placed it around his shoulders.

“Relax. I know what I’m doing, don’t worry. I’ll just shorten it a bit, I promise,” Victoria reassured him.
Oliver saw Felicity approaching from the corner of his eyes as she was holding her cellphone. “Don’t you dare! I think there has been enough pictures taken!”

“Oliver. You’re in a beauty salon, wearing a purple cape with flower pattern. I will never forgive myself if I don’t immortalize this,” Felicity gently scolded him, her eyes twinkling with mischief.

“I swear to God, if you send this to Tommy…” Oliver threatened her.

“Oh no, no, no. There is no way I am wasting this just for a good laugh. It’s perfect blackmail material.”

Oliver opened his mouth to reply but she cut him off right away. “I’m gonna do a bit of shopping in those cute little shops. I’ll come and pick you up in 20 minutes.” Smiling at him, she leaned down and whispered in his ear. “Try to behave. I wouldn’t want to find you in the bathroom with one of those charming ladies.”

Oliver glared furiously at her. “I’ll make you pay.”

“Tsk, tsk” she chirped, holding her phone. “I wouldn’t threaten me if I were you…”

“Ready, Oliver?” Victoria asked, scissors in hand.

As he watched his assistant walking out the door, he sighed. “As I ever will be.”

***

“Oliver, you look even more charming!”

“It makes your hair look so soft!”

“It’s also the perfect length. Your girlfriend can still grab it when… well when she wants to grab it.”

“Helen, don’t grab his hair!”

“I am merely proving my point, Beatrice!”

“And with that scruffy look? Victoria, you did wonderful!”

As Felicity reentered the salon 30 minutes later, she couldn’t see Oliver at first. The seat where she had left him was surrounded by all the clients and workers who were, apparently, more than approving of his new haircut. She cleared her throat, trying to get to him. *Only because we need to head to this mini-golf tournament. Absolutely not because I’m dying to see how he looks.*

As soon as Oliver saw her, relief showed on his face. She stopped, taken aback. *My, my, my…* Shaking her head, she quickly caught herself. “Well. See? You really didn’t have to worry.”

Victoria chimed in. “I told you! A jaw like this needs short hair!”
Felicity smiled softly, still gazing into Oliver’s eyes. “You were right. That was a very good dare, indeed.”

He stood up as soon as the dreadful cape was untied. “Victoria told me where the mini-golf tournament is being held. We should go now or we’re gonna be late.”

Felicity barely had the time to say goodbye, Oliver dragging her outside the salon.

“Jeez, I didn’t know you loved mini-golf that much,” she dryly said.

Glaring at her, he kept walking at a relatively steady pace. *This short hair really brings out his eyes. I never noticed they were that blue. It’s unfair really. The whole face AND the eyes?*

Smirking, he side-eyed her. “I take it I don’t look like a serial-killer anymore?”

Blushing from head to toe, Felicity groaned. “I didn’t mean to say that out-loud”

“Which part? The one about me looking like Ted Bundy or the one complimenting my appearance?” he teased her. “You’re gonna have to be a bit more specific.”

She remained silent, throwing him a glare. They resumed their walk, glancing at the other every now and then until Oliver couldn’t take it anymore. "I'm still glad to know I have the whole package."

Felicity opened her mouth to reply but words were left hanging as she stared at a point behind Oliver. Frowning, he turned, wondering what had caught her attention and found himself just as speechless when he saw a police car on the curb with an officer trying to push a grown-up man on the back-seat. A grown-up man dressed as a giant corn-dog.

“Come on, sheriff. I wasn’t trying to flash those ladies!”

“Bartholomew, just get in the car.”

“It’s that bloody costume! I couldn’t get inside the restrooms! Just like I won’t fit in your back-seat!”

“Of course you’ll fit!” The officer pushed a little harder, groaning slightly with the effort.

“What kind of crazy town is this…” Oliver mumbled, unable to tear his eyes off the scene.

Even if he kept his voice down, the sheriff heard him and swapped his head at them. “Oh, you two! Get here!”

Felicity and Oliver looked behind them then back at the officer.

“Yeah, you two over there!”

Sharing a look, they both walked the few feet that lead to the car.

“You,” the officer pointed at Oliver, “you push on the head. And you, young lady, go on the other side of the car and grab Bartholomew. When I tell you, you start pulling.”

Both of them stayed there, mouth agape and slightly blinking at the man.
“Preferably today if you don’t mind!” he barked at them.

“Sorry,” they both said at the same time, hurrying to get to their positions. Felicity climbed on the other side of the car, awkwardly circling whatever body part of Abraham she could get.

“No, not there, sweetie. My wife wouldn’t appreciate it.”

“Oh God I’m sorry, it’s hard to tell with all… all that fabric. Is it better if I put my hands… Oh wow, there too? I’m really sorry. Not for your wife, though, she’s a lucky… I mean, that’s impressive. Sorry. Hum. Where can I hold it? I mean you? Where can I hold you?” Oliver could hear Felicity’s usual rambling as he stepped next to the sheriff, putting both his hands on the top of the costume.

“Is she often like that?” the police officer asked him, quirking an eyebrow.

“… Yes. You get used to it, eventually.”

The other man laughed. “OK, Bartholomew, everyone, are you ready? 1,2,3. PULL!”

Once Bartholomew was securely inside the car, the sheriff thanked them, assuring them he was just driving him back home and not arresting him.

“I’m almost afraid to go to that mini-golf tournament,” Oliver slyly said as they stood on the pavement, watching the sheriff’s car driving away.

“It’s too late to change our mind anyway,” Felicity answered distractedly.

Intrigued, Oliver glanced at her, then followed her eyes. They were indeed near the entrance of a big parking lot with several signs indicating this was where the tournament was being held. As they made their way inside the building, they were not surprised to find decorations with the theme of the festival. All the employees were dressed accordingly, although none of them had been brave enough to get a costume like Bartholomew had. Approaching the ticket booth, they signed up their names while the employee explained the rules of the game. It was a duo tournament, the pairing with the least swings would win the Cup. There would obviously be referees at each of the holes, making sure no cheating occurred.

“Once you’re done, just come back here with your sheet. Don’t forget, only the referees can write down the number of swings,” the employee explained, handing them their clubs and two small balls. “Game officially started 30 minutes ago, you will have to complete the 25 holes before 6PM. That leaves you plenty of time, though. The winners will be announced tonight at the bar. 1st prize is all you can eat corn dogs for the rest of the festival. Have fun!”

Walking through the building, they made their way to the big doors, following the signs.

“How do you want to do it?” Felicity asked, taking in the small crowd that had gathered outside. From what they could see, people could start wherever they wanted, ensuring there wasn’t any queue.

Oliver quirked an eyebrow at her.
She rolled her eyes. “You know perfectly well what I meant.”

Chuckling, he handed her a club. “There’s no one anymore at the first hole. Let’s try to do it the right way, shall we?”

Leading her to the small sign that was indicating the beginning of the game, he put down the ball, gesturing for her to take the first shot. She stepped in front of him, while he put his hands across her, resting them on her own on the club. “You need to be supple when you’re holding it. Firm, but supple.”

“Like when I hold chopsticks?” she smiled, turning her head to look at him.

He grinned at her, remembering when he had tried to teach her how to eat Chinese food with chopsticks. “I really hope you do better when you have bigger things in your hands.”

Felicity gasped, laughing. “You did not just say that!”

Smirking, he placed his hands on her hips to correct her position. “Don’t be stiff, use your hips for balance.”

He stepped back, giving her room while she threw him one last look. Adjusting her stance, she balanced the club once, twice, before hitting the ball with perfect precision, sending it in the hole right away. Smirking, she turned back to face him. “Looks like I’m doing pretty good if the stick is big enough.”

Oliver chuckled, shaking his head. “OK. You’ve played before. Why did you tell me you never had?”

“First of all… I never said that. I said I never took part in a tournament, which is different. And second of all... you seemed to be having so much fun playing the professor, I didn’t want to ruin that.” She lightly tapped his cheek before scurrying to get her ball. Oliver gulped when she bent down, unable to tear his eyes off her.

She caught him red-handed, but seemed to stay oblivious to where his thoughts had taken him as she asked, turning around and trying to take a loot at her behind. “Do I have something on my jeans?”

“Hum. No. You’re fine,” he mumbled, avoiding her eyes as he placed his own ball on the small painted circle. As she went to the referee to have her score written on the sheet, Oliver took his shot and did just as well as her.

“Hey, we’re pretty good! Think we could win?” she asked him gleefully.

“No idea.” Giving the referee his own sheet, he asked, “are the other ones good?”

“They’re OK. A few couples are pretty good but most people are here for the fun.” The referee handed him his sheet back. “There will be prizes for the three best scores, you probably could get on the podium.”

Felicity narrowed her eyes, observing the other contestants and he frowned at the look of intense concentration on her face, but knew better than to ask what her brain was coming up with.

“Oliver?” she eventually said while he guided her to the second hole.
“Yes?”

“I want to win,” she calmly asserted. “We are going to win. We are going to win and get this dreadful corn dog cup back to Starling City and you’re gonna put it proudly on your desk.”

Oliver looked at her warily, worried by the calm confidence. “… I don’t want to be a let-down, but unless you find a way to disable all those people, it won’t just be a matter of what you want. Not to mention, why should it be on my desk?!”

“We’re good. Most of them clearly enjoy a drink. And, please, look at me. Do I look like the kind of girl who has a corn dog covered in fake gold on her desk?” she answered, barely looking at him, and he could swear she was already scheming, a small calculated smile growing on her lips.

“You’re the one who wants it in the first place!”

“I want it because I want to win. But fine, if it makes you feel better we’ll have a shared custody,” she waved dismissively. “Not to mention, we’ll get the all you can eat!”

“Felicity. I’m rich. I think I could afford to buy us a couple of corn-dogs.”

Ignoring him, she mumbled, “we need to distract them.”

“Felicity…”

“Take off your shirt, Oliver.”

“… what?”

“Most of the players are women. We need to distract them. So take off your shirt,” she explained slowly as if he was a six-year-old.

“Felicity, I’m not getting half-naked just so you can win a stupid cup!” he hissed, aware that they were slowly becoming an attraction.

Sighing, she folded her arms. “Fine. You’d better play well, though.”

It only took them a little less than two hours to complete all the holes. They had done pretty well, according to Felicity who had desperately been nagging the referees to get an estimation of their chances to win the cup. None of them had been willing to answer, which ended up with a pouting Felicity and an amused Oliver.

“I didn’t ask for anything specific. Just a general idea.” Raising her arms, she huffed out a frustrated breath.

“Felicity? It’s just a game.” Oliver tried to hide his smile as both of them were heading to the garage. They had just stopped on the way to get a drink and a corn-dog – regular for Oliver and turkey for Felicity.

“Exactly! It’s supposed to be fun! How am I supposed to have fun when I’m being left in the
darkness of ignorance?"

“You’ll find out in,” Oliver quickly glanced at his watch, “one hour at the most. Think you can handle the darkness until then or am I gonna have to dig up my bags for that topical anesthetic?”

She narrowed her eyes at him. “Are you calling me…”

He cut her off. “A cranky toddler probably teething?” he asked innocently. “Why, yes, I believe I am.”

“Here come the lovebirds!” a booming voice welcomed them as soon as they stepped inside the garage. Joe walked towards them, drying his hand on an old rag. “Good news, kid. Your car is fixed and ready to go. You’ll just have to go gentle on her, if it gets too hot, stop regularly to pour water in the radiator. Those old beauties can be fragile. I’ll just need to make one last check, take her for a small ride to make sure everything works. I’ll leave it on the parking lot in front of the bar for you. I’ll give the key to Bob if I don’t see you.”

“That’s great. Thanks a lot, Joe.” Oliver fished out his wallet, handing him his credit card. “Just charge everything on it.”

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Victoria waved at them as soon as they stepped inside the bar. She was sitting in a booth, with Fred, Danny and Sofia. As the place was already slightly crowded, it took them a couple of minutes to make their way to their friends. Oliver let Felicity sit down first, taking place next to her on one side of the booth.

“I have to say, Oliver… Victoria was right. This haircut is… wow.” Sofia complimented him as soon as he arrived.

He rolled his eyes. “I’d rather forget all about this dare.”

Felicity gently nudged him in the ribs. “Don’t be so whiny. You sure didn’t seem to mind the compliments when I picked you up at the salon.”

He glared at her. “I’d rather forget about that as well, if you don’t mind.”

She smiled sweetly at him then turned her attention towards the rest of the table, whispering, “don’t mind him. He’s a sore loser.”

Rolling his eyes, Oliver stood up. “First round is on me.” He quickly registered what they were drinking before making his way to the bar area.

“Look who’s talking! Miss ‘I don’t want to ride that bull because the dare isn’t fair’” Fred laughed, gulping down the rest of his drink.

“I… honestly don’t remember much about last night,” Felicity blushed. “But I’m sure I had a good reason to say that.”
“Come on. You all but pleaded your man to go with you. All doe-eyed and everything,” Danny snorted before taking a gulp of his beer. ‘You’re lucky he’s so whipped.’

“Don’t pay attention to him,” Sofia interrupted. “I thought that was so sweet that Oliver went with you because he was afraid you’d fall and hurt yourself.”

Giggling, Victoria leaned towards her. “We were all more than tipsy last night.”

Felicity groaned, putting her head between her hands. “Don’t remind me. I just got rid of the headache. I’m never ever drinking tequila sunrise again.”

“Good. That’s why I chose a lemonade.” Oliver put a glass in front of her then proceeded to empty his platter by placing beers in front of everyone, except him.

“Ginger ale?” Fred raised his eyebrows

“Yeah. Long road tomorrow. Not risking it.” He raised his bottle. “Cheers, though.”

“Have they announced the winners, yet?” Felicity asked Victoria.

“No. Did you guys have fun? You were already halfway done when we arrived. We didn’t get the chance to talk to you. You think you have a chance?”

“We did pretty well, I think. But those bloody referees wouldn’t say a thing.”

“Felicity is very competitive,” Oliver explained, smiling fondly at her. “She really wants that cup.”

“Well, there are a few teams who are really good even if most of us just play for the fun. We should know soon enough, I just saw Beatrice and Helen walk in. They were in the salon earlier, remember? Anyway. They are the ones who will announce the winners.”

Victoria had barely finished her sentence when the music was muted down as the two elderly ladies made their way to the small stage.

Felicity squealed with excitement, clapping her hands under Oliver’s amused look.

“What?” she asked defensively. “I’ve never won anything when it comes to sports.”

“I wouldn’t exactly call mini-golf a sport,” Oliver chuckled.

“It’s close enough for me, OK? I’m not very athletic, so this will have to do. And hush they are announcing the winners!” she put her hand on his mouth to make sure he would stay silent, eyes glued to the small stage. She barely felt his hand softly grabbing hers and pulling it down, too focused on the two women who were opening an envelope.

“We’ll announce the podium and you will be able to get your prize at the bar, right away. Third place is Wendy and Marc, congratulations!”

A few cheers erupted from a table nearby as a middle-aged couple high-fived each other.

Felicity bit her lower lip, her foot tapping under the table. “Come on, come on…”
“Second place goes to… Oliver and Felicity?” Helen announced, frowning as she didn’t recognize the names.

“Oh no…” Felicity let out, shoulders slumping.

“Yes, Helen, you remember Oliver? He was at the salon to get his haircut? Such a nice ass…” Beatrice tried to cover the mic but her words could still be heard across the room.

Oliver groaned, hiding his face while people around them started to laugh, looking across the room, trying to spot him.

“Oh, right! Good job!” Helen said, holding out the envelope closer to her eyes. “And finally… First place… Judith and Gracie, well done girls!” Two women who looked even older than Beatrice and Helen smiled, waving as everyone in the bar applauded them.

Pouting, Felicity crossed her arms. “I really wanted to win.”

“Hey guys! You made it second, that’s great!” Fred tried to cheer her up.

Nudging her, Oliver leaned and murmured. “Come on. We still get a prize.” Standing up, he held out his hand.

Sighing, she took it and got up as well, following him to the bar. “I really thought we had a chance!”

“Felicity, it’s just a mini-golf game. Isn’t it better if it’s someone who lives there who wins, anyway?”

She pondered his words for a moment. “… yeah. You’re probably right. That all you can eat would have been wasted. But I would have really loved to get that cup.”

Their prize was a free framed picture that had been taken during the tournament while they weren’t paying attention. They were talking, holding their clubs while waiting for their turn. Felicity was holding her sheet, her eyes slightly frowning as Oliver was chuckling at her, raising a bottle of water to his lips.

They stayed in the bar for a couple of hours, having a few drinks and a light dinner in the separate dining room. They were about to say goodbyes to their new friends when Felicity suddenly remembered something. “Guys… do you know why I ended up sharing Oliver’s dare and singing with him last night?”

“Yes. When I told you I had already picked Time of My Life, you said you had a crush on Patrick Swayze when you were younger. Oliver said if you came with him you could do the lift together,” Fred laughed. “He did try but it didn’t end up pretty.”

“Yeah… I remember that part.” She lightly pinched Oliver who just looked at her innocently and she couldn't help but smile at the memory. It had been quite a night, after all.
“You never learned how to do that lift, did you?” she asked him as they made their way up the stairs to get back to their room.

“… No,” he admitted guiltily. “It didn’t seem that hard, honestly.”

Opening the door, he stepped aside to let her walk in first. Sighing, she took off her coat, setting it on one of the empty chairs, untying her shoes and toeing out of them. From the corner of her eyes, she saw Oliver doing the same and felt slightly awkward for the first time since they had arrived. Last night, the two of them had been completely drunk and barely remembered making it to their room. But tonight, they were both sober and having to share a room suddenly felt very domestic.

As she went to sit on the bed, she saw Oliver hesitating, apparently sharing her feelings.

“… This is awkward, right?” she hesitantly asked, grimacing.

“Yeah.” He ruffled his hair, frowning when he realized it was much shorter now. “Damn.”

Felicity giggled. “You’ll get used to it, I promise. Anyway… how do you think we should do this?”

Oliver raised an eyebrow. “Well, usually I’m more a man of action than words but…”

Tilting her head, she glared at him.

Smiling, he approached the bed. “I don’t know. Maybe we should have drunk tonight, after all. Don’t worry. I’ll sleep on the floor.”

“Don’t be silly, you have a long drive and a meeting tomorrow; I’ll sleep on the floor, you take the bed.”

“My mother would write me out of her will if I let a woman sleep on the floor.”

“I don’t plan on telling your mum about the last two days, so the point is moot,” she pointed out, laying on her back and staring at the ceiling.

“Believe me, she’d find out. She has a sixth sense when it comes to this.”

“Then, we’ll just share the bed. We did it last night, and nothing bad happened. We are both adults… I mean it’s just one night?” she asked him, turning her head to face him. He was still standing, leaning on one of the bed posts.

“Are you sure? If it makes you uncomfortable…” Oliver hesitated, his fingers playing on the post.

“Yes. I mean, let’s be honest it’s kinda… weird. But it would be worse if you were to sleep on the floor. I promise.” Standing up, she walked to her bag. “I’m gonna use the bathroom first, if you don’t mind?”

“Nope. Go ahead.” He sat down on the bed, turning the small TV on to keep him company. Felicity had barely started the shower when there was a small knock on the door. He padded across the room, opening the door.

“Victoria?” he asked, surprised. “Is there something wrong?”
“Oh no! Don’t worry! I just realized I forgot to give my email address to Felicity,” she said, handing him a small business card. “We should try to stay in touch… if you ever stop by again.”

Oliver smiled, pocketing the card. “Yeah… if you ever stop by Starling, just give us a call?” He handed her one of his own business cards.

“… Oliver Queen? Like Queen Consolidated Queen?” Victoria asked, surprised, as she read the small piece of paper.

“The one and only, I’m afraid.”

“Felicity is not really your girlfriend, is she?”

“No, she’s not. We didn’t want to play anyone but everyone assumed and…”

“And it was easier,” Victoria smiled reassuringly. “It’s fine, really. Just… if you don’t mind me giving you advice…”

Frowning, Oliver leaned on the door. “Advice about what?”

“About her. She might not be your girlfriend but you clearly make each other happy. I don't know you, obviously... It's just that everytime you look at her, you get that... smile on your face. Maybe you should reconsider your relationship.”

“No. Felicity is my assistant. And a friend. A very good friend. But we can’t… it… it wouldn’t be… and she’s not… not. I mean she is but…” Oliver stuttered.

Taking pity, Victoria interrupted him. “Hey, it’s fine. I was just giving my opinion. Speaking of which, don’t shave tomorrow either. You need more scruff.” Winking at him, she started to walk away.

“Victoria?” he called out to her, watching her turn around to face him again with a questioning look on her face.

“Thank you. For everything.”

“You’re welcome, Oliver. Take care.”

“Why are you standing in the door?” Felicity’s voice startled him.

“Victoria stopped by to give you her email address.” Turning around, he gave her the small business card. She was wearing pajama pants with unicorns and a simple black t-shirt. Her hair was still in a messy bun and she didn’t have her glasses on.

“Oh, yes. I thought… if I ever stop by, you know?” Grabbing the card, she put it in her handbag. “Shower’s all yours if you want to.”

When Oliver opened the bathroom door and stepped back inside the bedroom, he was about to ask Felicity to set the alarm when he saw her already deep in sleep, the remote control hanging loosely
from her hand. Smiling softly, he made his way to her side of the bed as quietly as he could. He picked up the remote, turning the TV off. He saw that she had divided the duvet and blankets into two separate piles: one for her and one for him, probably thinking that not being underneath the same sheets would be less intimate. Noticing her cold fingers, he tucked her in the duvet, adding one of his blankets on top of her, then turned off the bedlamp. There was still enough light coming from the window to guide him across the room. He tiptoed around the bed, setting the alarm for the next morning and finally slipped underneath the blanket as slowly as possible, afraid to wake her up. Turning on his side, he took a deep breath, a small smile appearing on his face as he found himself surrounded by the fragrance of green apples, her shower gel. “Sweet and sour… exactly like her” was his last thought as he drifted into sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Usual question: soooo... what did you think? *bites thumb nail*

Can we all have a prayer circle for Victoria who is (in this story I mean) the one to come up with the Oliver Queen super mega hot look?

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi!
Hi everyone!
Thank you so much for all of your comments and kudos (wow... just when I mentionned being over the moon for reaching 1000 kudos, you guys sent more than a hundred my way. Thank you!!). I have been struggling this last week. Not much of a writer's block, more like having my head in another place (mostly Paris attacks, then Brussels on lockdown and the general high threat of terrorism in my country). I'm still trying to get ahead, but not there quite yet. This is why you had to wait a tiny bit longer for this chapter (like 1 day or 2, nothing bad) and might be the same for the next one. Really hope I'll get back to it, especially since the tone of the story is changing.

We've had a lot of fun going on but things are about to become more complicated, more angsty. I did promise a bumpy, ride, didn't I? ;)

Song: Something I Need - OneRepublic

PS: Special mention to yellowpretendingtobered, my beta :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Something I Need"

I had a dream the other night
About how we only get one life
Woke me up right after two
Stayed awake and stared at you
So I wouldn't lose my mind
And I had the week that came from hell
And yes I know that you could tell
But you're like the net under the ledge
When I go flying off the edge
You go flying off as well
And if you only die once I wanna die with
You got something I need
In this world full of people there's one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you
You got something I need
In this world full of people there's one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you

Last night I think I drank too much, yeah
Call it our temporary crutch, hey
With broken words I’ve tried to say
Honey don’t you be afraid
If we got nothing we got us

And if you only die once I wanna die with
You got something I need
In this world full of people there’s one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you
You got something I need
In this world full of people there’s one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you

I know that we’re not the same
But I’m so damn glad that we made it
To this time, this time, now

You got something I need
Yeah in this world full of people there’s one killing me
And if we only die once I wanna die with you
You got something I need
In this world full of people there’s one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you
You got something I need
In this world full of people there’s one killing me
And if we only die once,
I wanna die with you

If we only die once I wanna die with
If we only live once I wanna live with you

It was around 2AM when Oliver woke up with a start. He was laying on his back, his heart beating wildly, cold sweat covering his face. Confused about what had caused this reaction, what had caused him to jerk awake. A few images reached out to him. A nightmare. Just a stupid nightmare. Nothing that even made sense. It was more like a feeling of loneliness and helplessness. Failure. He lightly shook his head, knowing full well that the video call with his father and his meeting at the Backstones’ were getting inside his head. Oliver Queen was very good at keeping up appearances, he had been raised that way. Stay strong, confident at all times. Don’t let them see what’s really going on in your soul. Keep your head high, play off the part.

Taking a deep breath, he tried to relax enough to get back to sleep. A small movement on his side had him frowning, remembering suddenly who was beside him. Slowly turning his head, he saw her
in the dim moonlight as she reached out for his hand, lightly gripping it. She was obviously still asleep, but she must have sensed something was off. Unconsciously, he pressed her hand back as he let his eyes get accustomed with the darkness and looked at her face, so peaceful and reassuring. Synching their breathing calmed his heartbeat enough to fall back asleep.

Warmth. Comfy, reassuring warmth. Even behind her closed eyes, Felicity could sense that the sun hadn’t risen yet. She sighed, snuggling into her pillow, letting the warmth relax her body once more. Her hand reached out to circle the arm that was currently around her waist before her brain could register what she was doing. As she was lightly stroking a solid, strong wrist, a small moan echoed in her ear, piercing the clouds of sleep she was still lingering in.

Her hand froze on Oliver’s arm as she woke up suddenly, her eyes bolting open. Holding her breath, she focused on her hearing, trying to figure out if he was still asleep. His breathing was calm, deep, regular. And very close to her ear. Which made sense since his arm was still currently wrapped around her. Without moving an inch, she tried to get a look, noticing that she had moved to the center of the bed during the night. From what she could feel, she was tucked in her duvet and was separated from Oliver by another layer. “Good. At least there is no full body contact,” she thought with relief.

She squeezed her eyes, hoping he wouldn’t wake up as she slowly pulled his arm away from her while, as quietly as possible, she slipped closer to the edge of the bed inch by inch. Once their bodies were not in contact anymore, she turned around and let out a breath of relief when she saw Oliver still deep in sleep, his hand now clutching her pillow. Grabbing her cellphone, she checked the time. It was barely 6AM, she could try to go back to sleep for an extra hour but the idea that she might end up in the same position again – and worse, with a fully awake Oliver this time – was enough motivation to get up and walk to her bags. Quickly picking her outfit, she silently tiptoed to the bathroom, planning to get ahead of schedule by showering first.

Oliver woke up slowly, his mind still fuzzy, to the sound of running water. Groaning, he reached out to turn on the bedlamp, blinking with the sudden and brutal light. He noticed right away the empty bed, even if the sheets were still warm. Seeing that they were still in their separate sheets, he sighed with relief. He had woken up another time during the night to Felicity’s hair tickling his nose. She had moved in her sleep, probably seeking his warmth judging from the freezing toes he could feel against his leg, despite the layers between them. Without thinking, he had moved closer to her, encaging her feet between his calves, trying to bring her comfort. With the smell of green apples surrounding him, he had fallen back to a dreamless sleep.

Sitting up on the bed, he let his head rest against the headboard, eyes still closed. It felt like the past few days had been like someone had taken his life and turned it upside down. He was left slightly unbalanced, confused about many choices he had made. For the first time in his life, he truly wondered if he was on the right path. If this perfect road that had always seemed to be the one he was supposed to take… was indeed the right one for him. He had been raised with the idea that he was following his father’s steps. The great Robert Queen, a genius businessman, great philanthropist, charming and socialite. For years, he had been following his exact footsteps, going to the College his father went to, even if it was with less success. Oliver Queen had started college like most boys from wealthy families: knowing his name would grant him a degree and having too much money, too
much freedom... too soon. Not having to fight his way through had been a source of fun, a liberty he had thought he was lucky to have. Now, he was reconsidering things. By taking everything for granted, by having everything handed to him, Oliver never had once to fight for what he wanted. In fact, he never even had to wonder what he truly wanted in life. Money, booze, girls... isn’t that what every man in his twenties wants? He had been in an on and off relationship with Laurel Lance, that both his parents loved, for years. They were seeing her as the perfect future Mrs Queen. Smart, driven, strong-willed, sophisticated. His father, particularly, was pressuring him to commit, to show a responsible front. Even if he loved Laurel, had probably ever since he was a teenager, Oliver couldn’t bring himself to take that last step with her. She was perfect on paper for him, but Oliver had been presented with perfection ever since he was born. Now he was old enough to understand that perfection didn’t exist and even if it did... he needed something else in his life. A challenge. Surprises. Fights. Someone who expects better from him than just being there to provide. He couldn’t even remember the last time he had fought with Laurel. She barely acknowledged his infidelities, accepting them like they were an obligated part of himself. How many times had he been glad to have a girlfriend who wouldn’t cause drama? A girlfriend who understood that affairs on the side were meaningless?

Yet, for some reason... all of this was changing. It was no longer enough. He had always assumed that this was the way his life was going to be, and he had been fool enough to consider himself lucky for all of that. It was no longer the case. He wanted... he needed more. He needed something else. How was Laurel fitting into all of this? Would she still be the partner everyone thought she was destined to be? Could they find a different balance in their relationship? Or was it time to consider that maybe, they were just not made for each other, despite all the years they had been together?

This trip was only supposed to be about business... but the amount of things he had learned about himself left him slightly dizzy. He had found out that inside of him was another person. Someone he didn’t know much about, but had a gut-deep feeling would make him much more proud of himself than he had been for his entire life. His work had turned from a compulsory activity to a constant challenge and a way for him to make things better around him. Never had he thought he could actually make a change, matter in the family’s company history. That just bearing the last name Queen was enough. How wrong he had been. It had taken him years to find out where this source of frustration had come from. But there, in this crazy town lost in the middle of nowhere, he felt like he had found the beginning of an answer. He wasn’t bored with the whole public persona he was supposed to be. He was bored with himself because he had let other people dictate who he was supposed to be.

He didn’t want to be the next Queen inheriting the company. He wanted to leave his mark. He wanted to make it his own legacy. And for the very first time in his life, he actually thought that maybe he could.

His thoughts were interrupted when Felicity carefully opened the door, peaking an eye.

“Oh. You’re awake. I didn’t wake you up, did I?” she asked worryingly as she stuffed her pajamas into her bag. She made her way to the bed where she sat down to comb her hair.

“No, don’t worry. You barely made a sound,” he reassured her, smiling warmly. “I didn’t know you were such an early bird. Sun is barely rising,” he added, watching her fighting her way through knots.

She grimaced, pulling harder on her comb as she mumbled, “damn it, I knew I should have conditioned it. And I’m not an early bird, I was awake so... thought I might as well take advantage.”
He observed her silently for a few moments, before reaching for the comb. “Let me. You’re gonna end up bald if you keep going on like that.”

Snorting, she paused, the comb still in her hair. “You want to play hairdresser with me?”

“Haha. Very funny. Come on, let me help you.”

Sighing, she tried to hand him the comb that was stuck into a particularly stubborn knot. “It’s stuck,” she whined.

Chuckling, he pushed the blankets away to sit behind her. He carefully picked the comb, delicately moving the strands of hair that were stuck, then proceeded to slowly untie the rest of the knots.

“You’re pretty good at this,” she broke the silence after a couple of minutes.

“I’ve had a lot of practice,” he murmured while separating her hair in two parts, putting the one that was done over her shoulder. “With Thea,” he added with a laugh.

“I didn’t say or imply anything.”

“Felicity, I can practically hear your thoughts,” he teased her. “Tsk, stop moving, I’m almost done.”

“It must be good to have a sibling,” she sighed, obviously trying to stay still.

“Yes. Don’t get me wrong though, she can be a real pain in the ass. But I wouldn’t have it any other way.” Putting the comb down, he leaned in, “There you go. All done.”

“Thank you,” she smiled, turning her head to face him. He saw her short intake of breath when she realized how close there were. For a few seconds, both were unable to tear their eyes away from each other until his alarm started to ring, startling the two of them. Frowning, Oliver reached for his phone, switching it off. “Guess it’s time to get up.”

Standing up, he stretched his arms above his head, his t-shirt rising on his stomach, showing a patch of skin above the waistband of his sweatpants. “Do you still need the bathroom?”

“No. I’m good. I’ll just blow-dry my hair here. Go ahead,” she waved towards the bathroom door, not looking at him. He looked at her, wondering what had gotten into her, then made his way to the bathroom.

At the sound of the door closing, Felicity let out a breath she wasn’t aware she’d been holding.

“He’s a very attractive man. Nothing new there. No need to start blushing, you’ve seen much more of him in the past,” she mumbled to herself.

Shaking her head, she tried to gather her thoughts as she started the hairdryer. The fact that they had spent almost every single minute together the last couple of days had somehow messed with her brain. She felt as if something had shifted between them. Not that Oliver had done or said anything inappropriate but there was an intimacy between them that wasn’t there before. It was unsettling to feel this kind of connection to someone she was working for. There was an understanding between them and a line had been crossed somehow along the way. What had started as a partnership had turned into casual friendship and now… now it felt like something more was blossoming between
them. Their bond was tightening and with a man as charming as Oliver, Felicity was afraid she might lose herself in inappropriate emotions.

Having straightened her hair, she decided to opt for a high ponytail. She usually never had the patience to untie the knots but with Oliver’s intervention, it had made it easier for her to tame her thick locks. Fishing out her small make up bag, she was just finishing applying her mascara when Oliver walked out of the bedroom, shirtless and a towel around his neck.

“I was thinking we could grab breakfast on the road. Are you hungry yet?” he asked, putting a sweat-shirt on.

“No. I can wait,” she answered while packing the rest of her clothes. They both quickly finished getting ready and it only took them a couple of minutes to close their bags and head downstairs. Bob had told them to leave their keys on the bar whenever they left which meant they wasted no time getting to the car. Once all of their belongings were inside the trunk, Oliver sat behind the wheel with a joyful sigh.

“You missed it that much? Oh, sorry… I meant her,” Felicity teased him, fastening her seatbelt. “Do you want me to give you a moment?”

He winked at her with a one-sided smile. “I don’t mind having a public.”

She was still laughing when he pulled out of the parking lot, driving in the still empty streets of the small town.

“Do you think we’ll ever come back?” Felicity asked with a bit of nostalgia once they passed the road sign ‘You’re leaving Ivy Town. Come back soon!’

“I don’t know. I’d like to, though,” Oliver said softly as the car stopped at a crossroads.

“Me, too.” Sighing, she let her head rest on the back of her seat.

“… You really want that cup, don’t you?”

“God, yes!”

The stop for breakfast was also the perfect opportunity to go through the questions they wanted to ask during their meeting with the counselor in Sacramento. They also had received an email from Dig who had overheard one of Isabel’s assistants mentioning she had been getting phone calls from ‘a weird dude who speaks some kind of russianish language’ – which Dig had specified were the exact words used. It might have seemed like a detail for most, but it was confirming Oliver and Felicity’s suspicions: they hadn’t been looking in the right country. That only made them impatient to head back to Starling City and finally be able to tackle the problem. If Felicity was the one who had trouble dealing with the fact that she literally could do nothing to solve the mystery yet, Oliver also seemed to be struggling with the forced inaction. The fact that they were getting closer to seeing Isabel again didn’t help; as the hours were passing, he was becoming more and more restless.

Thankfully, the meeting with Mrs Bielsen forced him to focus on something else. It had also proved to be resourceful: she had printed all the paperwork concerning the potential tax-cuts that could be applied to the Backstones’ financial support if it was used to invest in green energy. Due to Mrs
Bielsen’s work, they were able to leave the City Hall earlier than they expected. Neither of them were exactly impatient to join the group that had been staying at the Hyatt Regency but once their small lunch was over, they had no other reason to delay the inevitable.

After a quick check-in, they each went to their respective rooms. Putting down his bags on the bed, Oliver stopped by the bathroom to splash some cold water on his face, in an attempt to get rid of the tiredness of the last few days. As he was patting a towel on his cheeks, he pondered on how idly empty the room seemed to be. There wasn’t a noise, the whole suite was completely silent. After spending almost every minute of the last couple of days with his assistant, the loneliness seemed somehow unnerving. It even felt weird to not see her bright purple toothbrush next to his. Which was utterly ridiculous since they had only spent two nights in the same room. But if there was one thing Oliver had learned about Felicity, it was her ability to brighten a room without doing anything. Sure, she often confronted him, or generally challenged him, but there never was a moment of boredom whenever she was around. He couldn’t be more thankful to have her by his side, knowing she had his back. Their relationship was based on loyalty. A loyalty that went both ways, despite him being her employer. He could sense that the company was going to face some serious challenges and having her by his side was a constant reminder that he wasn’t alone. With one last look in the mirror, he put the towel down on the counter and walked out of the room, ready to face Isabel… and his father.

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“So, this is all we know so far,” Robert Queen concluded after a small 30 minutes of talk.

Oliver and Felicity, who were sitting side by side around the conference table, shared a look, letting loose a sigh of relief.

The investigation had proved that there was no neglect of maintenance, which at least was reassuring for the stock market. Unfortunately, evidence seemed to point towards arson. Arson meant the company was being targeted, and that other facilities could be next.

“Do they have any suspects?” Isabel asked, distractedly playing with a pen.

“No. So far, they are still assembling the puzzle, as they say. Someone clearly manipulated at least one of the gas lines and heating ducts,” Robert shook his head, relaxing back on his seat. “Are there any more questions about that?”

Everyone around the table glanced at their neighbors, lightly shaking their heads.

“Very well. Next thing I wanted to talk about was the fact that, with all the information we have, Walter and I decided it was better to have you back in Starling as soon as possible. You have met with all the main backers, I have a few appointments myself with the ones you were supposed to meet this week.”

“Robert, are you sure? I mean, we are here, a couple of days more surely can’t change much?” Isabel asked, frowning.

“Our head of security and our Board agree with me and Walter. It’s better if we’re all here,” Robert shook his head. “Now, if everything is clear for all of you, I’ll see you back at the office on Monday.”
As everyone started to gather their belongings, Robert’s voice raised above the small buzzing noise. “Oliver, could you stay a bit behind? I’d like a word.”

Felicity quickly looked at Oliver, a question in her eyes. He knew he had tensed as soon as he had heard his father’s request and she had probably noticed. He nodded nonetheless, sitting back on his chair while everyone else hurried to leave the room. Meeting her eyes, he smiled at her reassuringly, “I’ll meet you for dinner, with everyone else.”

Crossing his arms and facing the big screen, Oliver waited patiently until the last assistant left the room. As soon as the door closed, he directed his eyes towards his father, willing to end this as quickly as possible. There was still some serious tension between them, tension that, as Oliver had started to understand, wasn’t just about Isabel’s promotion.

“We’re alone. So what do you want to talk to me about?” he asked politely.

Robert sighed, scratching his chin as he tried to observe his son’s reaction. “Son, I know our relationship has been tensed for the last couple of weeks. Or months, really. But you did a great job with the Backstones.”

“I still haven’t met with the patriarch, yet,” Oliver frowned.

“I know. I just wanted to let you know that you already made a good impression. It was some good work.”

Oliver tilted his head, pondering his father’s words, then huffed out a bitter laugh, shaking his head. “You don’t think I can convince them, do you?”

“That’s not what I said,” Robert defended himself, raising his hands.

“That’s what you implied. You don’t expect better from me than what I did. I’m even ready to bet you’re surprised I managed to get that meeting by myself.” Oliver stood up, pacing in the room. “Is this the reason why you asked for everyone to leave? So you wouldn’t have to show your employees the lack of faith you have in your own son?”

“Oliver, you are putting words in my mouth. I just wanted to say that you did a good job, no matter what happens tomorrow.”

“Then, and I’m repeating myself here, why couldn’t you just say so in front of everyone? Afraid you might piss off your mistress because for once, just for once, I did well enough?”

Robert paused. “Let Isabel out of this, this is about you and me.”

“I can’t leave her out of this since, in case you forgot, she is my superior,” Oliver snorted.

“She was the best choice for the company. You just… are not ready for this.”

“And when I am, what’s going to happen? I’ll have to work with her? The woman you cheat on mum with?!” Oliver asked in disbelief. “How could you even think this was a good idea, dad? How could you?”

“As the CEO of this company, I have to make decisions in the best interest of the company. Your
mother understands that. Isabel is qualified, driven and makes sense as vice-president.”

“And I’m neither of those things,” Oliver murmured, more for himself than for his father to hear. Taking a deep breath, he continued, loud enough to be heard this time. “You’re right. I’ll just go and do my job, she’ll do the same and for the love of God, just try to make sure we don’t have to interact more than necessary.”

“Oliver… one day you will understand. Business is business.”

“We are supposed to be better than that. You’ve been drilling me ever since I was a kid that our company was about family. I just don’t understand how you could give such a high position to a stranger!”

“Walter has been my Vice-President for years, and he’s not part of our family either.”

“He has been your partner almost since the beginning, he’s practically a part of our family and you know that. He’s the one who took me under his wing when I started at QC!”

Robert sighed. “It wouldn’t have been a good idea for you to work with me. We’re too much alike.”

“… yes. Yes, we are.” Oliver passed a hand over his face. “Look, I’m supposed to go have dinner with everyone else. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about or can it wait until Monday?”

“No. That is all.”

“Great. Tell Mum and Thea I said hi,” Oliver walked to the computer, ending the call.

He was still a bit tense when he walked into the restaurant some 15 minutes later. He had cooled off, trying to figure out why his relationship with his father had become so tense over the last few months. It had all started way before the whole Isabel drama, probably around the time he had started working at QC. His mother had always been there to play the referee, but with Isabel in the picture, Oliver now avoided putting her in the middle.

As soon as he entered the restaurant, he spotted Felicity’s blonde hair. She was sitting at the end of one of the two tables that had been set for their party, having saved a seat for him. Hurrying towards her, he quickly sat down.

“Everything OK?” she asked him, narrowing her eyes as if she could sense something was off. Damn it, she’s observant.

“But now wasn’t the time.

“Yeah. Just the usual, don’t worry,” he smiled at her while grabbing the water pitcher. “Water?”

“Yes, please,” she answered, handing him her glass. “So no earth-shattering news I should know about, then?”

Oliver laughed softly. “No. I promise. Just a father and son talk. You know how those can be.”

She quirked an eyebrow. “Oh yeah. I used to have those all the time. You know, back when I was still a man…”
Oliver laughed out loud, attracting attention from their co-workers who had just taken places around
the table as well. They both shared a look, smiling sheepishly.

Oliver took a sip of water. “Mother and daughter, then. You don’t talk much about your family but
I’m sure you do talk to her every now and then, don’t you?”

Taking a deep breath, she rolled her eyes. “Oh God, yes. Although I’m pretty sure your father
doesn’t nag you to find a boyfriend”

Oliver grinned. “No, it’s more like ‘when are you going to settle down’. Although this time he just
talked about the company, mostly.”

He was about to explain more when the waiters appeared with their appetizers. Even if they were
sitting at a big table, surrounded by other employees, they mostly spoke to each other as all the other
ones had obviously created bonds during the trip. They took this as an opportunity to go through the
list of things Oliver was supposed to talk about with the Backstones’ the next day, as well as all the
data Felicity had gathered on her computer.

Oliver found himself relaxing as dinner progressed. Isabel was at another table, ignoring him - for
which he couldn’t be more grateful – and being in a conversation with Felicity, even about their
work, usually helped him focus. He was just exchanging a few words with Denis Lewis concerning
the last few days he had missed while he was away, when he felt Felicity’s hand gripping his arm.

Turning his head, surprised, he saw her coughing violently, her eyes watering. “Are you OK?” he
lightly tapped on her back. “Do you need some water?”

She shook her head violently, unable to talk as her breathing became wheezy.

Oliver’s heart started to beat faster as he saw her obviously struggling to swallow or breath.

“Felicity?!” he stood up violently, pushing back his chair and kneeling in front of her. “What’s going
on?”

He was just about to stand her up, thinking she was choking and mentally trying to remember how to
do the Heimlich maneuver when she grabbed the fork that was on her plate, trying to make eye
contact with him through her tears. People around them were starting to come to their sense as well,
realizing something was wrong.

“She is choking, you need to get her up!” Denis shouted, alarmed.

Felicity tried to shake her head, blindly reaching for her purse and gripping Oliver’s hand as hard as
she could.

Realization suddenly dawned on him. “Oh God, it’s your nut allergy, right?” he grabbed her
shoulders, trying to force her to look at him, witnessing to his horror her lips turning blue and
swollen.

He quickly picked up her purse, opening it and, pushing the plates away, he threw all of the contents
on the table, praying to whatever was listening to him that she had one of those epipens. Hands
shaking, he barely heard someone shouting “call an ambulance, she is turning blue!” when he found
the little yellow stick, opening it as fast as he could.
He turned around, seeing she had been laid down on the floor behind him and he reached for her leg, quickly pressing the epipen into the flesh. He massaged her thigh, not knowing if it was the right thing to do, but desperate to do something. For the longest seconds of his life, he prayed, in his mind, out loud, not seeing any difference, witnessing her fight to get some air to her lungs and clinging to his hand, her eyes never leaving his.

“Come on Felicity. It’s gonna be OK. The ambulance is on its way. You need to try to calm down, it’s just gonna take a few seconds before it starts working.” Kneeling next to her, one hand holding hers and the other one still massaging her thigh, he kept talking to her, trying to reassure her. After about a minute, she seemed to struggle less, her eyes showing less panic as air finally made it through to her lungs. Her lips were still blueish and swollen, her eyes watery and her face slightly puffy and red, but her breathing seemed easier.

Oliver let out a breath of relief, letting his head fall and breaking eye contact for the first time. The noise around him finally seemed to reach his ears and he noticed for the first time the amount of people surrounding them.

“She is breathing now,” he reassured them, while reaching with his free hand to push back her hair from her forehead. He noticed the sweat on her red and heated skin and asked the closest person if they could bring him a wet napkin. He was carefully passing the wet cloth on her face, trying to bring her as much comfort as he could, when the sirens of an ambulance were heard just outside. He barely paid attention as the paramedics arrived, even when one of them tried to push him out of the way.

“No, I’m not leaving her,” he shrugged the young man off.

“Sir. You need to let us work. She seems fine, but we need to make sure.” The paramedic explained kindly but firmly as he pushed Oliver aside. He stayed there, watching them as they lifted her onto a stretcher, feeling completely helpless. One of the assistants had replaced all of Felicity’s belongings in her bag and handed it to him.

Taking it automatically, he looked at her blankly.

She smiled reassuringly. “She is going to need her ID for the hospital.” She gently nudged him as the paramedics were carrying Felicity out of the restaurant. “You can go with her, I asked one of them.”

He barely remembered the drive to the hospital. All he remembered was sitting next to her in the back of the ambulance while a doctor put an oxygen mask on her still miscolored face, his only words being “Don’t worry, sir. Your girlfriend is gonna be alright.”

And he didn’t correct him because all he could hear in that sentence was that the girl who had been holding his hand as if her life depended on it was going to be fine. His girl was going to be fine.

Chapter End Notes

So... less dialogue, but a very good journey into Oliver's head. I think it was time. Hope this helped you understand more of his actions?

By the way, see, those last chapters ARE longer (some of you asked for this. I try to
deliver lol)

Hope everyone liked the Ivy Town wink-wink?

I really hope I'll be able to post next chapter by next weekend (still not done with it, like I said I've been struggling... so I need a bit of time to get back on schedule)

PS: I realize now that I used the word 'hope' three times. Sorry about that, I could try to fix it buuuuuut it's the morning here and I'm not a morning person XD
Guyyyys... sorry for the long wait! And thank you to all of you who reached out and asked when this chapter was going to be up (it feels awesome to know that you are passionate about it!!)
That being said, I couldn't get this chapter edited by me beta. So please, if you spot anything, tell me.
Pidanka, God bless her soul, read it before and told me of a few mistakes but none of us are native speakers so it is possible we missed a few things.

Song: One More Night by Maroon 5

You and I go hard at each other like we're going to war.
You and I go rough, we keep throwing things and slamming the door.
You and I get so damn dysfunctional, we stopped keeping score.
You and I get sick, yeah, I know that we can't do this no more.

Yeah, but baby there you go again, there you go again, making me love you.
Yeah, I stopped using my head, using my head, let it all go.
Got you stuck on my body, on my body, like a tattoo.
And now I'm feeling stupid, feeling stupid, crawling back to you.

So I cross my heart and I hope to die
That I'll only stay with you one more night
And I know I said it a million times
But I'll only stay with you one more night

Try to tell you "no" but my body keeps on telling you "yes".
Try to tell you "stop", but your lipstick got me so out of breath.
I'll be waking up in the morning, probably hating myself.
And I'll be waking up, feeling satisfied but guilty as hell.

Yeah, but baby there you go again, there you go again, making me love you.
(Making me love you)
Yeah, I stopped using my head, using my head, let it all go.
(I let it all go)
Got you stuck on my body, on my body, like a tattoo.
(Like a tattoo, yeah)
And now I'm feeling stupid, feeling stupid, crawling back to you.
So I cross my heart and I hope to die
  (Yeah)
That I'll only stay with you one more night
  (Oh)
And I know I said it a million times
  (Yeah)
But I'll only stay with you one more night
  (Yeah)

Yeah, baby, give me one more night
Yeah, baby, give me one more night (whoa, yeah)
Yeah, baby, give me one more night (oh, yeah, yeah)

Yeah, but baby there you go again, there you go again making me love you.
Yeah, I stopped using my head, using my head, let it all go.
Got you stuck on my body, on my body like a tattoo.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

So I cross my heart and I hope to die
  (Oh oh oh oh, oh oh oh oh)
That I'll only stay with you one more night
  (Oh oh oh oh oh oh)
And I know I said it a million times
  (Oh, I said it a million times)
But I'll only stay with you one more night
  (Yeah, baby give me one more night)

I don't know, whatever.

“I’m sorry, Miss Smoak. It really is best if you stay here until the morning. You had a severe allergic reaction and I don’t want you to leave this hospital before we get your blood test results.”

As Oliver was walking towards Felicity’s room, he heard the doctor’s last sentence through the half-opened the door. She had been moved to a private room as soon as possible – not that Oliver playing the ‘Queen’ card had anything to do with it… Stopping awkwardly, not daring to walk inside the room, he shifted on his feet as he heard Felicity groaning with frustration.

“But that could take hours! I don’t have hours! Besides, I’m fine. It’s not like it never happened to me before.”

“It shouldn’t take very long. I suggest you try to get as much rest as possible.” The doctor opened the door, and quickly walked past Oliver.

“I take it we are spending the night here?” He asked lightly as he stepped inside the room, trying to lift her mood. She was still laying on the bed, her face only presenting small patches of red. Her hair was still disheveled and judging by the frown she was wearing, her encounter with the physician hadn’t been pleasant.

“I’m sorry. They don’t want to discharge me until my blood analysis come back clean.” She said apologetically, a shaky hand reaching to push back her glasses. Groaning, she laid her head back on
the pillow and closed her eyes.

“Don’t worry. I will call the Backstones first thing in the morning to find another date for the meeting.”

“Oliver, no. They might not want to. I won’t let those stupid nuts ruin your efforts. You know very well how important it is for you to come back to QC with those backers on your side. You should just go, I’ll make my way back to Starling with the rest of the group.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows. “You really think I’d be OK leaving you all alone in this hospital?”

“I’ll be fine. With a bit of luck, they might discharge me in the morning, anyway. I’ll spend the day the hotel.”

“No.”

She opened her mouth but Oliver didn’t let her speak.

“Felicity, I mean it. This is not up for negotiation. I either cancel the meeting or I wait with you. I’ll call the Backstones and let them know we might run a bit late, like you had suggested.” Oliver calmly spoke, his eyes letting her know there was no need to argue with him. “The question is, are you up to it, or not?”

“Of course I am! It’s not me that I’m worried about!” Felicity huffed.

“Then it’s settled. I got your bags, by the way. The nurse who made you the injection told me that once the doctor had stopped by, you could take a shower and get ready for the night.” Smiling softly at her, he reached for the bed remote to push her to a sitting position and looked expectantly at her. “Come on.”

Felicity suspiciously narrowed her eyes at him. “Who are you and what have you done with my boss?”

“What?” Oliver asked, genuinely surprised.

“The Oliver Queen I know would have found a way to get the nurse’s phone number and probably asked if I needed help with that shower.”

He laughed, his head thrown back. “I think you’re confounding me with Tommy Merlyn.”

She snorted. “Oh please. You are both exactly the same. Although, now, you’re the one with the best haircut.” She stood up from the bed, reaching for her bags. Oliver placed them on the bed and watched her carefully as she looked through them for whatever she needed.

“Stop staring,” she mumbled, picking up some comfortable clothes.

“I’m not…” he interrupted himself when she turned her head to glare at him. “OK, maybe I am. I’m just making sure you can stand.” He raised both his hands in defense.

Felicity sighed, shaking her head. “I’m fine, Oliver. I know it’s kind of scary to witness, but I promise you… I feel good, now. And I’ll feel even better after that shower.” Turning around, she padded her way to the small bathroom, then stopped herself, her back still facing Oliver. “Are you still going to be there when I’m done?”

“Of course. I’m not leaving you alone in a hospital,” Oliver answered, the offense clear in his voice.
He was caught off-guard by the vision of Felicity’s shoulders starting to shake.

“Felicity?” he was next to her in the next second, even before noticing his feet were moving. “What’s wrong?” he softly put his hands on her shoulders, trying to get her to look at him.

“I’m gonna sleep with my boss for the third night in a row,” she giggled, wiping her eyes. “And knowing you, that must be some kind of a record.”

Oliver frowned. “Are you sure you’re alright? You seem a little… off?”

“It’s the epinephrine. It makes me giddy.” She smiled at him, poking him on the chest. “Wow, you’re hard.”

Oliver let his eyes down where she proceeded to poke him once more.

“Like, really hard.” She frowned, mumbling to herself as she palpated his pecs.

Oliver gently put his hands on hers, slowly dragging them away from his body. “How about you go take that shower?”

She smiled at him. “Promise me you’ll still be there?”

Oliver couldn’t help but smile back at her, taking in how far away she was from the professional assistant he was used to. “Yes. I’m not going anywhere.”

She seemed to return back to her normal self, her face growing more serious. She nodded, opening the bathroom door. “Oliver?”

He turned back to her, having already made a few steps towards the chair he was probably going to spend the night on. “Yes?”

“Are you this hard everywhere?” she asked him, frowning, her head tilted on the side.

He opened his mouth and closed it again, not really knowing how to answer as she was clearly a bit high from whatever they had given her. Not to mention, her words were bringing some vivid mental pictures of her asking that question in different circumstances. He lightly shook his head, trying to clear it and to come up with an appropriate response. This only caused Felicity to giggle some more.

“Just kidding!” she chirped, finally closing the door while Oliver let out a sigh of relief. *This is going to be a long night…*

Once Felicity was done with her shower, she surprisingly went to sleep almost instantly. Oliver grew slightly alarmed, having seen her being energetic and giddy one minute and stumbling onto her bed the next one. One of the nurses assured him it was normal, but he still had a hard time relaxing. The fact that he was sitting on a very uncomfortable chair probably wasn’t helping, even if he had been given pillows and blankets. Felicity was sleeping quietly and the sound of her regular breathing finally helped him drift off as well.

It was still night when an eerie feeling woke him up. The room was mostly dark, and it took him a couple of seconds to remember where he was. Once his eyes were accustomed to the darkness, he recognized Felicity’s silhouette, sitting on the bed with her legs crossed. He couldn’t see her face in details, but she was obviously looking at him.

“Oh perfect. You’re awake!” she instantly jumped out of bed, turning on the light.
He groaned, closing his eyes tightly against the sudden burst of light. “Is everything alright?”

“Yes. I just went to talk to the nurse. My blood tests came back, all is well. We can leave whenever we want to,” Felicity explained while going through her purse. “If we leave in the next hour, we’ll even be in Sorora ahead of schedule.”

Oliver rubbed his eyes as he pushed back the blanket that was covering him. Putting his elbows on his knees, he observed her while she was getting her things ready, noting her routine was back to normal. He had noticed that Felicity would always check her phone and tablet first thing in the morning. Taking a deep breath, he stood up, stretching.

“Do you mind if I take a shower here? It would save us time if we don’t have to stop at the hotel on the way.”

“Sure. Help yourself.” Felicity answered distractedly, too focused on her phone to pay attention to him.

He quickly made his way to the small storage space at the end of the room, where he had put his outfit and a toilet kit. He took a quick shower, brushed his teeth, deciding to follow Victoria’s advice once more. Besides, making a pass on the shaving would save them precious time.

While he had been in the bathroom, Felicity had been busy signing up all the papers discharging her. While she got ready herself, he packed up the rest of their belongings, already charging them in the car. They were ready to leave the hospital merely 40 minutes after he had woken up, planning to stop on their way to grab a quick breakfast.

“The doctor asked if I knew what had caused the allergy.” Felicity told him as they made their way on the empty roads. “It’s weird, I don’t recall peanuts being common in bourguignon beef. And the test they made confirmed it was indeed due to peanuts.”

“I had a few words with the HR assistant in charge of these things. She swore to me she made sure every restaurant knew about this. I know her, she’s been working at QC for ages and she didn’t seem to be lying. She had asked the chef and he confirmed there was no peanuts involved in any of the meals he was supposed to prepare for us,” Oliver answered, his eyes on the road and jaw tense.

“Maybe it’s one of the kitchen employees that messed up?” she asked, shrugging a shoulder.

“Probably afraid to get fired, they wouldn’t admit it.”

Oliver shook his head. “Crazy coincidence, though. That someone would put a completely alien aliment to a dish and it turns out to be just the one you’re allergic to.”

Felicity turned her head, taking in his grim expression. “You think someone did that on purpose? And by someone, we both know who I mean.”

Quickly glancing at her, Oliver sighed. “I don’t know. I know it’s in your HR files, though. Files that Isabel asked for. We also know she tried to sabotage the Backstones meeting earlier this week. It just seems to… fit.”

“Wow.” Felicity let her head rest on her seat. “Just wow. I don’t know if I should feel concerned about the amount of psychopathy that it involves or slightly flattered that she would think of me as such a threat.”

“Let’s not think about this for now, there’s nothing we can do anyway,” he smiled at her reassuringly. “I’ll try to find out more about it tonight.”
“Are you going to bribe potential witnesses?” she teased him.

“If I have to play dirty, I will, Miss Smoak,” he quickly winked at her as he slowed down the car, parking it in front of a 24/7 diner. “Ready for breakfast?”

***

“You know, son. You’re really not like your father.” Andrew Backstone, the patriarch, sat back on his chair, linking his hands as he looked at Oliver. He had asked to be left alone with him after their small presentation. Oliver had given him the same information he had given Brad earlier that week. Felicity had pulled out the numbers, explaining the technical terms. The two of them had functioned like a well-oiled machine, each sticking to their strength: Oliver being the naturally gifted orator and Felicity the technical back-up. During the whole thirty minutes they had been talking, Andrew hadn’t let a word out, apart from the occasional question; Nothing in his demeanor could have given them a hint about his thoughts. The man was stoical, listening carefully but not letting anything show.

Oliver nodded, lowering his eyes.

If I had been given a dollar everytime someone told me that, I’d be… Well. Even richer.

“I know. You’re not the first one to tell me that,” he let out a bitter laugh.

Andrew observed him quietly. “I meant it as a compliment for you. Not the other way around.”

Surprised, Oliver raised his head, his eyes slightly confused with the unexpected comment.

Standing up, Andrew picked up his walking stick and walked around the table where Oliver was still sitting. “I know your father quite well. We are not exactly the best of friends, but financially speaking, we always had a good connection. He is an astute businessman. Has always been. You… you’re different.”

“I’m afraid I don’t really…” Oliver trailed off.

“What I mean is that you seem to care. You bring this new idea, and I can see you really believe in it. You see the future. You are confident this is the right path, but still humble enough to let your assistant –charming young girl, by the way- handle the areas you’re not comfortable with. Your father would have never let his assistant – or any other employee – take the stand.”

“Felicity is much more than my assistant. She is more like a partner to me. And I would be stupid to not let her use her full capacities, just because of her job description,” Oliver answered, slightly defensive. “Not to mention, last time I tried to ask her to act like a typical assistant, she didn’t react that well.” He let out a laugh at the memory of the last time he had tried to have run a personal errand.

“I agree. I used to have an assistant just like that. Much smarter than I, I’m not ashamed to admit it. Smart enough to call me on my bullshit whenever necessary and not caring at all if that could cost her job,” Andrew chuckled. “But I digress. I like the fact that you are so involved. You’re trying to make your place in a company that carries your father’s name. I’ve been there before, it’s not easy. Yet, you still play by the rules. You’re loyal. I respect that. Here’s the deal: we’ll keep our partnership, I’m on board with your new project. But any question I have, it goes directly to you.”

Oliver seemed lost for words for a moment, then quickly caught himself. “That can be arranged. We
can keep our partnership between your company and my office. Everything will go directly from me to you.”

Andrew smiled, patting Oliver on his shoulder. “Then we have a deal, son. Get a new contract ready, send it to Brad, he’ll go through it. I’ll get back to you by the end of the week and we’ll see how we can make it work.”

As he started walking towards the door, he paused and looked at Oliver. “Now, don’t mind me, but I promised my daughter we would play scrabble. Tell your assistant it was lovely to meet her, will you?”

“Of course. I’m sure it’s likewise,” Oliver answered, gathering all the papers that were still lingering on the table. A sudden thought had him raising his head. “Mr Backstone?”

“Yes?”

“What happened to your assistant?” Oliver asked, genuinely curious.

Andrew paused at the door, his hand already on the handle as the ghost of a smile appeared on his face. “I married her.”

***

“Linda?”

“No.”

“Steffy?”

“No.”

“Angela!”

“No.”

“Lu…”

“Felicity, I’m not telling you,” Oliver cut her off, trying to keep his voice stern but miserably failing, unable to hide the smile on his face. They were heading back to Sacramento, both being in a festive mood after the success of the afternoon. Since they didn’t have any meeting to worry about anymore, finding out the name of Oliver’s car had become Felicity’s top priority. They had been driving for almost an hour and she had suggested almost every possible female name, even begging for a hint, willing to exchange it against the compromising picture she had taken of him in the beauty salon. The sole fact that he had refused had only spurred her on, bringing up the hyper competitive side of her personality.

She groaned, hitting the back of her head against the seat several times. “Why are you so stubborn?!?”

“Me?” Oliver asked in disbelief. “You have a nerve!”

“I am curious, it’s different. Curiosity is healthy,” she defended herself, glaring at him.
Oliver snorted. “I think we passed the Curiosity level 40 miles ago. I’m sorry to inform you that you’re full on the Insanely Obsessive level.”

“I need to keep my mind busy. If only my boss could enter the 21st century and get a car with, oh I don’t know, a music player!”

“Fe-Li-Ci-Ty”

She crossed her arms on her chest, humphing. “Fine. I will find out one way or another, though.”

“Oh I don’t doubt it,” Oliver calmly said, his eyes still on the road. The sun was just starting to set down, basking them in a quiet light on the highway.

“Then why don’t you just tell me?” she all but whined. “It’s driving me insane!”

Oliver smirked. “That’s the point.”

She gasped. “You’re only doing this to piss me off?!”

“Yup,” he nodded his head, unable to hide his smile. He slowed down, shifting the stick as he exited the highway. From the corner of his eyes, he could see her watching him in disbelief.

She threw her arms in the air. “How old are you exactly?!”

“Says the one who threatened to, and I quote, ‘pout all the way back to Sacramento’ if I didn’t tell her what she wanted,” Oliver chuckled. “Besides, I already told you… I’m willing to exchange that information against another one… If only my assistant could, oh I don’t know… tell me what she did on that mechanical bull that involved her apparently missing some piece of clothing?”

“Never,” she stubbornly said.

“Then I won’t tell you.” He laughed slightly, turning his head a quarter of second to see her lips stretching into a small smile.

“Eyes on the road, Mister…”

“Oliver ‘Smooth’ Queen. I know,” he grinned softly. “We’re there, anyway.”

He slowed down the car as he entered the hotel garage, not wasting any time as he handed the car keys to a valet. A groom took care of their luggage while they walked up the few steps that led to the lobby. They had just stepped inside the main hall when a cheerful voice welcomed them.

“Felicity!”

Caught off-guard, Felicity stopped looking for her key in her purse, turning to her right where the voice had come from. “Barry?!”

The tall young man stood up from his seat and made his way towards the shocked pair. He stopped next to them, obviously not sure how to act but still wearing his usual goofy smile. Oliver’s mood suddenly darkened, and he couldn’t help but stare at the young man.

“Barry. What a surprise.”

“I take it no one told you? I was hoping I could surprise Felicity but I thought someone would have let you know.”
“Tell me what? The reason why you are here in this hotel?” Oliver asked coldly, earning a surprised look from Felicity.

“Yes! I wasn’t supposed to be here, actually. But since I’m expected at QC on Monday, your HR office called me and said I could come… here and…” Barry trailed off as Oliver tilted his head, locking his jaw. So the kid was being sent to QC...

Felicity looked between the two men, probably sensing something was off. “O… kay. That’s great. That you’re going to QC with us. Right, Oliver?” she discreetly stepped on his foot as a subtle way to remind him he was supposed to have manners.

Wincing, he swapped his head at her, quirking an eyebrow. They both stared at each other for a couple of seconds, Felicity sporting a very disapproving look and Oliver on the edge of scolding. None of them willing to back down, until Oliver finally rolled his eyes and forced a a polite smile on his face.

“Yes. It’s great. Why, though?” he swiftly looked at Felicity, adding, “If you don’t mind me asking.”

“You know Mrs Keiffer also offers consultants to help companies to turn towards greener energy? Well. Tada. I’m your new consultant,” Barry laughed, obviously trying to hide his discomfort.

“We definitely need help in this area,” Felicity smiled broadly at him. “Looks like I’ll be able to give you a tour much sooner than we thought!”

Barry grinned back at her. “Yes. Even better, there’s a new Doctor Who tonight, we could watch it together!”

“We still have work, Barry,” Oliver interrupted them. He really didn’t like being left out of the conversation. It was rude. Not to mention, Felicity must have been tired and not in the mood to watch a stupid TV show.

Felicity frowned at him. “Barry, could you excuse us a second?”

She didn’t wait for an answer and dragged Oliver by the sleeve a few feet away. Lowering her voice, she hissed, “what has gotten into you? We don’t have any work to do tonight. And why are you so rude to him?!”

Oliver shoved his hands in his pockets, glancing at the ceiling. “I don’t trust him.”

“What?!”

“He works for Lucy Keiffer, the woman who’s in with Isabel’s plans, in case you forgot!”

“Which we only found out about because of him, in case you forgot!”

Oliver opened his mouth but seeing the furious look in her eyes, he shut it back, avoiding her gaze. Taking a deep breath, he made sure to keep his voice down. “I’m just saying that we don’t know much about him.”

“Exactly. So far, everything seems to prove he is a good person.”

“Why, because he likes Doctor Who?” Oliver snorted.

Felicity squared back her shoulders, willing herself to keep her calm. “No. Because he has been decent with me from the minute we met. Which is something I can’t say about everyone I work with,
Oliver blanched at her words. “Felicity… I didn’t mean it like that. I’m sorry.” Pinching his nose, he mumbled, “I just… I’m worried. I don’t want you to be caught in the crossfire any more than you already are. Isabel is… she is manipulative. She knows how to choose her pawns.”

“Like your father?”

“… Yes. I’m afraid he doesn’t think clearly when she’s involved.”

“Neither do you, apparently,” Felicity said softly, putting her hand on his arm. “Oliver, I appreciate you being concerned. But there are lines you cannot cross. Barry seems like a good guy. Am I going to tell him all about what we’ve found? Hell, no. I’m good at keeping secrets. Don’t worry about that.” With one last smile, she turned around, joining Barry who welcomed her with a relieved smile.

“I’m not worried about that…” Oliver mumbled to himself as he watched the two of them making their way to the elevators.

Sighing, he made his way to the bar area, already thinking about the scotch he intended to order. He had just sat down on one of the high stools when a familiar voice caught his attention:

“Fancy meeting you here”

He closed his eyes for the briefest second, fully aware that the moment of calm he had been seeking was getting away from his grasp. Putting on his best charming smile, he nonetheless greeted the newcomer:

“Mandy.” Noticing she was standing right next to him with an expectative look on her face, he added, more out of obligation than anything else, “would you like a drink?”

She smiled instantly, already climbing on the seat to his right. “I would love to. A glass of white wine, please.”

Oliver passed his order to the barman while listening distractedly to Mandy’s talking.

“I wasn’t expecting you so soon. I even thought you wouldn’t come back to Sacramento at all. I take it the meeting was shorter than expected?”

Oliver’s smile didn’t quite reach his eyes as he answered. “Something like that, yes.” He had already decided that the result of the meeting would be kept under the radar for as long as possible. A part of him was still doubting himself and as long as the contract hadn’t been signed, Andrew still had the possibility to change his mind.

Sensing she wasn’t getting any more information about that, Mandy shifted on her seat, her hand reaching for a small glass recipient that was holding crackers and different kinds of nuts. As he thanked the barman who handed them their drinks, he saw her picking a peanut and popping it in her mouth. The small action was random enough but it brought back the unpleasant memory of Felicity’s allergy. Frowning, he realized that Mandy might be the perfect person to help him figure out if his doubts were indeed founded – Could Isabel have paid someone to slip something in their food?

“To business trips,” he said, raising his glass.

If she was surprised by the change of tone, Mandy didn’t let it show. She swiftly picked up her own
drink, lightly clinking it against his.

She smiled at him seductively, taking a sip of her wine. Keeping her eyes on him, she licked the remaining liquid on her lips. “Let’s hope next time we’ll have the chance to spend more time together”

“Well, we were supposed to have some free time last night, but with what happened to Felicity…” he trailed off, the hand holding his scotch circling around the glass.

“Oh. Yes. They told us she was fine, though. You didn’t have to go with her, you know. I would have kept you company,” she cheekily said, letting her hand fall on his thigh.

“We really needed to work on that presentation. Believe me, if it had just been me, I would have stayed.”

She eyed him suspiciously. “You did look worried, though.”

Oliver tilted his head. “Really? Well, I guess I freaked out a bit, like everyone else. You can’t deny it was scary to see,” he huffed out a laugh, taking a sip of his drink.

“It was. I didn’t know it could be that bad, honestly.” She shuddered slightly. “I always thought allergies were just getting stomach aches or rash… Not inability to breathe.”

Oliver eyed her carefully. “Yeah. Most people don’t think it can be lethal. They probably just think it incapacitates someone for a day or two, like the flu. The truth is, she could have died hadn’t it been for the epipen. Felicity doesn’t want to sue the restaurant, but I’m still considering it. It almost ruined our chances with the Backstones. What do you think? The chef swears there were no nuts at all in last night’s menu.”

“I… I don’t know. Someone probably made a mistake? It happens.” Mandy focused on the drink in her hand. “I mean, I know it’s serious but she is fine, now. Maybe she’s right, putting everything behind her might be the best solution.”

Oliver nodded, not being fooled. Whatever had happened, she knew something about it. Or at least had strong suspicions, like him. Getting her to talk, though, would take much more alcohol. He gulped down the last of his drink, knowing that it would probably unconsciously encourage her to do the same.

“Come on, it’s our last night. We deserve a bit of fun, don’t we?” he winked at her, raising his arm to call the barman once more.

She appeared relieved at the thought, flashing him a grin before grabbing her glass and finishing it off. “You’re right. Tequila?”

Once more, the souvenir of another blonde danced before his eyes. A disheveled Felicity taking a shot in Ivy Town. His smile flickered as he remembered he had been holding a slice of lemon between his lips. She had taken it with her teeth, her lips so close to his, he could almost feel them. He lightly shook his head, trying to get back to the present. It was the first time he had remembered something that had happened during their drunk night in that God-damn town.

“Tequila!” He unbuttoned his cufflinks, rolling up his sleeves. Taking off his tie, he placed besides him on the bar as two small glasses were put in front of them. He handed one of them to Mandy, silently praying she was a light-weight.

After two other glasses, she was already tipsy enough to get her to talk. Oliver didn’t plan on getting
Oliver caught her by the arms, silently cursing himself for not having realized that she was already intoxicated. “You’re gonna be alright?”

“Yeah. Just a bit dizzy,” she smiled at him. “Would you mind walking me back to my room, though?”

“Of course.” He guided her through the bar with a hand on her back, not comfortable with the idea of having her walking in the hotel by herself. They had just made it to her door, Mandy being busy.
trying to find her keycard in her purse, when he saw Barry on the far side of the hallway, knocking on a door. Despite the distance, he heard the door open and a squeal of delight he would recognize everywhere. A small hand appeared from inside the room and grabbed Barry, pulling him inside.

Oliver stood there, Mandy’s rambling and cursing about her keys barely reaching his ears. He knew Felicity was an attractive woman. He also knew she and Barry had hit it off right away. But the bitter taste that he had in his mouth had his stomach churning and it took all his will power to not stomp his way to her door. *I’m just worried about her. I’m just worried. It’s perfectly fine. Friends care about each other. That’s what we are. We are friends.*

“Hum, Oliver?”

Mandy’s voice wasn’t enough to get him out of his own thoughts, but the small hand reaching for his arm finally breached through. He looked at her, puzzled, having almost forgotten about her. He glanced once more at the door at the end of the hallway, his head still reeling with mental pictures of Felicity sleeping near him, of her cold feet seeking his warmth, of the morning where he had combed her hair, of her in that damn towel barely covering her body, of his toothbrush that was now by itself on his bathroom counter. *She’s just a friend. Just a friend.*

“Oliver, are you sure you don’t…”

Oliver’s lips were on hers before she could finish her sentence, walking them both inside her room. He kicked the door closed with his foot, wishing he could also close the door to the torturing images his brains were coming up with. Images of what Felicity was probably doing at that moment, with another man. *She’s just a friend. She’s just a friend.*

Chapter End Notes

*hides underneath table* Don't hate me OK... I told you, months ago that Ollie would "slip" one more time.

*shifty eyes*

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com

Random note: I need someone who is a native speaker and good with grammar to check a chapter or two (Beta is at school and it's that time fo the year with tests and stuff. In short: it's a bit too crazy for her.) I could wait until she is back, but that's in two weeks... So if you're good with grammar and a native speaker and are OK with reading a chapter or two or three and editing it for me, please let me know if you're interested ;)

Hi there guys :D
First of all, thank you so much for all of those who volunteered to beta the story. It's
good to know I can always count on you for a back up plan ;)
Special thank you to Pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda who read, edited, commented
this chapter for me :)  

Song: The Scientist - Coldplay

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"The Scientist"

Come up to meet you, tell you I'm sorry
You don't know how lovely you are

I had to find you
Tell you I need you
Tell you I set you apart

Tell me your secrets
And ask me your questions
Oh, let's go back to the start

Running in circles
Coming up tails
Heads on a science apart

Nobody said it was easy
It's such a shame for us to part
Nobody said it was easy
No one ever said it would be this hard

Oh, take me back to the start

I was just guessing
At numbers and figures
Pulling the puzzles apart

Questions of science
Science and progress
Do not speak as loud as my heart

Tell me you love me
Come back and haunt me
Oh, and I rush to the start

Running in circles
Chasing our tails
Coming back as we are

Nobody said it was easy
Oh, it's such a shame for us to part
Nobody said it was easy
No one ever said it would be so hard

I'm going back to the start

As Felicity was getting ready for bed, Barry having left right after the last episode of Doctor Who, she noticed a small buzzing sound coming from her purse. Frowning, she glanced at the night stand where she had left her cellphone. Quickly picking up her bag, she realized that the constant noise was coming from another phone. Oliver’s. She remembered having put it in her bag when they had left the Backstones and had completely forgotten about it. She checked the time, biting her lips. It was barely 10 PM and knowing Oliver, he probably wasn’t asleep yet. Even if he was, he still might need his cellphone at some point and she didn’t want him to knock on her door in the middle of the night. Grabbing a hoodie, she put it over her pajamas and, barefoot, swiftly made her way to his room, his phone in hand.

She stopped in front of his door, knocking softly, secretly hoping she wouldn’t have to go to the reception desk to leave him a message. The weekend had been more than eventful and to say she was exhausted was an understatement. She seemed to hear some shuffling noises coming from the room and was about to knock once more – louder this time, when the door burst open to a surprised-looking Oliver.

“Hum. Felicity?” he asked, dumbfounded, stepping closer to her and keeping the door only slightly ajar.

Smiling warmly at him, she held out his cellphone. “Found this one in my bag. Figured you might need it and didn’t want to…” Felicity’s words stopped abruptly when she saw the door opening wider, and a smug looking Mandy passed by them, her hair messy and shoes in hand.

“I think she can take the night off… don’t you think?” she smirked, throwing Felicity a satisfied look while Oliver avoided looking at either woman, his eyes shifting to his feet, which were just as bare as Mandy’s. Only then did she notice his ruffled hair and wrinkly clothes.

Felicity’s smile fell off her face as she tried to comprehend what was happening. Oliver finally looked up, meeting her eyes and he let out a small grimace of discomfort. If she had any doubts left, the guilt on his face told her everything she needed to know. Oliver had had sex with Mandy. Of all the women he could have picked, he went with the one who had been hell bent on making her life as miserable as possible. Of course, Oliver was free to act as he pleased, but she had thought that he at least cared enough about her to not give Mandy more ammunition.

“Felicity, I…”
She shook her head, shoving his phone in his hand. “I don’t want to hear it.”

He instinctively took a step towards her, to which she responded just as automatically by stepping away from him, raising a hand between them, putting a brave smile on her face. “No, really. What happens in Sacramento, stays in Sacramento.”

Turning around, she held her head high as she padded back to her room. Oliver was an adult, after all. She had been too naive, thinking they were friends instead of just colleagues.

Oliver stood there for what seems like forever, watching her walk away from him without a single glance in his direction. The pain he had seen on her face, the clear feeling of betrayal, were already engraved in his mind. He heard her door closing, the sound far away from him and barely reaching through the beating of his own heart. Not able to look away from her door, he stayed there, silently wishing she would come back, that she would let him explain, tell her that it didn’t mean anything, that he was sorry, that he never wanted to hurt her. He was so lost in thought, he didn’t even notice someone walking out of the elevator and heading in his direction until Barry Allen’s cheerful voice was too close to ignore.

“Mister Queen!”

Turning his head, he glared coldly at the newcomer, barely registering the Big Belly Burger paper bag he was holding.

Barry’s smile quickly disappeared under the stare. “Hum… good night, I guess.”

Frowning, Oliver answered, “Goodnight, Barry. I thought you were supposed to meet with Felicity tonight?”

“Yeah. I did. I mean we already watched the two episodes of Doctor Who. David Tennant is our favorite Doctor”

Oliver closed his eyes for a second, letting out a sigh of relief. A relief he had no right to feel, he quickly reminded himself. Composing himself, he smiled politely at the younger man. “Well, enjoy your meal, then.”

“I sure will,” Barry replied cheerfully, quickly making his way to his own room. As he was opening the door, he glanced once more at Oliver, waving slightly at him. This seemed to shake Oliver out of his trance, and he finally walked back inside his bedroom as well.

Locking the door, he made his way across the room, sitting on the barely rumpled sheets and throwing his phone on the night stand. Putting his head in his hands, he closed his eyes, thinking of how much of a mess the night had turned into. And he only had himself to blame.

A buzzing sound suddenly caught his attention. Putting his hands down, he stared at his cellphone, not willing to talk to anyone at the moment but also aware that it might be important. Sighing, he shook his head, reaching for it. The smiling face appearing on the screen had him grimacing in guilt and remorse. In the split of second it took him to press the key to accept the call, he had made up his mind. Starting now, he was going to try to get out of this hole he had been digging himself into.

“Hi Laurel,” he greeted her, forcing a smile on his face.

“Oliver! I tried to reach you several times… is everything OK?” she asked, sounding worried.
“Yeah, yeah… sorry. I forgot my phone somewhere, I just got it back.”

“Oh. You had me worried for a while. It’s not really like you. I haven’t heard from you in days… is everything alright?”

Oliver cleared his throat. “I’m fine, Laurel. Actually, I’m heading back to Starling tomorrow.”

“I thought you were going to be away for at least another week?” she asked, the annoyance in her voice making it sound younger. It irked Oliver for a reason that he couldn’t understand. Since when did her voice feel like fingernails on a chalkboard?

Forcing his voice to stay neutral, he explained. “Yes. The rest of the trip is cancelled. Listen, I was wondering if…”

Laurel cut him off. “I was just calling you to tell you I was going to spend the week with Sara and mum. I had my last test today and mum and dad offered us a small rental down the coast.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah… I can’t cancel, they already paid.”

“When are you leaving? I’d like to talk to you. I should be home late afternoon, I could drop by your place?” Oliver asked, willing himself to go through with his decision. This masquerade can’t go on. She deserves better.

“We’re leaving in the early morning. That’s why I was trying so hard to reach you. It’s a last-minute deal,” she huffed out a frustrated sigh. “Why didn’t you let me know sooner?”

“I only found out yesterday, Laurel.” Oliver sat against the headboard, closing his eyes, trying to fight the beginning of what was going to be a massive headache.

“Still. I could have done something yesterday. Why are you even cancelling it, by the way?”

“It’s a long story… when will you be back?”

“Next Sunday. Whatever it is you want to talk about, Oliver, we can do it now. Is it about QC?”

“No, it’s fine. Complicated, but fine. I will see you next Sunday, then.” His tone was much harsher than he intended, causing Laurel to pause, the silence on the line allowing him to hear the background sound of some random TV show.

Feeling guilty, he took a big breath and added in a softer tone, “sorry. It’s been a long week and I have this killer headache. It can wait, really. I really wanted to talk to you, not just on the phone.” He winced as soon as the words left his mouth. A part of him wanted to get done with it, but he knew he at least owed it to her to do it in her face, not through a cowardly phone call. Unfortunately, his phrasing might be misinterpreted.

“It’s alright. I know it’s late, I’m tired too, to be fair,” she laughed lightly, her mood instantly lighter which only confirmed Oliver’s fears. Keep digging, Oliver. Just keep digging…

He quickly ended the call after that, thinking that at least he had made a step in the right direction. Undressing, he walked in the bathroom, opening the shower door. As the water was running, he stepped inside, letting it relax his muscles. Closing his eyes under the stream, he put both hands on the wall, his head falling forward allowing the water to cascade down his back. He tried to focus on anything and everything, his trip back home, the baseball season,… anything to avoid thinking about
his actions from the night. The look on Felicity’s face, him stumbling into his room with Mandy after she told him they couldn’t stay in hers because she was sharing it with Mark, the taste of her skin on his lips. It had felt so wrong somehow but he had kept going, hoping her body would bring him the comfort he was seeking. It hadn’t worked. She had taken off his shirt, lightly scratching his back while he was lowering her bra cups, his mouth taunting her, breathing in her ear while his hands teased her quivering body. It had taken him a second to realize she had stiffened, to realize he had been talking, to realize he had said what he should have never said. Because he didn’t have the right. Because it was a new low, even for him. Because using each other’s body for pleasure was one thing. But this… using her body to keep his mind off of whatever was happening a couple of doors down the hall… It wasn’t right. And it obviously wasn’t working either.

So he had stopped, closed his eyes for a couple more seconds. Just as he was moving, freeing her from his weight, he had opened his mouth to apologize but she hadn’t let him. Replacing her bra on her breasts, she had put her dress back on just as he picked up his discarded shirt, getting dressed as well.

Shaking his head, trying to clear off his thoughts, he shut down the water. Stepping outside of the shower, he quickly dried himself, draping the towel around his waist as he brushed his teeth.

Once he was back in bed, he fidgeted with the remote control, desperate for sleep but also suspecting he wouldn’t find it easily tonight. Turning off the lights, he chose a re-run of an episode of X-Files in a desperate attempt to keep his mind busy. It took another two episodes of the TV show to eventually fall asleep, the remote-control slipping from his hand.

***

Unsurprisingly, he woke up much later than expected. Quickly freshening up, he made his way downstairs to grab a light breakfast, secretly hoping he would meet Felicity on the way and get to clear the air with her. Luck seemed to be on his side as she was waiting on the ground floor for the elevator. He noted she was accompanied by Barry but he wasn’t about to let that stop him. He quietly walked up to her, softly putting a hand on her back as a warning of his presence in her back.

“Good morning,” he said to the two of them. “Felicity, may I have a word?”

“Good morning, Oliver,” she answered, her tone neutral and polite. “Barry and I were just about to go back to our rooms, can it wait?”

“Mister Queen, good morning!” Barry said with a smile. He looked at Felicity who had turned her back once more, apparently confused with her behavior. “You know, why don’t we meet here in thirty minutes? We still have plenty of time before we have to give our keys back, anyway.”

Felicity’s shoulders stiffened but this time she forced a smile. “I know. But I still need to pack and I hate having to leave a hotel room in a rush. I always feel like I’m forgetting something. Besides…” she turned to Oliver, quirking an eyebrow at him, “I’m positive this can wait until Monday.”

Shifting on his feet under Felicity’s stare, Oliver shoved his hands in his pockets. “I guess so. You are going back by plane, then?”

Noticing the awkwardness between the two, Barry coughed slightly as he made his way to the staircase. “You know what, I’ll just go ahead. See you in half an hour!”
Sighing exasperatedly, Felicity crossed her arms, looking expectantly at Oliver. “Yes, I’m taking the plane. I wouldn’t want to play third wheel between you and Mandy.”

“Felicity, there’s nothing between Mandy and I and…”

She cut him off, shaking her head. “I’m just your assistant, none of what you do on the side is my business. Let’s just leave it at that.” With a stiff smile, she patted his arm, pressing the button to call the elevator once more.

“You’re my friend as well, Felicity,” he replied, trying to ignore the way her words were digging a hole in his chest.

She stepped inside the elevator. “I will see you on Monday, Oliver. Have a good trip back home.”

***

The way back to Starling City was much more silent without Felicity’s constant rambling and her Spotify playlist in the background. Oliver was fully aware of the irony of the situation; not two weeks ago he had been willing to do almost everything to make sure he would be driving alone and now that it was finally happening, all he could feel was a sense of loneliness and boredom. No more games, no more teasing, no more sharing meals, no more Felicity stealing his fries,… no more laughing.

It was actually a relieved Oliver who drove back into the main alley leading to the Queen Mansion. The sun had already set and he had just made his way out of the garage, carrying his bags when his little sister bounced her way towards him.

Smiling instantly, he dropped his luggage, opening his arms for her.

She stopped a few feet from him, her mouth falling open. “Your hair!”

Oliver chuckled, passing a hand over his now much shorter hair. “Yep. Like it?”

Tilting her head, Thea scrutinized him, her eyes narrowing. “… I do. It looks good!”

“Great. Now give me a hug.”

Laughing, she tackled him. “You’ve been gone forever. Did you get me a souvenir?”

Oliver looked sternly at her once they broke apart. “It was a business trip, Thea. I didn’t really have time for shopping.” Picking up his bags once more, he made his way to the main door, Thea right behind him. “Buuut… I might have gotten you a little something.”

“Ha! I knew it! What is it?” she pleaded him once they were inside the house.

“Let me unpack, will you?” Oliver huffed out a laugh as he walked up the stairs.

Groaning, his sister retreated. “Fine. I was waiting for you to have dinner. Can I tell Raisa she can fix us a little something?”
At the top of the staircase, Oliver turned back, smiling. “I’m starving. Something quick would be perfect. I’ll meet you in the kitchen in 5 minutes?”

She left right away, already running across the house. Shaking his head, Oliver entered his room and put his bags on the bed, already looking for the small gift he had indeed bought for her. Finally finding the small parcel, carefully wrapped in several layers of silk paper, he let out a small smile, remembering where he had bought it.

Once they had been done with the mini-golf, Felicity and he had made their way back to the garage. She had stopped once more in front of a small shop window, looking longingly at a pair of flats with weird looking pandas on them. He had figured out that the price tag was probably keeping her from buying them and he had gently nudged her towards the door.

“Try them on.”

“No. No. I don’t really need another pair of shoes,” she shook her head, resisting him as he opened the door.

“Please. Let me. Consider this as an early birthday present,” he winked at her, grabbing her hand and, pulling her with him, walked towards the one and only employee. It was a small boutique, very feminine and with a few original pieces - like the panda flats. The whole place was colorful, bright but slightly overwhelming with the amount of merchandise on display.

“My friend would like to try on the panda flats.”

“Oliver, really, it’s not necessary.” Smiling apologetically to the employee, Felicity tried to grab his arm to get him to leave the shop.

“Don’t mind her. She is the stubborn kind.” Oliver smiled charmingly at the woman – Ally according to the nametag on her blouse.

Felicity gasped. “You have a nerve! Me, stubborn?!”

“Yes, you.” Oliver turned towards Ally, who was staring at the two of them, a confused look on her face. “Don’t pay attention. She really wants those shoes. Size…” glancing down at Felicity, he looked at her feet, “7 … 7 and a half?”

“7 and a half,” she instinctively answered, then shook her head. “It doesn’t matter anyway because I don’t want to try them on,” Felicity repeated, gripping her handbag with more force than necessary.

Oliver grinned at her and without taking his eyes off of her, told Ally, “we’ll take a pair of those shoes, size 7 and a half, please.”

Felicity glared at him. “No.”

“Yes.”

The clerk stood there, her head turning between the two of them as if she was watching a ping pong game.

“Oliver, no.”
“Felicity… yes.”

“You can’t buy your assistant a pair of expensive shoes!”

“You’re right. But that’s not what I’m doing. I’m buying a birthday gift for my friend.”

She sighed. “Still. It doesn’t feel right.”

“OK. It’s my birthday soon, too. Why don’t you…” looking around him, he grabbed a small item on a display, “get me this for my birthday?”

Felicity stared at the object in his hand for a few seconds before raising her head, her eyebrow quirked. “Really?”

“Yeah,” he answered as seriously as possible.

Felicity fought back a smile, her eyes twinkling with mischief. “Oliver, I hate to break this to you but… you just got a haircut. You don’t have any use for that anymore.”

They locked eyes, both trying to keep a straight face and not willing to back down. The smiles grew on their faces at the same time just as the clerk cleared her throat, trying to get their attention.

“So… do you want me to wrap this for you?” she asked, holding a box of shoes.

“Yes, please,” Oliver answered, tearing his eyes off Felicity, as he handed her the delicate silvery headband he was still holding in his hand. “Can you also wrap this, please?”

He was interrupted in his thoughts by the sound of a knock on the door. Clearing his head, he turned around, seeing Thea standing on the threshold.

“Dinner is ready?” she asked tentatively, probably noticing her brother had somehow been lost in thoughts.

“Yup.” In five steps he was near her, handing her the small parcel.

Squealing, Thea opened it right away. “Aww. That’s so cute!”

She handed him the discarded papers and, glancing at one of the mirrors in the hallway, put it on right away. Turning her head, she admired herself. The silvery metal was complimenting her naturally dark hair and one small leather panda was incrusted on the right side.

“I’m actually impressed. I was expecting the usual snowglobe or teddy bear,” she smirked at him.

“What can I say? You’re growing up!” he smiled at her. “You like it, then?”

“I love it. Thank you,” she reached on her toes and kissed his cheek, then punched him on the arm. “First one in the kitchen gets the other’s dessert,” before taking off and rushing down the stairs.

Laughing, Oliver followed at a much slower pace. He had always let her win, and even if his sister was indeed growing up, he had a feeling it would never change.

***
Monday morning happened sooner than he hoped for, the tiredness of the trip heavy on him. It was around 9 when he stepped out of the elevator, and seeing Felicity’s familiar figure at her desk brought a smile on his lips. A small, irrational part of him had feared she wouldn’t have been there for some reason.

She was laughing to something Dig was saying, the two of them oblivious to him despite the usual ding the elevator had made.

“Good morning. Dig, great to see you back.” He shook his bodyguard’s hand. “I hope Carly is doing better?”

Dig smiled warmly at him. “Yes, she is. Still struggling with her right arm in cast but she’s getting there. A broken arm is nothing too serious. I was just waiting for you to thank you for the flowers. If you don’t need anything, I’ll be down in the security department.”

“That’s great to hear. No problem.” Oliver watched Dig as he made his way to the staircase before turning to his assistant. “Felicity, did you have enough rest? If you need a day or two, I’m sure I could…”

“I’m fine, Oliver,” she interrupted him politely with a professional smile. “You have an appointment with your father after lunch. In your conference room. Walter would like to see you this morning and asked for you to stop by whenever you have the time.”

Oliver frowned. “Did my father tell you the reason for the meeting?”

“No. His assistant just told me that Mr Merlyn would be joining him as well and that it was nothing formal. Apparently the two of them are having lunch together. Which reminds me… Mr Merlyn, junior, would like to see you for lunch.”

“I was planning on getting Big Belly Burger for us, you told me you missed it…”

“I am having lunch with Barry today. It’s his first day,” she answered, not paying attention at him as she was replying an email.

“Well…” Oliver shifted on his feet. “If you already have plans…”

“I do. Thank you for the offer, though,” she smiled at him briefly before focusing on her screen again. “I already transferred you all the important emails.”

“I’ll just stop by Walter’s first and then get to it. Do you need anything? Food, water?”

“No, I’m fine. Thanks.”

His informal meeting with Walter allowed him to catch up on everything that had happened while he had been gone. News of his successful meeting with the Backstones had already reached him and their legal office was hard at work writing up the contract for their new partnership. It lasted well into the morning, and it was only when Walter told him he had another appointment that Oliver realized how late it already was. Cursing slightly, he hurried back to his office, knowing Tommy was supposed to stop by around 11.30, which was 10 minutes ago.

“No, really, Miss Felicity. There is no need to call Oliver. Why don’t you keep me company, instead?”
“Mister Merlyn…”

“Please. I already told you to call me Tommy. Besides, my father is supposed to drop by later and you might get confusing if you call us both ‘Mister Merlyn’.”

Oliver saw Felicity sigh and roll her eyes as he approached them. “Sorry, Tommy.”

“Nah. Don’t worry. Your charming assistant was keeping me company.”

“Felicity, are there any messages?” Oliver asked her, putting his jacket on.

“No,” she answered, not bothering to look at him.

“I should be back by 1 at the latest.”

“Good.”

Tommy stood there, looking at them, obviously confused. Oliver just shook his head, making it clear this was not the time.

Leaning towards him, Tommy whispered, “you know if Miss Felicity wants to join us, she is more than…”

“She already has plans,” Oliver quickly replied just as low.

Tommy had the decency to wait until they were seated at their usual table in a sushi restaurant, just one block away from QC.

“Ok what is going on?” he asked as soon as they had given their order.

Oliver pretended to not understand him. “What is going on with what?”

Tommy glared at him, eyebrows raised.

Oliver sighed as he took a sip of water. Fidgeting with his glass, he avoided his best friend’s eyes.

“Well. Since I have to spell it out for you… what is going on between you and Felicity? When you called me last week, you guys were bickering like an old married couple and now she’s all… cold and professional. And you look like a kicked puppy.”

“I did something stupid this weekend,” Oliver mumbled, his fingers tapping on the table.

“You are scaring me. You didn’t try something on her, did you?”

Oliver snapped his head back up, outraged. “Of course not!”

“OK. Good. Sorry but you make it sound like you murdered her grand-mother!”

Oliver proceeded to tell him what had happened on Saturday night, not leaving out any detail.

“Dude…”

“I know. It was lame. I know that. I apologized but you’ve seen her. She’s just… so polite and formal. She… she hasn’t even babbled once!”

“I’m sorry but I’m still stuck on Saturday night. I can’t believe you called out the wrong name,” Tommy said, his face showing his shock and disbelief.
Oliver tilted his head, looking sternly at him. “Really, that’s all you got from that?”

“Yeah. That has never happened to any of us. You, especially, have had a lot of training. So color me surprised to see that not only did you call a girl by the wrong name during foreplay but… you didn't even call her by your girlfriend’s name.”

“I just had spent the entire week with Felicity. I was tired and slightly drunk. That’s it.”

Tommy snorted, shaking his head.

“What?” Oliver asked defensively.

“You know, we’ve been on vacation together so many times I lost count of them. Drinking and not sleeping much or at all. Yet, I am pretty sure you never called my name in action,” Tommy dryly stated, bringing his glass of wine to his lips. He suddenly paused, his eyes horrified. “Oh God, tell me you never called out my name.”

Oliver rolled his eyes. “Of course not! I’m not attracted to you, idiot.”

Tommy smiled slyly. “So you are attracted to her?”

The short intake of breath was probably the only answer his best friend needed, judging by the satisfied smirk that grew on his face.

“It doesn’t matter. She is my assistant, my friend and I want to make things right.”

Tommy sighed. “Have you apologized?”

“Yes! Of course! I told her it meant nothing and I was sorry.”

“You should get her flowers.”

“No. She won’t like it, she will think it’s inappropriate.” Oliver shook his head, pinching his lips.

“OK. Does she like chocolate?”

Oliver smiled softly, remembering their lunch and the chocolate cake he had given her and Anna. The way she was savoring each bite, her eyes closed and her tongue licking out the raspberry coulis on her spoon…


“I was trying to remember if she liked chocolate,” he defended himself, cursing silently as he felt his cheeks starting to heat. “And yes, she does. You think I should get her chocolate?”

“No. You should bring her dessert, though. It’s appropriate for a boss to bring take out,” Tommy shrugged, shoving a california roll in his mouth.

And so, once they got out of the restaurant, they made a quick stop at the Italian bakery shop in front of QC’s building. Oliver picked a chocolate fondant with fresh raspberries on top, triple checking that there were no nuts.

It was with a hesitant smile that Oliver walked to Felicity’s desk, where she was already busy sorting through mail. She barely glanced up from her task when she saw the two men approaching her.
Oliver stood awkwardly near her desk, not sure if disturbing her was a good idea until Tommy cleared his throat, rolling his eyes.

“Yes?” Felicity looked at them expectantly. “Is there something you need me to do, Oliver?”

“I have dessert for you.”

Felicity’s mouth dropped slightly opened as her eyes widened.

Tommy mumbled under his breath. “Good lord, give me the strength…” Clearing his voice he explained, “what he means is that he got you a chocolate cake from that bakery that you apparently like. It was on our way back.”

Oliver wrinkled his eyes and shook his head when he realized what he had said. “Yes. Of course. Not the other kind of… I mean. I remember you liked chocolate cake.” He put the small box in front of her, looking at her hopefully.

She moved her eyes from him to the box. “Thank you. That is very considerate of you.”

Oliver shifted on his feet, not knowing what to do next. “Sure. Anytime.”

She put the box in one of the shelves of her desk then proceeded to sort the mail once again, not paying attention to him anymore. “I will let you know when your father arrives.”

Oliver shared a look with Tommy who winced and gave a sharp nod of his head. Oliver followed him into his own office, making sure to close the door.

“So… that obviously didn’t go as well as I thought,” Tommy said as he sat down on the sofa.

“I hate it. She’s so… professional!”

“Oh yeah… it’s awful. A professional employee. I hate it when I get one of those,” Tommy taunted him, his fingers playing on his knee.

“You know what I mean.”

“I think you’re doing it wrong,” Tommy said thoughtfully, scratching his chin.

“What do you mean?” Oliver asked as he sat down on one of the chairs.

“You apologized but she is still acting distant. You need to force her to break that wall.”

“Great. And how exactly am I supposed to do that if she barely talks to me?”

“From what I’ve seen she has no problem talking to you when she’s mad at you, does she?”

“… none at all,” Oliver laughed slightly remembering the number of times she had given him a piece of her mind.

“It’s easy, then.” Tommy smiled mischievously, leaning towards him. “You have to piss her off.”

Their fathers arrived shortly after that. Apparently, they were planning to invest in a common project
and just wanted to talk about it informally at first. Malcolm wanted more information about the new eco-friendly project Oliver was working on and Robert had thought it was a good idea to get the information directly from him.

As the four of them were seated in the conference room, Oliver used the intercom to call Felicity. The sound of her heels announced her arrival a few seconds later.

“Miss Smoak. Could you get my guests and I some coffee, please?”

The professional smile she had been wearing faded a bit as her eyes seemed to darken. Oliver forced himself to stay stoic under her glare as he continued, “the coffee maker is right over there.” He pointed to a small room, directly in front of him, that was separated from the conference room by a wall of glass, like the rest of the office.

Without a word, she walked past them, closing the door behind her.

Oliver and Tommy shared an amused look, while Robert and Malcolm, still talking, were oblivious to the assistant that was in the room behind them.

The amusement on Oliver and Tommy’s faces turned to confusion once they saw Felicity standing in front of the coffee maker, hands on her hips as is she was gauging the device.

Oliver turned his head to look at Tommy whose expression changed abruptly, his mouth popping open and his eyes bulging out. Turning his head back just in time, he saw a grimacing Felicity using all of her weight to try to push the coffee maker off of the table. It was a big, sophisticated machine that, Oliver knew from having the same one at the Queen mansion, weighed a lot. Slightly shocked, he watched her struggling for a couple of seconds before giving up and grabbing one of the handles. She yanked at it brutally, efficiently breaking it. She threw it away haphazardly and grabbing a milk frother, she held it out like a baseball bat and swung it, efficiently breaking the digital display.

Tommy and Oliver shared a nervous look as she carefully put the milk frother back in place. After fixing her hair, she stood there for a moment, hands on her hips, apparently admiring her handiwork.

As she opened the door once more with an innocent smile on her lips but a devilish look in her eyes, she addressed him sweetly. “I’m sorry, Mister Queen, but it seems as if someone broke our coffee maker.”

As she made her way past the older men, who were still oblivious to what had happened, she kept her eyes fixed on Oliver. Slowing down when she arrived next to him, she furiously mouthed, “violently” and left the room without a glance behind her.

As Oliver watched her retreat, a small smile appeared on his lips and he turned to his best friend. Tommy was still looking at the coffee maker, his mouth agape. “Did she… did she really…”

“Yes,” Oliver replied, his smile growing bigger. “Thank you.”

His words caught Tommy’s attention and his friend eyed him suspiciously. “Are you serious? You’re thanking me for…” dropping his voice, he nervously glanced at their fathers. “Ollie, she went all MMA on your coffee maker.”

“I know. We are progressing, though. Last time she was that pissed at me, she went after my car.”

“Baby? She attacked Baby?!”
Oliver smiled fondly at the memory. “She didn’t cause any harm, just made sure I got the message.”

Tommy stayed silent for a while then whistled softly. “You can’t charm her. You can’t fool her. You can’t outsmart her. Man… I’d say you’re screwed.”

Chapter End Notes

So... Fun fact? Oliver was totally, absolutely, going to sleep with Mandy in my head. Then 4x08 happened and with the big lie, I just couldn't write it. It felt too much betrayal for my poor little heart. The result is the same, though. It's still a wake-up call, it still made his relationship with Felicity take a step back.

Hope you liked Tommy back? And him scheming with Oliver was so much fun to write. ANd if you think Tommy has strong suspicions about his best friend's feelings... you might be right.

I should update next chapter by the end of the week, if all goes well :)

Come find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com

Check out my other stories http://archiveofourown.org/users/BlueBayou/works
Cats In The Cradle

Chapter Notes

For once, I'm posting it at a time that will benefit the "American continents" time-zone.

Huge thank you to mysticaldetectivepanda, who beta'd it, and Pidanka who delta'd it.

Song: Cats in the cradle (my favorite is by Ugly Kid Joe)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Cats In The Cradle"

My child arrived just the other day
He came to the world in the usual way
But there were planes to catch and bills to pay
He learned to walk while I was away
And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it, and as he grew
He'd say "I'm gonna be like you dad
You know I'm gonna be like you"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man on the moon
When you comin' home dad?
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son
You know we'll have a good time then

My son turned ten just the other day
He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on let's play
Can you teach me to throw", I said "Not today
I got a lot to do", he said, "That's ok"
And he walked away but his smile never dimmed
And said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah
You know I'm gonna be like him"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man on the moon
When you comin' home son?
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son
You know we'll have a good time then

Well, he came home from college just the other day
So much like a man I just had to say
"Son, I'm proud of you, can you sit for a while?"
He shook his head and said with a smile
"What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys
See you later, can I have them please?"
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
When you comin' home son?  
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
You know we'll have a good time then

I've long since retired, my son's moved away  
I called him up just the other day  
I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind"  
He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time  
You see my new job's a hassle and kids have the flu  
But it's sure nice talking to you, Dad  
It's been sure nice talking to you"

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me  
He'd grown up just like me  
My boy was just like me

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon  
Little boy blue and the man on the moon  
When you comin' home son?  
I don't know when, but we'll get together then son  
You know we'll have a good time then

“So, I heard about your success in Sorora. That’s some good job, Oliver. I know Andrew, he can be a real pain in the ass. We never really got along but he’s a force to be reckoned with,” Malcolm congratulated Oliver, raising his glass of water at him. They had spent a good part of the afternoon discussing their cogeneration project, as well as the current state of business and finances in the country.

Before Oliver could open his mouth, Robert interrupted him. “Yes. That’s some good work, but as the saying goes let’s not count our chickens before they’re hatched. Until I have his signature on a contract, he could still change his mind.”

Oliver locked his jaw, nodding non-committedly while averting his father’s eyes.

Tommy, sensing the discomfort, stood up from his chair. “Well, I think maybe we should let Ollie work a bit after his two-week road trip?” he asked the older men.

“You’re right. Thank you for your time, Oliver.” Malcolm stood as well, alongside Robert.

“Any time. If you need more information, just let me know. Felicity would gladly help if you have any questions.”

“Felicity?” Robert asked, confused. “Your assistant?”

“Yes. She is the one who actually came up with the original concept,” Oliver explained, opening the door leading to his office.

“I remember now. Walter mentioned her a few weeks ago. I didn’t know your assistant had any
background in sciences."

“She is an MIT graduate. Only ended up working with me because of... it doesn’t really matter. Anyway, Malcolm, if you need anything else, just let me know. I can guarantee you Felicity will explain things in a better way than our Head of Applied Sciences.” Oliver shook Malcolm’s hand as he held the door open.

“I won’t hesitate, then. Have a good day.” Malcolm and Robert walked towards the elevator, still deep in talk. It suddenly dawned on him how much both men relied on each other. Oliver had grown up with Malcolm and Robert constantly visiting each other, and locking themselves in his father's office, but even now that both companies were thriving, they still spent a lot of time together.

Tommy slapped his friend on the back. “We need to do something later this week. Let me know when you have time for dinner or drinks.”

“Will do,” Oliver smiled as he watched him stopping by Felicity’s desk.

“Miss Felicity, you have, once again, brightened my day. I think I might have missed you more than my best friend. We really should go out for coffee one of these days. Get to know each other. Maybe work on your anger management?” Tommy asked innocently.

Oliver leaned against the wall, eyeing his assistant who was tilting her head at Tommy and glaring at him.

“Thank you for the offer, Mister Merlyn, but I’d rather work on it with my boss.”

As Oliver felt a smile growing on his lips at her innuendo, Tommy raised his eyebrows.

Felicity squeezed her eyes shut, a slight blush covering her cheeks. “That’s not what I meant. At all.”

“I can’t believe I wasted my time with all of my best lines while all I had to do was ask you to get me coffee,” Tommy sighed, shoving his hands in his pockets.

Felicity quirked an eyebrow. “Wow. You mean all those cheesy lines you’ve been giving me since I started working here were actually the best you could do?”

Tommy grimaced, “Ouch.”

With a small satisfied smile, Felicity went back to her computer. “Have a good day, Mister Merlyn.”

Tommy laughed lightly, shaking his head. “Good day to you too, Miss Felicity.” With one last glance at his best friend, he rejoined his father in front of the elevator. Oliver made his way back to his office, stopping in front of the giant windows besides his desk. The elevator had barely closed that he heard the familiar sound of her heels clacking furiously on the marble. Knowing she couldn’t see his face, he let out a smile, keeping his eyes on the view ahead of him. *Showtime.*

“I had one rule. One rule!” she shouted as she stormed into his office.

Wiping the smile off his face, Oliver turned around and asked innocently, “about?”

She narrowed her eyes at him, taking a deep breath. “You know exactly what I’m talking about. I’m not here to bring you drinks. Especially when I’ve been trying to catch up with all the work while you were gone most of the day!”
“I’m sorry. I guess it slipped my mind,” Oliver tried to placate her, sitting on his desk.

Felicity eyed him suspiciously. “It slipped your mind?”

“Yep. I guess I was too focused on finding a way to get you to talk to me?”

She crossed her arms on her chest. “I talk to you, Oliver.”

“No. You’re being all professional. You answer my questions and that’s about it. I want my Fe… my friend back.”

“Oh. You want your friend back?!” Felicity raised her arms, turning around. “The nerve you have!”

“Felicity, I apologized. I told you it meant nothing and actually nothing much even happened and…”

She cut him off. “Do you know how many women live in Sacramento?”

Oliver looked at her, confused. “Hum… No? But what does it…”

Interrupting him once more, she explained, raising her voice, “thousands. Hundreds of thousands. Yet, you have to sleep with her. You say I’m your friend? And you sleep with the one woman – the ONE woman – you know has been doing nothing but try to make my life as miserable as possible ever since you named me your assistant!”

Oliver took a short intake of breath. “Felicity, I didn’t…”

“You didn’t what, Oliver? You didn’t mean to hurt me? You didn’t think?”

He stayed silent which only seemed to fuel her rage more. “Tell me! You didn’t what?!?”

His temper slowly rose as well with the frustration. “I didn’t do it to hurt you! I wasn’t thinking clearly, I was just… I was frustrated…”

Felicity snorted, interrupting him once more. “Oh, I’m sorry. Two weeks must have been long, I get it. Sorry if I’m not the right kind of assistant for Mister Oliver-Can’t-Keep-It-In-His-Pants Queen!”

“That’s not what I meant and you know it, Felicity!” He shouted back at her.

“Then what?!”

“I just wanted to find out if Mandy knew something about the peanuts in your food!”

Felicity stared at him for a second, her face softening for a second. “Oh. Oooooh.”

He was about to talk when she approached him, folding her arms. “So? Did you get an answer by looking in her panties?” she asked sarcastically.

“No!” he roared, “and stop twisting my words! I wanted to question her, because I feel it in my guts that Isabel has something to do with it!”

“Are you sure it’s the only reason? Isn’t it because you can’t get past the fact your father promoted her instead of you?”

“No. No. But he’s blinded by her, it’s messing with him. He has an affair with her and I can’t bring my doubts to him because of that. I messed up, I know that. I didn’t plan on things to go that far with
Mandy but then…”

Felicity took a deep breath. “But then? Oliver, I think this whole thing is messing with you as well.”

“Messing with me?” he asked, frowning. “Messing with me? I’m sorry if I’m having a hard time seeing my father promoting the woman he cheats on my mother with!”

Felicity laughed dryly. “Now that is rich.”

“What?”

“Blaming your father,” she answered calmly.

“Like I shouldn’t?” he asked in disbelief. “People keep expecting me to be like him and at the same time I’m seeing the way he… I am supposed to take over after him, do as good as him, but at the same time my superior is his mistress...” Frustrated, he struggled to finish his sentence.

“Alright. I get it,” she said, stepping next to him. “What I would like to know though is… Why do you blame him, Oliver? You’re doing exactly the same. You’re behaving just like him. Even in your personal life.”

Oliver opened his mouth but Felicity held out a hand. “No. This is the time where I talk and you listen. Until me, you picked assistants you knew you could screw between meetings. You would have never hired me if your mother hadn’t been pestering you. You probably would still see me as the girl with the glasses if this whole mess with Isabel hadn’t happened, looking for the first excuse to get me out of your way.”

Oliver tried to interrupt her but she stopped him once more, her eyes menacing him. “Oh, no. You wanted me to talk, and I am still talking.”

Pacing in front of him, she started counting on her fingers. “Your father sleeps with Isabel then promotes her; you hire assistants then sleep with them. Your father cheats on your mother? You cheat on your long-time girlfriend. You want people to stop expecting you to walk into your father’s steps? Then be different! Don’t be the next Queen! Be Oliver! You are so pissed that people expect you to act like your father while all you’ve been doing ever since I met you is behaving exactly like him!” Stopping for her breath, she looked at him, her eyes suddenly softening. His shoulders slumped as he rested his hands on his desk, bowing his head.

“Oliver…” she said softly as she sat on the desk next to him, putting her hand on his back. “You could do so much good. For this company, for this city. You care about them. You are passionate, driven when it’s something you believe in. I know it, I’ve seen it first-hand. You don’t have to be like him to be a good leader. You are one naturally. You just have to find a different way.”

“I feel useless. I can’t tell him about our doubts, I can’t confront her directly. And I was doing OK with it but then… I saw you on the floor and… I had to do something, Felicity. Anything. I swear I was just going to make sure she made it safely to her room. Then… I just…” he trailed off, not willing to admit what had pushed him to kiss her.

“You just did what you’ve always done,” she quietly said.

He raised his head, looking at her, feeling terribly ashamed of his behavior. “Yes.”

She smiled reassuringly at him and nudged his shoulder with her own, trying to lighten the mood. “Good thing I bought you these condoms, I guess.”
Oliver chuckled. “I didn’t need them. We didn’t go that far.”

“But Mandy said… well…” Frowning, she looked at him and seeing the truth in his eyes she groaned. “That bitch!”

Oliver laughed, relieved to see that his Felicity was back. He glanced at his watch, seeing that it was past 4. “You should go. Go home, get some rest.”

“It’s not even 5 yet,” she protested as she grabbed his wrist to check the time for herself.

“You worked almost all weekend. You already have plenty of comp time.”

She bit her lips, looking at him hesitantly. Only then did he notice the dark circles under her eyes.

“Felicity. I mean it. You were in a hospital not 72 hours ago. Go home.”

“But we need to work on You-Know-Who. And I’m already taking Friday off,” she whispered, her eyes frowning.

He smiled softly at her stubborn expression. “We will. Tomorrow. I cleared my schedule in the morning. I’ll be there early. Even if you seem to forget it sometimes, I’m the boss here.” He lightly tapped her nose with his index, “and I’m telling you your work day is over.”

Sighing, she finally got up from the desk. “I really need to stop by the supermarket anyway.”

He watched her as she made her way to her desk, quickly gathering her belongings. She stopped by his door with her coat on her arm. “See you tomorrow, then.”

“See you tomorrow, Felicity,” he smiled back at her as he sat down on his chair. He still had a few things to do before calling it a day as well, including giving his last notes to the legal department that was in charge of putting up the contract he was going to send to Andrew Backstone.

He was scribbling a few notes on the first draft when a small knock on his door interrupted him. Surprised, he stood up, greeting his visitor:

“Mom!” Smiling, he quickly walked up to her, leaning to kiss her cheek. “What are you doing here?”

“I just wanted to stop by and congratulate my son. I didn’t get to see you last night, you were already in bed when I came back home.”

Oliver felt the tip of his ears blushing. “It’s not officially done, yet.”

“I am proud of you nonetheless.” She lightly patted his cheek before taking a seat on the sofa. He followed her, sitting on the opposite chair. “I hope I’m not disturbing you? I stopped by ten minutes ago but you seemed… busy with your assistant.”

Oliver frowned. “Why didn’t you interrupt us?”

“Well… judging by the loud talking, I assumed it was better to come back later… I assume you are going to need a new one?”
“A new what?” he asked, confused.

“Assistant. I know what I’ve said before but you’ve clearly changed. If you need a new assistant, I’m sure you can…”

Oliver cut her off. “What?! I don’t… No way,” he laughed at the ridiculousness of the idea. “I’m not getting a new assistant.”

Firing Felicity? Firing Felicity?! He'd probably fire himself first. He needed her way too much.

Moira perked an eyebrow. “Are you sure? Because from what I was seeing, or rather hearing, she didn’t really seem to behave like a professional assistant.”

Oliver shook his head. “You caught us at a bad time. We disagreed on something, and our tempers got in the way. That’s it. She is brilliant. There is no way I could fire her. It’s… it’s Felicity,” he finished, chuckling to himself.

His mother looked at him intensely, tilting her head. “Very well. If you’re sure…”

“Yep. I am. Don’t worry, mom. We have an unusual relationship but… it works. We make a good team.”

Moira smiled. “I’m glad to hear it.”

She stayed silent for a couple of seconds, her eyes travelling around his office.

Noticing her unusual behavior, Oliver asked quietly, “there’s something else you would like to tell me about, isn’t there?”

Moira let out a small smile as she looked at her son. “Yes, there is” She took a deep breath, adding, “Oliver, I know things are bad between you and your father. And I think I know why.”

Oliver stood up and started pacing. “Mum… I’m not sure it’s a good idea to talk about this. It’s between me and dad.”

“No. Oliver. I know it has a lot to do with Isabel,” Moira explained calmly, her tone free of any passion.

That caught his attention and he stopped pacing, sitting next to her on the couch.

“Mom?” He didn’t finish his question, knowing she would probably understand.

Taking a deep breath, she continued, “I know she is his mistress. I have known for a while. You can never really fool a wife, Oliver. But that doesn’t mean he promoted her just for that. And you know it. I want you to try to get past it. Whatever happens between your father and me… it is between your father and me. I don’t want it to damage your relationship with him.”

Oliver stared at her for a second, at loss for words. “You are defending him?”

“I am defending my family, Oliver. He has always been a good father.”

“I can’t believe I’m hearing that,” he cut her off, not believing his ears. How could his mother defend him?!

“Hear me out, please. He made mistakes. He probably still makes some. But he tried, and is still trying, to fix them. You weren’t ready for that position, were you?”
“No, but that’s beside the point! He could have picked anyone… anyone else but her!”

She sighed. “He chose the best candidate for the company. It’s his responsibility to make sure that the company you and Thea will inherit one day is as thriving as can be.”

“But… how can you be OK with that? He cheats on you with her and she’s a top executive of the company you helped him build!”

Moira’s eyes hardened. “Oliver. Like I told you… what happens between your father and me is our business. Not yours. It is our marriage. It might not be perfect, but it’s none of your concern how we choose to live it as long as it doesn’t impact your and your sister’s lives. I want you to learn how to separate our private life from your job. Because that’s what you will have to do once you take over for your father.”

Probably realizing he was still processing her words, she stood up. “I am going to leave you to your work. Don’t be late for dinner.”

Oliver didn’t even have the chance to gather his thoughts that she was already gone, leaving him with more questions than answers.

He stayed on the sofa for a couple more minutes, trying to make sense of their conversation. Sighing, he finally stood up, willing to put that in the back of his head for the moment. He still had to finish reading through the Backstone contract. He could deal with his parents later.

It turned out he didn’t get much time to process everything his mother had told him. His father asked to talk to him as soon as dinner was over. Willing to at least try to honor his mother’s wishes, he walked into Robert’s study with the intention of staying calm no matter the cost.

“Oliver. Good. Have a seat,” Robert welcomed him, pointing to one of the leather chairs that was opposite his desk.

Oliver narrowed his eyes and walked to the sofa instead, intending on having a conversation from equal to equal this time. He had lost count of the amount of times he had been summoned into the patriarch’s office to be scolded about his behavior. *It’s not going to happen this time, dad.*

Robert raised an eyebrow at the movement but, after a moment of thought, stood up and walked to Oliver, taking a seat opposite from him.

“I’m listening.” Oliver made a gesture with his hand, inviting his father to start the conversation. He still didn’t feel like he had much to tell him but was willing to hear out whatever he had to tell him.

“Oliver. You did a great job during the whole trip. Really. I’m proud of you. So is Walter, by the way.”

“But?” Oliver asked.

“There is no but. You were professional, apart from the whole drama where you didn’t want to use the plane anymore. It didn’t show a lot of maturity,” Robert scolded him.

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “You might want to reconsider your definition of ‘there is no but’.”
“You can’t deny that it might have painted you as an heir throwing a temper tantrum.”

Oliver paused, a smirk appearing on his face, but kept silence. He had walked inside this office willing himself to stay calm and hear his father out. He wanted them to be able to have an adult discussion, but that didn’t mean it was easy.

Robert continued, “Let’s not dwell on that; what is done is done. The legal department will be sending your revised contract tomorrow. As soon as we get it back, it will be officially announced. I’m proud of what you did there. I hear there had been a lot of obstacles for you.”

“You mean like your mistress trying to sabotage me?” Oliver snapped back, regretting his words as soon as they had left his mouth.

“What are you even talking about?” Robert asked, frowning.

“She changed the first meeting without letting me know first-hand. It was good that I was prepared and that Felicity had set up all the tech beforehand because I honestly don’t know how I could have carried out a presentation if I had not been able to use said presentation. It was supposed to be a meeting like we always have. Executives, assistants. Head of departments. Not Isabel, Bradford, and I. I lacked support. The company lacked support.”

“Isabel told me about this decision. I understood her reasons. The warier the backer, the more careful you have to be, Oliver. That wasn’t sabotaging. It might not have been the best call, but I’m sure she was confident you could handle it. Isabel cares for this company. She would never do anything to cause it any harm.”

Oliver nodded, knowing deep down that it would be pointless to argue. He had already shared too much.

“Did you set up mum to talk to me?” he changed the topic.

“No. But your mother is a smart woman. She has your best interest at heart and so do I, even if you don’t understand it yet.”

Robert stood up and walked to the window, staring into the Mansion’s garden. It was mostly dark, but some lights were still on, basking everything in a small glow.

“I am not above admitting my mistakes, Oliver. I am trying to fix them.”

“What mistakes exactly?”

“I gave you everything on a silver platter, thinking you would naturally walk in my footsteps and become what the company needed. I gave you too much, too soon. I had to put the brakes on and let you earn your place. You will never appreciate it if I don’t.”

Oliver stayed silent for long minutes, mirroring his father’s attitude. He finally stood up and went to the door. He paused there, hesitating. A part of him wanted to leave, but there was also a small voice in his head encouraging him to say out loud what he had been thinking more and more lately. He finally made up his mind as his eyes fell on a family portrait on the wall.

“I did try, dad. To be like you. To walk in your footsteps. That’s all I’ve been trying to do for as long as I can remember. I went to the same college you did. I took on the same sports you did. I loved the same cars, same clothes, same wine. I dated women that you would have probably dated as well if you’d been given the chance. My best friend is your best friend’s son.” He huffed out a humorless laugh, shaking his head bitterly. “Hell, I even drink scotch even though I don’t like it… So if you
think you failed at making me the next you… Then I’m glad you did. Because I don’t think I want to be like you. And maybe it’s time I stop trying.”

He opened the door and left the room, not seeing the regret in his father’s eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo… a lot of confrontations for Oliver today. I felt bad for him, poor thing lol.

What did you think?

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com don't be shy... come say hi ;)}
Hi everyone!
You have no idea - NO idea - how pleased I was with your feedback for last chapter! It was such an important chapter for Oliver. It's like a new beginning for him, now.

I have to thank several people for reading this chapter before-hand: pidanka, mysticaldetectivepanda and yellowpretendingtoberead who beta'd it for me. You girls were so helpful, whether it's editing or giving your honest opinion.

I hope you guys will like it as well.

Song: It's Time - Imagine Dragons

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"It's Time"

So this is what you meant
When you said that you were spent
And now it's time to build from the bottom of the pit
  Right to the top
  Don't hold back
Packing my bags and giving the academy a rain-check

I don't ever wanna let you down
I don't ever wanna leave this town
  'Cause after all
This city never sleeps at night

It's time to begin, isn't it?
I get a little bit bigger but then I'll admit
  I'm just the same as I was
Now don't you understand
That I'm never changing who I am

So this is where you fell
And I am left to sell
The path to heaven runs through miles of clouded hell
  Right to the top
  Don't look back
Turning to rags and giving the commodities a rain-check

I don't ever wanna let you down
I don't ever wanna leave this town
   'Cause after all
This city never sleeps at night

   It's time to begin, isn't it?
I get a little bit bigger but then I'll admit
   I'm just the same as I was
Now don't you understand
That I'm never changing who I am

   It's time to begin, isn't it?
I get a little bit bigger but then I'll admit
   I'm just the same as I was
Now don't you understand
That I'm never changing who I am

This road never looked so lonely
This house doesn't burn down slowly
   To ashes, to ashes

   It's time to begin, isn't it?
I get a little bit bigger but then I'll admit
   I'm just the same as I was
Now don't you understand
That I'm never changing who I am

   It's time to begin, isn't it?
I get a little bit bigger but then I'll admit
   I'm just the same as I was
Don't you understand
That I'm never changing who I am

When Felicity walked into her office that Tuesday morning, the sun was already high in the sky. It was one of those beautiful spring days and it seemed like the rest of the week was going to be just as sunny. The smile she was wearing matched the sky as she made her way to her desk, surprised to see Oliver already there.

“Wow. You’re here really early!”

He raised his head, a smile already forming on his lips. “I do keep my promises, sometimes.”

“That’s good to know,” she teased him.

There was still some lingering tension between them, but both of them were determined to work past it and trying to get their relationship to the same state it was before that fateful Saturday night.

“Dig should be here in a couple of minutes, he’s parking the car.”

“Perfect. Did you gather more intel?”
“Yep. A bit. But it’s still pretty foggy, to be honest.” She picked up her laptop and tablet, making her way to the sofa where she sat down. Oliver joined her just as Dig walked inside the room, rubbing his hands together.

“So what do you have for me?” he asked as he sat down on one of the chairs as well.

“OK, so I already told you pretty much everything in the car. I ran more searches and found more of our investors having bought shares in the past couple of months. There are also traces of secret transfers to a Russian company. So far I can’t link Isabel directly to that company, though. She’s good at covering her tracks.”

“Is the amount of stock shares something we should worry about? Would it be enough for a takeover?” Oliver asked her, his head resting on his folded hands as he leaned towards her.

“No. Far from it at the moment. Which makes me think we still have time. They want to stay as discreet as possible, obviously. So it’s little by little.”

Dig chimed in. “There is no big sell off planned for QC shares in the near future, is there?”

“No. No, no. That only happens in times of big crisis, we are far from it at the moment.”

Felicity chewed on her lower lip. “If only I could find a connection between Isabel and this Russian company, it would be enough to take to your dad. Or at least to Walter.”

Oliver smiled softly at her. “Hey. You already found out so much. I would still be completely oblivious to that if it wasn’t for you. Now at least we know where to look.”

Felicity turned to Dig. “Could you go through the security files? I think some are still on paper – God help me. Especially the ones with special missions asked for bodyguards, outside of Starling. Or request of cars, planes. I didn’t find anything about Isabel’s trip to Seattle but maybe she hasn’t always been that careful.”

Dig nodded. “Good idea. I’ll look through it but it will take a couple of days. I can’t exactly spend hours down there without any good reason.”

“My own searches will take just as long, so we should be in sync,” she chirped, smiling brightly.

Oliver looked at them. “OK… what about me? Surely there must be something I can do?”

“Yes. You can start by following Victoria’s advice and stop shaving,” Felicity stated blankly, her eyes dropping to his clean-shaved jaw.

Dig snorted while Oliver glared at her, raising an eyebrow. “And how is that going to help, exactly?”

“Felicity is right, you know. That strong jaw of yours is pretty damn distracting.”

Felicity and Dig avoided each other’s eyes as they fought back the smiles from their faces.

Oliver looked at Felicity. “You told him, didn’t you?”

“I couldn’t resist,” she smiled innocently at him.
After a few seconds of a very intense staring contest, Oliver turned his head. “Did she tell you about that mechanical bull while she was at it?”

Felicity gasped. “Oliver!”

“I couldn’t resist,” he smirked.

“No, she didn’t,” Dig laughed. “But the pictures you guys sent me were pretty telling.”

It took them a couple of seconds to register his words.

“Woaw what…”

“Pictures?!” Felicity shrieked, covering her face with her hands. “Oh no. This is a nightmare.”

“I particularly liked the message you left me, by the way.”

Felicity slowly lowered her hands, glancing at Oliver who winced. “What message?”

“You really don’t remember?” Dig laughed. “That’s why you haven’t mentioned it… I thought you were just too embarrassed!”

“The night is a bit… blurry.”

“Wow. You were that drunk?”

“Don’t judge, OK? We had had a hard day.”

“So what was on that message?” Oliver asked.

“Oh no, no, no. I’m keeping this. It’s too good to waste it. Perfect blackmail material.”

“What the hell is wrong with you two, keeping things for potential blackmail?!”

“I like to have insurance. And tease the hell out of you whenever I can.”

“And I just… Yeah, me too,” Felicity whispered, suddenly very interested in her nails.

Both men narrowed their eyes at her, making her shift on her seat. “And that’s all I’m gonna say on that matter.”

Clearing her throat, she changed the topic. “Sara was also going to do some digging up in her department, but she won’t be back until the end of the week. She’s on a vacation again.” Frowning, she added under her breath, “she sure travels a lot.”

“Yes, she is on the coast with Laurel. Do you know if she's coming back on Sunday as well?” Oliver asked, crossing his ankles and spreading his arms on the headset behind him.

“No. She is coming back on Thursday. We’re spending the night together,” Felicity smiled brightly. “I won’t be here on Friday, you remember?”

“Yep. Don’t worry. The giant post-it you left on my desk didn’t go unnoticed,” he winked at her.
“Well, I know how easily distracted you can be.”

Dig interrupted their bickering, rolling his eyes. “Alright, kids. If that’s all for today, I’m going to head back downstairs. Should I pick up some big belly burger for lunch?”

“Yes!” Felicity nodded enthusiastically as she stood up as well. “It’s been ages.”

“Two weeks,” Oliver clarified.

“Like I said. Ages.” With one last glare, she went back to her desk, Dig following her as he headed to the elevator.

The rest of the week went by rather smoothly. Oliver and Felicity worked hard to catch up with everything they had missed, Dig helping them as much as he could to fill the blanks.

Thursday arrived and just like every other day that week, it started with a big, bright and sunny sky. Felicity woke up to a couple of messages on her phone. That brought a big smile on her face, a smile that only widened when she remembered her plans for the night. Sara was supposed to be back late afternoon, just in time for the small dinner she had planned for her birthday. Her mother was also coming to town. It would be just a quiet birthday dinner, the three of them, but Felicity was looking forward to it. Her relationship with her mother was still strained, had always been. Both women were so different that it was hard for them to really keep in touch. But it was Felicity’s 21st birthday: There was no way Donna Smoak would miss it willingly. She had been disappointed enough that her daughter couldn’t make it to her hometown, having already mentally planned a crazy night on the strip.

Dig knocked on her door, as he always did in the morning since they had gotten into the habit to leave for QC together. He was expected in another place, having been called as extra security for Walter who was meeting one of their investors. He had nonetheless insisted on dropping her off.

She opened the door to a smiling Dig, holding out a carefully wrapped parcel. “Happy Birthday!”

She beamed, stepping aside to let him inside. “Thank you, you shouldn’t have, you know.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” he dismissed her objections with a shake of his hand.

Not resisting any longer, she tore off the wrapping paper, uncovering a new purple tablet case. Squealing, she held it against her heart as she hugged him. “Thank you!”

He chuckled, amused by her enthusiasm. “Don’t mention it. Now I hate to be a party-pooper, but we need to get going.”

“Yup, yup. I’m all set!” She quickly grabbed her bag, shoving the new cover inside, fully intending on making the change at work. Once inside his car, he asked her more about her plans.

“Well, it’s going to be pretty quiet. Sara is coming back later today, my mother arrives as well. Actually I am picking them up at the airport, their planes arrive almost at the same time. Then it’s just a small dinner, at that Italian restaurant I’ve told you about. And that’s it!” she laughed. Her plans
were quite simple but she was still pretty excited.

“Well you’re not going to make me believe that Sara Lance and your mother who I believe, lives in Vegas, are not going to take you out for drinks!”

Felicity groaned. “I don’t really want to think about this. Cause they probably will.”

“What’s so bad about it?”

“You clearly never met my mum.”

Dig laughed. “It can’t be that bad!”

“… yes, it can. You know how we all get fake IDs to get inside bars and stuff?”

“Yeah, we’ve all done that. No biggie, really. She gave you a hard time for it?”

Felicity snorted. “Please. She bought the fake ID herself and snuck it into my wallet.”

Dig raised his eyebrows, speechless.

“So, now that I’m finally legal… you can imagine how the night will turn out.”

Once she arrived in her office, she noticed that the whole place was still empty. Which wasn’t surprising since it was still quite early. She got right to work, quickly losing track of time. She barely noticed her phone buzzing and picked it up distractedly. Seeing it was a text from Oliver, she opened it right away, suddenly wondering why he still wasn’t there.

*Running late. Have a lunch meeting. Any messages?*

She quickly typed back her answer:

*Nope. All good.*

His own reply came back instantly:

*Good. I’ll see you later.*

She didn’t bother answering back, and was just about to get back to her email when another buzz distracted her. Frowning, she glanced when she saw that Sara was trying to call her.

“What?” she picked up right away, slightly worried.

“Felicity! Happy birthday!” Sara’s cheerful voice could be heard over a busy background. It sounded like she was in a train station or airport. “I’m so sorry to call you at work, I didn’t interrupt anything?”
“No. Oliver hasn’t even arrived yet,” Felicity assured her, smiling at her friend’s concern. “Is there something wrong?”

“Well, you could say so. Nothing bad, really but… I take it you haven’t heard the news?”

“Hum… no. Why?” she asked as she picked up her tablet, already firing up her internet browser.

“Air controllers strike. It’s national. All planes are being kept on the ground until further notice. I’m stuck in L.A.”

“What?! Did something happen?”

“No. Something about their wages or whatever. But I won’t be able to make it today, I’m so sorry.”

“No… don’t worry, it’s not your fault. When did it happen?”

“Like an hour ago, it was sudden. Really don’t know much more about it. I’m on the waiting list for the first flight to Starling but I have no idea when that will be.”

Felicity sighed. “It’s OK, really. We’ll just do it another time.”

“Maybe your mom managed to catch a plane already? The ones in the air are still being monitored by the air controllers who don’t belong to their Union,” Sara added hopefully.

“I’ll check with her. Thank you for letting me know, I hope it won’t last long.” Felicity quickly ended her call, biting her lips as she was reading the news.

A quick call to her mother confirmed the news: she was also stuck in Las Vegas airport and seemed more heartbroken than her daughter.

“Honey, you can’t spend your birthday alone. Tell me you have some friends in Starling, at least. I feel awful. I had bought that gorgeous little blue dress, it would have looked perfect on you.”

Felicity couldn’t help but smile. “Mum. It’s fine, really. Since we have to postpone it, I might even be able to come home for a weekend in a couple of weeks?” she asked, trying to cheer her mother up.

The high pitched squeal she heard confirmed it was working. “That would be amazing! Why don’t you bring your new friend as well? Sara, is that it?”

“I’ll ask her but I can’t promise anything. She already took a lot of days off.”

“OK. OK. Well, take care, sweetie. Let me know when you can come by.”

“I will, mum. Thank you.” Sighing, Felicity hung up the phone. Well… there go my plans for a nice Italian dinner.

She cancelled her reservation, her mood sinking a bit.

She stayed at work later than she had planned, but Oliver still didn’t show up. "Not that I was waiting for him or anything" she tried to convince herself. Truth be told the fact that he had forgotten her birthday had hurt. She first had thought he had been in a hurry when he had texted her and had
expected him to send another one – or even give her a phone call. But he hadn’t. She had kept on glancing at her phone, hoping to see a new message arriving. It hadn’t and after a few hours, she had finally resigned herself. Not that it had helped soothe the pinching in her heart.

She decided to walk back home and stop by a grocery store to at least stock up her fridge for the long weekend. She had just walked out of the shop when the sunny sky shifted to heavy and dark clouds. Three and a half minutes later, her hands full of bags, she was drenched to the bone. Happy birthday indeed.

When Oliver arrived back at QC, the sun was already setting. He had been stuck in a meeting much longer than he had anticipated and he rushed out of the elevator, coming to a brutal stop when he saw her empty desk, cursing under his breath.

He went to put the flowers he was carrying on her desk, grabbing a notepad and quickly scribbling a few words down. He noticed her tablet was still fired on, which was unusual. It started up when he moved it and saw right away the news alerts about the air controllers strike. Frowning, he remembered Dig mentioning Felicity’s mother and Sara were both supposed to fly in that day to spend the evening with her and celebrate properly. Chewing his lips, he fumbled with his phone, hesitating. The idea of Felicity being all alone made up his mind.

He finally dialed a phone number and was relieved when he didn’t have to wait long.

“Hello?”

“Helena?”

“Oliver. What a surprise. Don’t tell me you’re canceling. Again.” Her sophisticated voice sounded just as assure and polite as usual, without a trace of annoyance as if she was just stating an unsurprising fact.

He stayed silent for a couple of seconds. “I’m sorry. Something came up.”

Helena sighed. “It’s the third time this week.”

“I know,” he winced, remembering having canceled on her on Tuesday, having stayed later than usual to work with Felicity and on Wednesday because he had felt too tired.

“You know… this was always a temporary arrangement. We both can end it whenever we want to,” Helena said softly, probably sensing his struggle.

Sitting down on Felicity’s chair, he passed a hand over his face. “I care about you Helena.”

“But it’s not enough anymore, is it?”

“It’s not that. You’re great. You’re more than great. I just feel like… it doesn’t…” sighing, he groaned his frustration. “I mean, somehow… it feels wrong now.”

“It’s OK, Oliver. I’d much rather we end this on good terms. At least we can stay friends.”
He smiled absentmindedly, his fingers playing with one of Felicity’s pens. “I think I’d like that. Your father still owns one of my favorite restaurants after all.”

She laughed lightly. “Next time will be on me, then. Take care, Oliver.”

“Thank you, Helena. You too.” He hung up the phone, picked up the flowers and after a quick stop at the catering level, made his way to Felicity’s apartment. She wasn’t going to spend her birthday alone.

The rain was still pouring when he rang her bell, holding his jacket above his head while trying his best to hold the pot of flowers and a small box.

“Yes?” she answered, sounding out of breath.

“Felicity? It’s Oliver!”

There was a small pause then, “Oliver? Queen?”

“How many Olivers do you know in Starling, exactly?” he rolled his eyes. “Could you please let me in, it’s pouring!”

She opened the door for him and in his hurry, he almost knocked down an old lady who was just about to go out.

“Sorry, ma’am!” he cheerfully said, already climbing the stairs two steps at a time. It was only when he was on the first floor that he realized he had no idea which apartment was Felicity’s. He was about to call her when a door opened on his right.

“Oliver?”

Smiling, he approached her as she opened the door wide enough to let him in.

"Happy birthday!"
He handed her the flowers that had suffered a bit from the pouring rain.

She let out a trembling smile, and he realized she looked almost as drenched as he was. “I thought you had forgotten,” she admitted quietly, taking the vase and setting it down on her dining table.

He shrugged out of his jacket, laying it on a chair and held out the box. “That needs to go in your fridge.”

“What is it?” she asked, trying to peek inside.

“Tsk, tsk… none of that, Miss!” he lightly tapped her hand. “It’s a surprise.”

“Did you bring me dessert again, Mister Queen?” she teased him, her smile turning into a laugh when she noticed his cheeks heating up.

“Shush. But yes, I did.” He quickly walked to her fridge and stored the box inside. “And of course I
didn’t forget. I really thought I’d be back in time to wish it to you. I was going to leave the vase on your desk but then I saw the news and well…”

Her smiled faded a bit. “Yeah. Talk about luck, right? Strikes never happen except on my 21st birthday.”

“I’m sorry. If you need to take another day off next week, don’t hesitate, I’ll make it work with HR.”

“No, thank you. I might take a long weekend in a couple of weeks though. Go see my mum.”

Turning her back on him, she sneezed violently. “I’m sorry! I walked back in the rain. I was just about to take a bath when you arrived.”

“Do it. I’ll order some take out. Come on, you need to warm up or you’re really going to be sick.”

“I can’t do that! I’ll just change my clothes,” she protested.

“It’s your birthday. Go take a bath. I still have some emails to check anyway, that would give me the time to do it. And I can order some take out?”

She eyed him suspiciously. “OK. Are you sure?”

“Yes!” he nudged her towards the small bathroom. “Go ahead. Then you’ll give me a tour of your place.”

“I’ll make it quick, I promise!” she said, defeated, but he could see the longing in her eyes at the idea of a long, warm bubble bath.

“No. Enjoy it. You’re the birthday girl. Also I’d like to work in peace if you don’t mind.”

She gasped. “Are you kicking me out of my own living room?”

“… Yes. Your babbling is distracting,” he hushed her away.

She narrowed her eyes at him but her stern look got ruined when she sneezed again.

“Damn you,” she groaned as she walked to her bedroom while he tried his best to hide his smile. And miserably failed. There was something to utterly adorable in the way her wet hair was hanging around her face, the vulnerability in her eyes awakening something in him. It took him a few seconds to realize what it was. Protectiveness.

***

After more than thirty minutes into a relaxing bubble bath – candles included – she stepped into her living room wearing comfortable clothes, her hair in a messy bun on top of her head.

Oliver was sitting on her sofa, watching what looked like an old action movie. He turned his head towards her, smiling, “better?”

“Yup. Thank you,” she answered as she sat down next to him.
“Food should be here anytime now.”

“What did you order?”

“American. I thought that we could do with some comfort food?”

“Good idea. Mac & Cheese?”

“Of course.”

He had barely replied when the buzzing from the bell was heard. Standing up before she could even move, he quickly walked to her door, answering and indicating where the apartment was. Only then did she notice he had taken off his shoes, which he had left to dry under one of the radiators. She finally got up as well, getting her wallet from her purse when he glared at her. “Now, really. You think I’m gonna let you pay?”

“It’s my home,” she protested, feeling discomfort at the thought of letting him pay for their meal. It was one thing when they were on a business trip – she knew he would be paid back. But when they were in her home, it felt… intimate.

“It’s my treat.” He held out his index finger when he saw she was about to argue back, efficiently ending the conversation.

She smiled as she watched him greeting the young delivery girl. She turned around, going to her cupboards and grabbing plates and cutlery. Setting them on the table, she went to get glasses and a bottle of Saint-Emilion she had been keeping for a special occasion. She was just about to grab some napkins from the small cabinet in the living room when she stopped dead in her tracks, her mouth hanging open, barely hearing him.

“There you go. I might have ordered a bit too much, but that will make you leftovers... Felicity?”

She knew she should answer him but was way too shocked to care about manners. All she could do was stare at the piece of furniture that had magically appeared against a wall in her living room. “My secretary. You built it?!”

“Oh that? Yeah. I noticed it was still in a box and I remembered you mentioning you still haven’t been able to do it… I hope you don’t mind?”

“But… I left you alone for… thirty minutes! How did you even manage to build it in thirty minutes? By yourself?!” she asked in disbelief, her head snapping from the piece of furniture to a very confused looking Oliver.

“There… were instructions in the box, Felicity,” he explained slowly, looking at her as if he was worried about her sanity.

“And you understood them?!” she exclaimed, still trying to make sense of how Oliver Queen, heir to the throne who had never even heard about Ikea meatballs, had managed to build her secretary.

“It’s just a plan,” he laughed. “I’m not that stupid, you know.”

“Oh my God. I can’t believe it.” She raised her arms in the air, shaking her head in disbelief.
“What? What’s wrong?”

“Oliver Queen is a natural at Ikea assembling!” she huffed out. “the guy who will never need to go shop at Ikea… is a freaking natural at it!”

Stomping her way to him, she poked his chest with her index. “We spent one hour on that thing from hell. Dig, Sara, and I. One hour. And you just arrive here and tada!”

“I’m… sorry?” he grinned at her, his eyes following the way the bun was swinging back and forth with every move she made.

Her eyes softened as she smiled back at him. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” Before he could stop his hand, he reached out to put a strand of hair back behind her ear, freezing once he realized what he was doing.

Felicity blushed slightly, her eyes leaving his for a second as she coughed. “Food is getting cold.”

They decided to eat in front of the TV and brought all the containers to the small table in front of her sofa. As she opened one, she burst out laughing.

“Corn dogs? I thought you’d had enough of those?” she elbowed him on the side.

“What can I say? It is a nice memory,” he chuckled, grabbing one and biting a good chunk of it.

Still laughing, Felicity put one on her plates, along with some fried chicken and corn. “This is the definition of unhealthy,” she noted as she started to eat.

“Mmmhmmh,” Oliver nodded in agreement, his mouth full. They both settled on watching old episodes of X-Files – one of the only TV shows they both liked. Luckily, Felicity had gotten back her DVD boxes from Boston.

After a few spoons of Mac & Cheese, Felicity put her plate back on the table.

“I’m stopping now or I won’t be able to eat any of that mysterious dessert you brought.”

“Amateur,” he smirked, taking a last bite of corn bread.

After the episode was over, Felicity got up, planning on making some tea.

“Chamomile, does that work for you?” she asked from the kitchen.

“Yes. Let me do it, though.” He stood up, joining her. Her kitchen wasn’t unreasonably small, but there was something about Oliver that made the space visibly shrink. She felt that whatever move she was making would end up touching, or grazing a part of his body. After she had let a spoon fall on the counter for the second time, he put his hand on hers, murmuring, “I’ll do it. Go sit back on the couch.”

She opened her mouth to protest, but he pressed a finger to her lips, “please.” She gulped nervously at the feel of his skin against her lips and judging by his darkening eyes, the contact didn’t leave him indifferent either. Relieved to escape the tension, she quickly padded to the living room, falling more than sitting on the sofa.
Her fingers grazed her lips, still tingling. She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn’t even notice him approaching her in measured steps.

Turning her head, she saw that he was holding a plate with what looked like a pie and a single tea light on it.

He smiled sheepishly. “That’s all I could find on such short notice.”

She giggled, her smile growing so big it actually hurt the muscles of her face. She consciously approached him, focused on her target. “I hope I get it in one blow.”

He chuckled, watching her taking a deep breath and successfully blowing the small candle.

Looking at the pie more closely, she squealed. “Lemon meringue pie?”

“Yes. The one from that hotel in Portland that you loved so much,” he nodded, smiling almost shyly.

Gasping, she looked at him. “How…?”

“I ordered some on Monday. It was delivered early this morning to the catering service at QC. Thank God the air controllers didn’t decide to go on strike earlier.”

“I can’t believe you remember that.” She looked at him in wonder, then shook her head, grabbing the plate and setting it down on the table.

Reaching out for a knife, she proceeded to cut two slices, then put them on smaller plates and handed one to Oliver.

“Well, you raved about it a lot, it’s pretty hard to forget, you know,” he laughed as he took his plate.

Not wasting any time, Felicity took her first bite right away, moaning as soon as the pastry touched her tongue. “Oh my God… it’s as good as I remember.”

She could see, from the corner of her eyes, that Oliver’s attention was on her and that he hadn’t even started his own dessert. She was about to ask him if she had some pie on her face when he eventually shook out of it, a small blush growing on his cheeks. She wondered what it was all about, then forgot all about it as she took her second bite. *Best birthday cake ever.*

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They watched another episode, Felicity making fun of Oliver when she found out that he might have had a crush on Agent Scully back in the day. As the episode ended, he realized she had fallen asleep next to him. As quietly as possible, he got up, cleaned the remaining food from the table. He then grabbed some of the blankets that were underneath the coffee table and wrapped them around her.

He tiptoed to the radiator, picking up his shoes, then walked out of her apartment, only stopping to put them on once he was in the hallway. He closed the door delicately, locking it with the extra key he had found hanging on the wall. He quickly walked down the stairs and was relieved to see the
rain had stopped. He still hurried to his car, turning the music player on. The trip back home seemed shorter than usual and he sighed with contentment when he parked the car in the garage and made his way inside the house.

Yawning, he silently walked across the mansion, intent on trying to get as many hours of sleep as possible when he saw a small flickering light coming from one of their sitting rooms. He frowned, wondering if Thea was still up and was surprised to see his mother on one of the chairs, wearing a robe.

“Mom? Everything alright?” he asked, genuinely concerned.

She turned her head at him and there was something on her face that he couldn’t quite place. Something that made a part of him want to turn around, go to his car and get back to Felicity’s apartment to share a plate of lemon pie with her.

She looked at him blankly as he approached her. Kneeling in front of her, he put a hand on one of hers. “Mom? Is something wrong?”

“Oliver. My beautiful boy.” She reached out, caressing his face with her hand. “I didn’t wake Thea up.”

His heart beating wildly, sensing that something was definitely wrong with his mother, he held his breath.

“I didn’t want to wake her up. Your father... He's gone, Oliver. His helicopter crashed a couple of hours ago. They said... they said no one survived.”

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... That happened.

Did it shock you? And by shock, I mean surprise. Let me know your thoughts :D

Next chapter should be updated by the end of the week, or next monday-ish (I am going to my mum's for a few days).
I wish all of you a Merry Christmas or, if you don't celebrate it, a Happy Friday :)


Hi guys :D

So, remember, we just learned that Robert Queen died in a helicopter crash. This chapter will just deal with all the mourning and grieving, + a bit of what is on Felicity's mind ;)

Hope you enjoy it... I also hope you had a lovely time for Christmas, for those who celebrate it.

Song: Bitter Sweet Symphony - The Verve

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Bitter Sweet Symphony"

‘Cause it's a bittersweet symphony, this life
Try to make ends meet
You're a slave to money then you die
I'll take you down the only road I've ever been down
You know the one that takes you to the places
where all the veins meet yeah,

No change, I can change
I can change, I can change
But I'm here in my mold
I am here in my mold
But I'm a million different people
from one day to the next
I can't change my mold
No, no, no, no, no

Well I never pray
But tonight I'm on my knees yeah
I need to hear some sounds that recognize the pain in me, yeah
I let the melody shine, let it cleanse my mind, I feel free now
But the airways are clean and there's nobody singing to me now

No change, I can change
I can change, I can change
But I'm here in my mold
I am here in my mold
And I’m a million different people
from one day to the next
I can’t change my mold
No, no, no, no, no
I can’t change
I can’t change

’Cause it’s a bittersweet symphony, this life
Try to make ends meet
Try to find some money then you die
I’ll take you down the only road I’ve ever been down
You know the one that takes you to the places
where all the things meet yeah

You know I can change, I can change
I can change, I can change
But I’m here in my mold
I am here in my mold
And I’m a million different people
from one day to the next
I can’t change my mold
No, no, no, no, no
I can’t change my mold
no, no, no, no, no,
I can’t change
Can’t change my body,
no, no, no

I’ll take you down the only road I’ve ever been down
I’ll take you down the only road I’ve ever been down
Been down
Ever been down
Ever been down
Ever been down
Ever been down
Have you ever been down?
Have you’ve ever been down?

It was the sun that woke her up. Burrowing herself deeper under the blanket, it took her a few moments to understand why it felt so weird. Her bedroom had thick curtains that didn’t let any light in and she hadn’t been woken up by morning light in days. Not since the business trip, actually. The memory brought up the image of Oliver in her mind and their shared evening. She smiled when she remembered seeing him on her doorstep, hair damp and a pot of daisies in his hand. The image was so un-Oliver Queen that she let out a giggle, but quickly sobered up when she realized she had no recollection of how the night had ended. Searching through her foggy brain, the last thing she could remember was watching an old X-Files episode with him after having eaten way too much food.
She carefully peeked out of her blanket, eyes blinking with the bright light that was flooding her living room. Moaning, she sat up, rubbing her eyes. Her original plans for the day had been a mani-pedi with her mom and some shopping. She definitely needed new outfits, especially for work. Sighing, she got up, figuring she might as well get started with the day.

Ten minutes later, she was sitting in front a fresh cup of coffee and the plate of lemon pie. She didn’t even bother cutting up a slice and had just grabbed the whole thing and a fork. She was taking her time, savoring each bite in the comforting silence of her apartment.

The idea that Oliver had made sure she would get that dessert for her birthday pleased her more than she had let him know. The sole fact that he had remembered had touched her, let alone that he had arranged, God knows how, for her to get one on her birthday. The fact that he had ordered it on Monday hadn’t escaped her attention. Monday had been rough for them, with their big argument and the whole coffee maker massacre. Deep down, she knew she probably didn’t have the right to react the way she had reacted; Technically he was just her boss, free to do as he pleased. His relationship with his father or his girlfriend were none of her business. Who he was sleeping with was none of her business. But the last few weeks had deepened their relationship, and an honest friendship had blossomed.

When she had seen Mandy walking out of that bedroom, messy hair and shoes in hand, she had felt betrayed… and foolish. Betrayed because Mandy had always been incredibly bitchy to her. Foolish because she had forgotten she didn’t have the right to care. Oliver was her boss and even if they were on friendly terms, he didn’t owe her anything. So, when Monday morning had arrived, she had been hell bent on keeping her relationship with him the way it should have stayed: professional. She had spent Sunday building up her wall, despite the nagging little voice in her head that kept telling her it might be too late for that.

The hurt she had felt didn’t come from a place of friendship. She had been ashamed of the first thought that had come to her mind once she had walked back to her room: “Why her? We spent two nights in the same bed and he hasn’t tried anything.” She had shaken her head, horrified at herself for even thinking it. He was involved with another girl, he was her boss. Was it just self-esteem? She wasn’t the most confident woman when it came to relationships and body image, and it had brought back memories of high school, when she was too young, too skinny, too flat, not pretty enough.

Or was it something else?

The talk they had had on Monday had cleared the air and allowed her to speak her mind. But by doing so, Oliver had let her see a part of himself he held hidden to most; Oliver unsure of himself, lacking confidence and direction. The Oliver who still wasn’t sure who he was. The vulnerable man under the façade. And, just like that, her wall had crumbled. Her anger had died, replaced by the urge to comfort him and bring back a smile on his oh-so-charming face.

Yet, the easy-going relationship they have had for the last couple of weeks had suffered. They were friendly again, but there was a lingering awkwardness between the two of them. Felicity, by being so angry at him, had shown him how much she cared. Oliver, by being so eager to get her back the way he had gotten to know her, had shown her how much he needed her. It had created a deeper, more intimate bond between the two of them. One they might not have been ready to face just yet.

As she drank a sip of coffee, letting the mug warm her hands, she let her mind wander back to last night. Despite the fact that they had spent most of the past two weeks constantly with each other, seeing him in her apartment, in such domestic surroundings, had been something she had not expected. She had been surprised at how much he seemed to fit in her home, how normal it had been
to have him around.

She had known for a while now that the Oliver Queen people were used to wasn’t the real Oliver. She had witnessed another part of him, one that was thoughtful, caring and attentive. And it was that part that she was afraid of. She could deal with the playboy, spoiled heir persona. But the softer side of him… that was something else.

“Enough with that,” she said out loud, standing up and putting the pie back in the fridge. She quickly finished her coffee, leaving the mug in the sink.

After a quick shower, she tied her hair, not bothering with make-up. She had planned a day of shopping and that damn air strike wasn’t going to stop her from having a good time, even if it was just by herself. Putting a light jacket on, she grabbed her purse while looking for her cellphone. She spotted it on the coffee table, and was surprised to see a small light blipping. She had forgotten she had turned the sound off last night and hadn’t thought of turning it on again.

She was just about to go through her emails when she saw the number of alerts she had gotten. Her heart beating, she quickly went through them and it took her several seconds to make sense of what she was reading. She fell back on the couch, a shaky hand covering her mouth as she finally understood the dramatic news: Robert Queen was dead.

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In the end, it was Oliver who had to wake Thea up. Moira was still completely in shock, only able to repeat the same sentences over and over again. Walter had arrived shortly after him and he had been the one supporting her.

As he walked down the hall leading to his little sister’s bedroom, Oliver felt the weight of the world suddenly dropping on his shoulders. He was about to end his sister’s childhood. The words he was about to say were going to make her grow way too fast. A part of him wanted nothing more than to run away, find a place where everything was easy and sweet. That part made his steps smaller and smaller, trying to delay the inevitable as long as possible. Once he stopped in front of Thea’s door, though, there was no turning back. Quietly opening the door, he stepped inside her room. She was a teenager now, but her room still looked like the one of a little girl. She hadn’t gotten rid of her favorite teddy bears or the posters of some random boyband. He halted at the foot of her bed, watching her sleep peacefully.

“I’m so sorry, Thea,” he murmured, more to himself than to her.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, he turned on the bed lamp, causing her to stir.

“Thea…” he called out, his voice still small and unsure. Closing his eyes, he willed himself to be strong. Even if it was just a mask, he had to be strong for his sister. She needed someone to lean on and their mother was not going to be able to be that person.

Clearing his throat, he repeated her name, with a stronger voice this time.

Moaning, she turned around, still half asleep “Ollie?”
“Thea. I need you to wake up.”

“Wass’goin’on?” she mumbled, hiding her eyes from the light. She shook her head, obviously trying to get rid of whatever was left of sleep.

“Ollie?” she asked once more, her voice cleared and more focused.

“Thea. There has been an accident. Dad…” he took a shaky breath, fighting the gigantic lump in his throat.

“Dad? What do you mean?” Thea asked, her voice smaller than usual. “Ollie, answer me!”

“There was a crash. The helicopter. He’s not coming back.” Oliver rushed the words out of his mouth while he still had the strength.

Thea looked at him, confused. “What? No. He called me before I went to bed. He’s fine, Ollie.”

Oliver shook his head. “It happened a couple of hours ago.”

“No. He was fine, Ollie. It must be a mistake.” She pushed back her duvet, reaching for her phone on the night stand “Let me call him, he’ll tell you.”

“Speedy, don’t…”

“Let me call him!” she screamed.

Oliver passed a hand over his face as she dialed their father’s number with shaky hands.

“Come on, dad. Come on.”

Once her call reached the voicemail, her chin started to tremble when she heard his voice. “Please, dad. Pick up.”

“Thea…” Oliver reached out, taking the phone from her hand. It seemed like hearing her father’s voice had broken through the denial.

“He always picks up,” she said, her eyes staring into emptiness. “Ollie. He always picks up. Why isn’t he picking up?”

Oliver put her phone down on the bed, tentatively reaching for her. She looked up at him and she must have seen the sorrow in his eyes, must have sensed that it was somehow real because her shoulders slumbered as she gripped his hand.

“He’s not coming back?” she asked once more as if she needed to hear it once again. As if there was still a chance she might have misunderstood her brother. At that moment, she sounded so young, so fragile, that Oliver struggled to answer her, reluctant to destroy her one last hope.

“No, Thea. He’s not.”
Appearances are such a tricky thing. When you are born in a family like the Queens, you are raised to put on a face. It is so drilled into you that you do it automatically, no matter the circumstances. You put on the mask, you hide your feelings and keep playing your part, even when your world is crashing down and you feel like drowning. Both Queen children were dressed in appropriate clothes as they walked inside the main foyer 30 minutes later. Moira and Walter were there, as well as a few police officers who were just leaving.

Moira was still wearing the same robe, staring into emptiness. Walter shook his head at Oliver, letting him know she had been that way ever since he had left her.

Thea squared her shoulders and approached her mother. “Come on, Mom. You need to get dressed.”

At that moment, it was hard to identify who was the child and who was the mother as Thea gently nudged Moira, leading her upstairs.

“Oliver, I am so sorry,” Walter spoke as soon as they were alone.

Oliver nodded, unable to form any coherent thought. What is someone supposed to answer in those circumstances? Thank you? How could he be thankful for anything?

He shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts. “QC?”

“Don’t worry about any of that. I’ll handle QC and the press. Just be there for your family. That’s all that matters for now.”

The rest of the morning happened in a blur for Oliver. Family members, friends, police officers,… the whole mansion was constantly invaded. He was thankful for it because it kept the three of them busy. His mother had seemed to snap out of her trance, even if she still seemed numb. Thea was doing her best, holding her head high and playing hostess. Oliver was keeping the mask on his face, reciting the same empty words over and over again. Faces became blurry, most of them being strangers or people he had never really gotten along with.

It was noon when Laurel walked into the reception room he was sitting in.

“Ollie,” she said, her eyes red and teary. “I’m so sorry.”

She walked to him, circling him in her arms and he felt a bit of the tension evade him; her embrace was familiar and safe. She knew him, she knew his family. Robert and her had always gotten along, probably better than he had himself. He felt a bit of the weight leave his shoulders, felt like he could finally let someone take charge. He had been forced to be the strong one the entire night and being able to be weak, even for a couple of minutes, brought such a relief that he sagged in her embrace. His eyes had stayed dry and he still found himself unable to shed a tear but the knot in his throat seemed to loosen a bit.

After a few minutes, he finally pulled away, taking a few deep breaths.

“How is Moira? Thea?” Laurel asked, obviously worried. “Are they holding up?”
“They are doing OK, I guess. I don’t really know. It’s so sudden, it’s hard to tell,” he explained as he fell back on the seat. “Thea seems to handle it better than I thought. Mom doesn’t seem to realize. I think she is still in shock. And I … I just don’t know what to do. The funeral. We’re supposed to plan the funeral, right?”

“Don’t worry. I’ll do it,” she reassured him, patting his knee. “What do you need?”

“I don’t know. Walter is taking charge at QC and we’ve been here all day.”

“Have you slept? Or eaten?”

Oliver frowned. “I didn’t go to bed. I ate last night.”

“Alright. You need to try to get some rest. Go take a shower, go to sleep. Eat something, if possible. I’ll ask Raisa to bring you something light in your room.”

“I can’t, all these people keep arriving, Tommy still hasn’t made it here.”

She interrupted him. “Ollie. You won’t be able to go through with the next few days if you don’t rest. Take Thea as well. Moira, too. I’ll handle the visitors. The three of you look exhausted.”

Even if a part of him wanted to say no, because he felt like he had to stay there, the relief he felt at the idea of someone else taking charge was too tempting. “Are you sure?”

“Yes. If anything happens, I will let you know right away.” She took a deep breath, smiling reassuringly. “I know what you are going through, Ollie. I lost my mom, too. Even if Dinah has raised me all my life, I know what it’s like to lose a parent.”

Oliver looked at her for a few seconds, remembering that Dinah was indeed Laurel’s step mother. Her biological mother had passed away when she was still a child.

She continued, holding his hand between hers. “You are going to need your strength. Trust me. Let me help you. Please.”

He nodded, standing up. He went to get his mother and sister, excusing them under the first pretense he could think of. The three of them went upstairs, Moira and Thea heading to his sister’s bedroom. Only then had he noticed the dark circles underneath their eyes. Laurel was right. None of them would ever be able to handle the next few days without rest.

As he was laying in bed, staring at the ceiling while the bowl of soup Raisa had made for him was still untouched on his desk, he tried to come to terms with what had happened. His father was dead. Gone. He understood the concept, was aware of the implications and sadness, regrets and remorse were already invading him. But he hadn’t shed a single tear. After a couple of hours, he got up and went back downstairs, resigned that sleep would evade him for a while. He quickly called Dig, asking him to get in touch with Felicity so the two of them could at least run things at QC for him. There was no one else he trusted as much as Felicity and he knew he couldn’t leave things hanging until Monday.

He found Laurel in the kitchen, surrounded by papers and finishing a phone call. “That’s perfect. Thank you.”

Seeing him, she smiled tentatively. He tried his best to smile back but was fully aware he only
managed a grimace.

“I’ve been in touch with Walter. I called the mortician, made all the arrangements. Your mother woke up earlier but already went back to bed. She just gave me the phone number of your lawyer. I just called him. Funeral will happen on Monday, if it’s alright with you.”

“That’s fine.” He poured himself a cup of coffee, adding, “Thank you for being here, Laurel.”

“Where else could I be?” she whispered, putting a hand on his.

Monday came too fast. He didn’t remember much of the weekend, caught in a whirlwind. Felicity had taken over for him at QC, finishing everything for the Backstones contract. Now, more than ever, they needed a strong backer by their side. Even if he was mourning his father, Oliver couldn’t let his emotions get in the way. His mother had been right: he needed to learn how to separate his private life and his job. Especially now that the company had lost its CEO. Walter had been handling the press, as well as the other executives, allowing the Queen family to get ready for the funeral.

After the service, Oliver stood over his father’s headstone for a while. Tommy had stayed behind with him, mirroring the day when he had lost his own mother. The two of them had been young and nothing had seemed to make sense. Despite him being an adult now, it still didn’t seem to make much sense. Robert Queen had always been so strong, so charismatic,… Oliver had always seen him as invincible. He hadn’t been ready to see him as a mere mortal.

“Tommy… could you leave me for a minute?” Oliver asked in a quiet voice.

“Sure, mate.” Slapping him on the back, his best friend walked back to the Queen’s mansion, leaving him alone.

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“Thank you, John,” Felicity sniffled, accepting the handkerchief he was offering her. “I honestly don’t even know why I’m so sad, I barely ever talked to the man.”

“You’re sad for Oliver, Felicity,” Dig said with a gentle smile.

“Still. Robert Queen was a dick to his son,” she caught herself, blushing. “Oh my God, I can’t believe I said that. You’re not supposed to talk bad about the dead. It’s like etiquette 101.”

Dig huffed out a small laugh.

She glared at him. “pretty sure you’re not supposed to laugh at a funeral either.”

“You started it. Besides, no one is paying attention to us, low-key employees.”

He was right. They were in a small corner of one of the Queen mansion sitting rooms. They were there out of support for Oliver, even if none of them had been able to talk to him since Friday. A lot
of people had showed up for Robert Queen’s funeral. Relatives, friends, business partners. The man was a socialite and well beloved in the community.

“Excuse me, Miss.” Felicity startled at the voice at her back. Turning around, she saw a woman, a friend of Moira if she remembered correctly.

“Yes?” Felicity asked, genuinely wondering why the woman would talk to her in the first place.

“Have you seen Oliver? You’re his secretary, aren’t you?”

“Assistant,” Felicity corrected automatically. “I’m his assistant. And no, I haven’t seen him. Which kinda makes me a bad assistant, now that I think of it,” she snickered, then sobered up once she remembered the circumstances. “I’m sorry. What I meant to say is…”

“We haven’t seen Oliver. That’s what she meant to say,” Dig eventually answered for her. “We are all still quite shocked by the news.”

“Oh. That’s too bad. Could you maybe let him know that he can stop by my place anytime if he needs to see a friendly face?” the woman asked, fiddling with her pearl necklace. “My name is Nancy, he’ll know exactly what I mean.”

Felicity stared at her for a few seconds. “Hum. Sure. I will.”

As soon as the woman had left them, she turned to Dig. “Is it me or was she…”

“Yep.”

“Oh my God. She’s old enough to be his mother!” Felicity whispered.

Dig looked at her from the corner of his eyes, smirking.

“Oh don’t tell me… No. I don’t want to know.” She drank the last of her mimosa, shuddering. “It’s the fifth one since Friday, you know.”

“Fifth what?” he asked, intrigued.

“Woman who wants to know where Oliver is and seems more than ready to comfort him,” Felicity explained as she looked for a place to put her glass. "Apparently he is ignoring their calls."

“Don’t tell me you’re surprised by women throwing themselves at him,” Dig smirked, grabbing the glass for her, putting it on a table behind him.

“No. I’m not really. I’ve gotten used to it by now…” she answered, her eyes wandering across the room. Of course, I’m not surprised. But he just lost his father. I mean… I know he is quite the charming man and his smile is the definition of panty-dropping but still.

Dig snorted. “Well. Let’s just hope your panties are well attached, then.”

Felicity looked at him, horrified. “Oh no. I didn’t mean… I mean of course they are. More like glued to my body. No risk of wandering panties with me. Nope.”

“Aww… now that makes me even more depressed.” The voice behind her made her pause and bend
her head, groaning with shame. Of course.

Taking a deep breath, she welcomed the newcomer. “Mister Merlyn.”

“Miss Felicity. Mister Diggle.”

“You know, I was just going to grab myself another drink. Any of you want something?” Dig asked, smiling sweetly as Felicity’s eyes bulged out at the idea of being left alone with Tommy Merlyn. “No? Alright, then. Mister Merlyn.”

“I feel bad about interrupting this very interesting conversation. When you say ‘no risk’ do you mean ‘no risk’ as in ‘Don’t worry, I am wearing a garter belt?’” Tommy asked her hopefully, sipping a Bloody Mary.

Felicity felt her face burning with embarrassment. “That was totally out of context. And no. I mean yes. I mean it’s none of your business. Has anyone ever told you how rude it is to interrupt a conversation?”

“Oh, my sweet Miss Felicity. I would love to show you how rude I can be. But let’s get back to our conversation. I believe it involved your underwear?”

She glared at him. “I was just commenting on the fact that women tend to drop their panties whenever Oliver is around. Or not around, since I’ve had to deal with several ones these last few days.”

Tommy winced. “Mentioning another man when we are flirting is pretty harsh, you know.”

“I am not flirting with you!” Felicity gasped in outrage. The man had a nerve...

“Now let’s not waste time on semantics. Let me buy you a drink,” Tommy charmingly offered his arm, seemingly completely unaffected by the cold glare she threw at him.

“It’s an open bar, Mister Merlyn.”

“I already told you… my father is here, too. You calling me Mister Merlyn is going to confuse people.”

“It’s an open bar, Mister Merlyn Junior.”

Ignoring his offered arm, she let her eyes wander across the room. Biting her lips, she fixed the main entrance.

“He’s not going to show up,” Tommy said softly.

“Hum… what?” she frowned.

“Oliver. He already left. I think all this…” Tommy waved his hand, encircling the crowd in the room, “is a bit too much for him right now.”

“I wasn’t…” she started to deny but the gentle look in Tommy’s eyes stopped the lie she was about to say. “I haven’t seen him… or talked to him since last Thursday. I just… I wish I could help him, somehow. Apart from the whole work thing,” she mumbled the last part.
Tommy smiled kindly. “He is going to need you. He will come to you when he’s ready.”

He lightly squeezed her arm then left her with her thoughts. She had been feeling so helpless during the last few days. Willing to help, but not knowing how. Laurel had been his support, Tommy, his best friend. She had just been his assistant. And somehow… it didn’t feel enough anymore.

***

It was already dark when Oliver drove the alley back to Queen Mansion. He had been driving most of the day, unable to face the questions and empty words he was bound to hear at the reception. He stopped the car as soon as the house came into view, his eyes reaching the windows of his father’s office. The room was dark, unlike most of the rooms that were still lit. He couldn’t remember how long he stayed behind the wheel, knowing he was supposed to come inside. He was supposed to step up. He just couldn’t find the strength to do so. There was a longing inside of him that he couldn’t place.

Closing his eyes, he rested his head on the back of his seat, remembering his conversation with his mother last night.

“We owe a lot to Laurel… She took everything in her own hands,” Moira said as she sat down next to Oliver in the sitting room he had found her in several nights ago.

“I know. She’s been awesome,” he agreed. Laurel really had helped them tremendously, being an almost constant support for the three of them.

“She really showed how much she cares about our family.” Moira looked at Oliver expectantly.

“Yes... she has”, he frowned, wondering what his mother had in mind.

“Robert loved her very much. I do, too, you know.”

Oliver nodded, remembering the special bond his father had shared with Laurel from the beginning. She had been the perfect next Mrs Queen in his eyes.

“I talked with Walter. We need to show our strength. More than ever. We’ve had to face several blows in the last few months,” Moira continued.

“What does it have to do with anything, mom?”

“Oliver. You know what is the next step for you. I don’t know how it’s going to work with the Board because no one expected Robert to…” she struggled to find her words, “to leave us this soon. We need to be strong, as a family. Walter is expecting a lot of trouble for our company.”

“I know that, mom.”

Sighing, she looked at the both of them with a small smile. “How long have you two been
together?"

"About 4 years now."

Moira paused, then asked softly, "Isn’t marriage the next natural step?"

"… Mom, what are you talking about?"

"You know what I am talking about, Oliver. You need to grow up. You need to be responsible, you need to prove you are mature enough to commit. Getting married is a way to do that, to prove your… wild days are over for good. To prove you are the best bet for QC."

"Mom, I don’t think Laurel and I…"

She interrupted him. "I know. It’s not perfect. No relationship is. But answer honestly: Hasn’t she been a support for you? Hasn’t she been there to handle things you were not able to handle?"

"Yes. Yes, she has,” he murmured. He couldn’t deny it. She had been there by his side but… marriage? Somehow… it didn’t feel right.

"Honey… that’s the whole point of marriage. Having each other’s back. Being partners. And you are going to need a partner. More than you know. Laurel is already a part of this family,” his mother explained softly as she stood up, leaving him staring at the fireplace.

Taking a deep breath, he opened his eyes, pushing the memory to the back of his mind. He wasn’t even aware he had started the car again, and was almost surprised when he stopped it beneath a building, not far away from QC. He stepped out of his car before he could change his mind once more and walked up the stairs, entering the building after a young couple, too busy making out to notice someone had followed them.

He was already knocking on the door when he changed his mind, but didn’t have time to turn around when she opened the door.

"Oliver?” Felicity opened her door wider, letting him in.

"I’m sorry… I didn’t mean to… I should have called,” he mumbled, shifting on his feet.

"No. Don’t be silly. Please, come in."

He stepped inside her small, comfortable apartment and the already familiar smell – green apples – welcomed him back. He sat down on her couch while she was making tea in the kitchen.

"You’re still ok with chamomile?” she asked.

"Yes."

They both stayed silent until she joined him in the living room with two hot mugs of tea. She sat opposite him on one of the comfy chairs, looking at him expectantly.

He took a sip of tea, wincing as the hot liquid burnt his tongue. “I’m sorry. I just didn’t want to go
home.”

She smiled at him. “I’m glad you came here.”

They both fell back in a weirdly comfortable silence, Michael Buble singing in the background.

“The last thing I told him was that I didn’t want to be like him,” Oliver finally said, startling her.

Felicity put her mug down on the coffee table. “You mean, your father?”

“Yes. We had a… not a fight. More like a discussion. I told him I had tried to be like him all of my life but I was glad I had failed. That’s the last thing I told him.” His voice trembled at the words, and it suddenly dawned on him that those were the very last words he had told his father.

“Felicity, it’s the last thing I told my father,” Oliver choked up. “that I didn’t want to be like him. He’s dead and I’ll never have the chance to make up with him.”

Felicity stood up as soon as the first tear spilled from his eyes. She walked to him when he eventually broke down, sobs tearing from his chest. He automatically reached out for her, circling her waist as his head burrowed in her stomach, desperately seeking comfort and understanding, knowing instinctively he would find both with her.

She cradled his head, her fingers going through his short hair, making soothing sounds as she let him cry and finally mourn.

Chapter End Notes

Sooo… same question: what did you think? Not a lot of Olicity moments but the one they share means so much that I didn't feel like it was lacking, in a way.

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi :)
I'm So Sorry

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone!
We hit the 1500 kudos YAAAYYY thank you so much to each and every single one of you! Thank you to those who leave a comment every now and then and then a thousand thank yous for those who do it every time. I actually sometimes get worried if one of you is missing (like Oh God I hope they still like it... or what if they're sick? Broke a leg? An arm? Both arms! OH MY GOD THEY GOT KIDNAPPED BY ALIENS!).

Special thanks to yellowpretendingtobered, my beta. And special thanks to Pidanka, my delta who can be very patient with me :)

That being said, we are now going to step into a chapter-trilogy. Chapters 25-26 and 27 are somehow linked and you will see they will eventually close a chapter in Oliver's life.
Song: I'm So Sorry - Imagine Dragons.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I'm So Sorry"

About time for anyone telling you off for all your deeds
No sign the roaring thunder stopped in cold to read
   No time
I get mine and make no excuses; waste of precious breath
   No time
The sun shines on everyone, everyone love yourself to death

   So you gotta fire up, you gotta let go
   You'll never be loved till you've made your own
   You gotta face up, you gotta get yours
   You never know the top till you get too low

   A son of a stepfather
   A son of a stepfather
   A son of a stepfather
   A son of a stepfather
   I'm so sorry
   I'm so sorry

No lies and no deceiving, man is what do you loves
I keep tryin' to conceive that death is from above
   No time
I get mine and make no excuses; waste of precious breath
   No time
The sun shines on everyone, everyone love yourself to death
The sun wasn’t up yet when Oliver quietly made his way out of Felicity’s apartment. She was still sleeping in her room when he had woken up with a start, around 4AM. He didn’t even remember falling asleep on her couch, but the irony didn’t escape him. He had been to her place twice, and one of them had ended up falling asleep in the living room each time.

Last night, she had been the one taking care of him because he had no recollection of reaching for the blanket that had been covering him when he woke up.

As he sat down behind the wheel, he turned on the radio, the eerie silence being uncomfortable for him. The last thing he wanted was to be alone with the thoughts and memories of last night. A part of him was embarrassed by his break down, embarrassed that Felicity had been there to witness it, forced to comfort him. But he was also man enough to admit it had been necessary. Carrying out that guilt wasn’t healthy and he couldn’t deny that he felt like a bit of the weight he’d been feeling ever since last Thursday night had lifted, making it easier for him to breathe. Still now, he wasn’t sure why he had ended up at her place, why he had driven there unconsciously. Was it because it was the last place he had been before his mother had broken the news to him, before his world had crashed down? Or because he knew she’d be there for him, no matter what?

After a quick stop at a 24/7 coffee shop, he made his way to QC. He didn’t feel like going back to
the Mansion and wasn’t feeling that tired anymore. He didn’t stop at his floor, but instinctively went to his father’s office. He felt like he should go there while no one was around. To say his goodbyes privately, in a way. As he watched the floor numbers going up on the elevator display, he let his mind wander back to the first time he had visited his father at work. He was probably around 4 and had been in awe with the size of the building. To him, it had felt like his father was a giant for needing such a tall building. He had been his hero since this day and Oliver had promised himself that one day he would also work at the top floor of the building. That one day, he would be a giant like his dad.

The fact that his father’s secretary had spoiled him with candy had probably played a part as well, though.

He didn’t stop at Robert’s desk and went straight to the large bay window. The whole city was still mostly dark, apart from the occasional light. The air conditioning purring in the background was the only sound piercing the silence. He couldn’t even remember the last time the building had been that quiet.

Oliver stayed there until the sun started to rise, slowly basking the city in its soft light. As he finally stepped away from the window, his eyes fell on his father’s desk and the framed picture of him and Thea that had been there ever since he could remember. The picture itself had changed with the years as they grew up, but the two of them had always been there, on the left side of his desk.

As he closed the door of his father’s office, he finally felt more at peace. His mind was sharper, already focusing on one thing: the legacy Robert had built up his entire life would continue to thrive after his death. He would make sure of it. Nothing, and no one, was going to take that away from his family. I am going to deserve to have my last name on that building, dad. I know I was never the son you hoped for, and I probably never will. But I can promise you this: I will not fail our family.

Once he was in the elevator, he noticed his wrinkly clothes and pale skin. Thankfully, he had a full bathroom and a closet with several changes of clothes in his office. He stayed a long time in the shower, letting the water relax him. He was brushing his teeth, a towel draped across his hips when he heard a familiar giggle. He quickly rinsed his mouth, dressing up in a pair of dark grey slack and a crisp white shirt. He put on a tie, but didn’t bother with the vest. He had no appointments and didn’t feel the need to be fully dressed up. Rolling up his sleeves, he made his way out of the bathroom, ready to welcome his assistant.

He stopped dead in his track when he noticed she wasn’t alone.

She was sitting behind her desk, reading something on her laptop, Barry leaning over her shoulder. Their heads were inches away from each other. Barry whispered something that made her giggle once more.

Oliver knew the two of them were getting along just fine and the rational part of him knew it was right and normal for her to have a personal life outside of her job. Personal life that included friends, dating,… and yes, potential boyfriends.

He cleared his throat as he approached them, startling the pair. Barry took a step back as soon as he saw him, which Oliver noticed with a satisfied smirk.

“Mister Queen! I didn’t know you were…”

“I arrived early, Barry. Call me Oliver,” he answered sternly, directing his look towards Felicity.
“I’m sorry to interrupt you, but I’m going to need my assistant.”

“Sure. Of course!” Barry quickly picked up his messenger bag, throwing it across his shoulder as he asked Felicity. “Still on for tonight?”

“Yup,” she smiled at him, putting a hand on his arm. “Don’t be late, this time.”

She watched him walking away, then turned towards Oliver, a soft smile on her lips. “I’m all yours.”

Oliver looked at her, blinking. She was wearing her hair down, something he still wasn’t used to.

“Oliver? What do you need?” she insisted as he stayed silent.

“Sorry. Not used to… Nevermind. Could you help me catch up? I saw you left several files on my desk.”

“Of course.” She stood up, brushing against him as she walked around her desk. “I left notes for each one of them.”

It took them the entire morning to catch up with work and make sure Oliver was up to date. Luckily she had been very organized during the last few days and Dig had been there to help her as well, making sure she could focus on paperwork while he managed the numerous phone calls.

She was just gathering the papers they had gone through, making sure they would reach the right offices now that Oliver had signed them when his voice stopped her.

“Felicity?”

She raised her head, watching him fumble with a pen. “Yes?”

“Could you try to find out about the other persons who were in the helicopter?”

She paused, putting the papers down on his desk again. “You mean the pilot and co-pilot?”

“Yes. Do they have families? Has everything been taken care of?”

“They were buried yesterday as well, if I’m not mistaken,” she explained. “But that’s about all I know.”

“Could you check if their families can deal with everything? Funeral costs, things like that?”

“Yes. Of course.” She turned around, walking out when she suddenly stopped. “You mean… legally or… discreetly?”

Oliver let out a small laugh. “As discreetly as possible. I don’t want people to know about that.”

She bit her lips, hesitating.

Oliver frowned. “Is something wrong?”

“No. It’s just…”
“What?”

She took a deep breath. “Oliver, we still don’t know what happened. I mean… what if it’s a human mistake?”

Oliver didn’t answer directly, letting his eyes wander to the window where he could see Starling’s skyline.

“I know. I just feel like it wouldn’t be right to have two families struggling while we…” he stopped himself. “Whatever happened wasn’t the fault of those families.”

She looked at him thoughtfully for a moment then nodded her head. “I’ll get to it as soon as I can.”

He smiled at her, holding her gaze. “Thank you, Felicity.”

And at that moment, she probably knew what he was thanking her for. It had little to do with her hacking skills or how good of an assistant she was.

“There really is no need to thank me, Oliver,” she blushed under his stare, playing with the files she was holding in her arms, but didn’t tear her eyes away. It was the sudden ping of the elevator that finally shook her of her trance.

“Alright, alright, alright,” Dig’s booming voice reached them before he was even in sight. “I brought food, people.”

They were halfway through their meal when Dig approached a topic he had been avoiding for a few days.

“Oliver, I hate to bring this up, now but… I talked to Sara and she found more info about Isabel. I don’t know if now is the right time or…”

Oliver frowned as he realized that the whole Isabel situation had completely escaped his mind. “No. Go ahead.”

“Isabel worked as an intern for a Russian-based company, Stellmoor International.”

Felicity paused, her hand holding a fry mid-air. “What? I never found that!”

“Sara only heard Mark talking about it. It’s not in her resume or anything. It was while she was still a student, apparently.”

Oliver, taking advantage of Felicity’s distraction, quickly grabbed her fry and popped it in his mouth. That was enough to get her attention.

“Hey! By all means, don’t mind me!”

“It was my fry, to begin with,” Oliver chuckled.

“I was holding it, that makes it mine!”

“Next time, why don’t you just order some instead of stealing mine?” Oliver snorted, trying to steal one of her pickles.
She slapped his hand. “Don’t you dare take my pickles!”

“Ouch!” he looked at her, shocked.

She glared at him while moving her plate away from him.

“You’ve been eating my fries ever since the first day we started to order at Big Belly Burger and I can’t even have one of your pickles?!” he asked in disbelief before turning his head to Dig. “Help me there!”

Dig raised his hands. “Oh no. I’m not getting between Felicity and her food.”

“Wise man,” Felicity approved, throwing one last dirty look at her boss. “Anyway… I kept track on Isabel but she hasn’t done much since last week… even her phone calls have been scarce. No suspect email, nothing.”

Oliver swallowed the last bite of his burger. “Well… she lost him, too.” He quickly changed the topic. “Which reminds me, there is a Board meeting tomorrow, Felicity.”

She raised her eyebrows, sharing a look with Dig. “I didn’t get a memo?”

“It’s… more like an emergency meeting. They are probably going to name Walter official CEO, at least for the time being.”

“Oh.”

Dig wiped his hands on a napkin, throwing it away in the paper bag that had held their food. “And you’re OK with that?”

Oliver thought for a moment. “Yes. Walter is the most stable candidate for this. It’s the best option for QC. Our family trusts him.”

“Will you need me here? For the Board meeting, I mean?” Felicity asked as she shoved the rest of her meal in the paper bag as well while Dig stood up to throw away their leftovers.

“Yes. I’ll have to be there to represent the Queen family. I’d feel better if you were there, too.”

She smiled fondly. “Sure.”

“Hum… guys?” Dig asked them from the conference room.

“Yes?” they both replied at the same time.

“What the hell happened to the coffee maker?!”

Felicity pinched her lips, avoiding his eyes while Oliver fought back a smile. “Let’s just say that Felicity had an argument with it last week.”

Dig stared at him for a few seconds, then looked at a blushing Felicity who was doing her best to avoid looking at any of them.
“And?” Dig asked once more, expecting more explanations.

“Well… she obviously won,” Oliver winked at her.

Grinning, Felicity stood up after checking her watch. “You have your video call with Andrew Backstone in five minutes. I’ll make sure you are not interrupted, just let me know if you need anything.”

Oliver smiled at her. “Thank you, Felicity.”

Oliver had been busy with his conference call for more than an hour, which had worried her at first, until his booming laugh had reached her ears. Obviously, everything was going well with Andrew Backstone. She was busy typing a thank you letter to one of Oliver’s business partner who had sent a letter apologizing for not being able to go to Robert’s funeral when she heard the sound of high heels on the marble floor. Raising her head, she saw Laurel approaching, a decided look on her face.

Felicity didn’t even have the time to greet her and ask her to wait because she reached for Oliver’s office door right away, ignoring his assistant.

“No!” Felicity jumped out of her chair. “Mr Queen is busy right now.”

Laurel stopped, glaring at her. “Excuse me?”

“He is on a very important conference call.”

“Do you know who I am?” the brunette asked, intrigued.

“Hum, yes. You’re Laurel Lance,” Felicity replied, confused by the random question.

“I am also your boss’s girlfriend. Believe me, he won’t mind,” she explained with a smile.

Felicity opened her mouth to reply but Laurel just opened the door, stepping inside Oliver’s office. He glanced at the two of them, frowning with the interruption and held out his hand as a warning.

“Andrew, can you give me just a minute?”

Felicity couldn’t hear the answer but since Oliver quickly stood up and marched towards them, she assumed the older man didn’t mind.

“Laurel, I can’t talk to you right now. Go see Sara, come back in thirty minutes, I should be done.” He gently shoved her outside his office and closed the door. He jogged back to his desk right away, his mind already back in business.

Seeing Laurel standing awkwardly, Felicity took pity on her. “It’s a very important conference call.”

“Nevermind. I’ll come back later.” Laurel turned around, and left just as fast as she had arrived.
Oliver called Felicity fifteen minutes later, mumbling over some file that he couldn’t find.

“I swear to God, it was just there! Where did you put it?!”

Felicity sighed. “Oliver, why don’t you tell me what you’re looking for, first?”

“Andrew asked for the blueprints of the new windmill, I told him I’d send him a copy right away.”

Rolling her eyes, she walked to him, shoving him out of the way with her hip. Opening his drawer, she got a red file and handed it to him. “There you go.”

Oliver looked at her sheepishly. “Sorry…”

They were interrupted by a small knock on the door.

“Is it a better time?” Laurel asked them in the threshold.

Felicity straightened up right away. “Oh, yep. I was just leaving.”

She quickly made her way to her own office, offering a small smile to Laurel as she passed near her. The brunette returned a small polite smile that seemed more forced than natural.

Oliver stood up as well to close the door behind her, leaning in to give a quick peck on Laurel’s lips, knowing his girlfriend was probably still remembering the way she had been kicked out of his office.

“Your mom said I could stop by, that you didn’t have any plans today,” she explained as she took off her coat.

“No. Apart from that video call, I just have the usual catch up,” he assured her as he led her to the conference room. “Did you need anything?”

“I was thinking we could spend the night at the Mansion? Maybe get a small dinner in your room… do some other kind of catch up,” she said as she approached him, a twinkle in her eyes, her hand reaching for his tie.

“Ah…” Oliver huffed out a laugh. “I have plans tonight. With Tommy.”

“Can’t you cancel? We haven’t spent time together in ages, Ollie,” she pouted.

“I’m sorry but I already canceled last week.” He put his hands on her hips, wincing. “I’m sorry, Laurel. I know you’ve been there for me and I have been a bit distant but…”

“Shhh… I know. It’s not an easy time for you.” She put a finger on his lips, silencing him. “I understand. I’m just trying to help you.”

“And I’m really thankful for everything you’ve been doing. It’s just… everything is so crazy right now. I think I could use Tommy’s help to get ready for the Board meeting.”

“Alright. If you want to stop by my place after your dinner, though…”

“If it’s not too late, I will. Don’t wait for me, though. You must be exhausted, too. The last few days
have been crazy for you as well.”

Probably noticing his hesitant behavior, she didn’t insist. “OK. At least, I hope this Board meeting will go well for you.”

“I hope so, too. It should only be to appoint Walter as CEO, but I’d like to be prepared. I’m supposed to represent the family, now.”

She grinned, patting him on the chest. “I’m sure you’re going to do great. All you have to do is show up, look confident. It’s a formality, according to Moira. I just wonder… why don’t you try to get the position? You’re Robert’s son, it should be yours.”

He snorted. “If only it was that simple. Walter has the experience. He’s the best choice, he will keep the company stable, our investors and partners know him as well as they knew my dad. It’s not about what I should have, it’s about what is best for QC.”

Laurel pursed her lips. “Well. I guess I should get going, then? I just wanted to ask my boyfriend out for dinner but since he already has plans…”

“Yup. What a crappy boyfriend you have there,” Oliver laughed as he lead her out of the conference room.

As she put her coat back on, she glanced towards Felicity’s desk across the glass wall. “Will she be there as well for the meeting?”

“Who?” Oliver asked, distracted as he was trying to scan the blueprints.

“Your secretary. Sara keeps saying that wherever you go, she goes.”

“Assistant,” he mumbled then cleared his throat. “And it’s the whole point of her job. But yes, since you asked, she is going to be there tomorrow as well.”

***

“Felicity?” Oliver called out from the small bathroom, the next day.

The familiar clacking sound of her heels announced her arrival. “Yes?”

“Can you help me? This bloody tie just won’t…” he mumbled, frustrated. He had been struggling with it for a good ten minutes.

She smiled teaseingly, moving his hands out of the way. She untied it, soothing the few wrinkles his unsuccessful attempts had caused. “Someone is nervous…”

Oliver snorted. “Please. That thing is just stubbornly uncooperative.”

“Stubbornly uncooperative? Now that reminds me of someone…” she laughed lightly while expertly
arranging his tie.

He felt a small smile turning up the corner of his lips as he watched her so focused on her task. He had noticed she had the habit of biting her lower lip and frowning her eyes whenever she was confronted with a problem. Which happened a lot.

“Aaaaand there you go!” she grinned proudly, soothing the silky material on his shirt, checking that the knot was straight. “You’re pretty lucky I am such a natural at dealing with the stubbornly uncooperative ones.”

“I’m fully aware of that, Miss Smoak,” he murmured, his eyes warm and gentle.

She didn’t look away, her hand still on his tie while her lips slightly parted, and only then did he notice how close they were to each other. Her breathing hitched up a bit, mirroring his. He saw her eyes hooding and traveling down to his mouth for the briefest second when he unconsciously licked her lips.

The buzzing sound of his phone on the counter startled her so much she jumped a foot back.

“It’s your alert. For the meeting. We should probably go,” she explained, sounding way too breathless for someone who had only been standing for the last couple of minutes. He knew he wasn’t any better, having her so close to him having caused his heart to beat faster for some reason he didn’t really understand. It was Felicity. His assistant. His incredibly gorgeous, fun, smart, caring, assistant.

The ride in the elevator was awkwardly silent, something that hadn’t happened between them for a while. The two of them were actually relieved when they entered the big conference room where most of the members were already there. They barely had to wait a couple of minutes before everyone was seated around the table.

The head of the board, a fifty year-old man named Alfred, didn’t waste any time. “Alright, everyone. Thank you for coming on such short notice. We all know the reason why we’re here today is not a happy one. We need to honor Robert’s memory and I know that making sure the company is in the best hands is what he would have wished for.” Pausing, he looked around the table, his eyes briefly stopping on Oliver.

“We all agreed that we should have a temporary CEO for the next six months, and reevaluate afterwards. Walter, it’s more of a formality than anything else, since you know…”

“Excuse me, Alfred,” Isabel interrupted him sweetly.

“Isabel?” Alfred asked, surprised at the interruption.

“I was under the assumption that you had already decided who would be the temporary CEO even though there has been no vote.”

“Well…” Alfred reached for his tie while glancing at a few of the members on his right. “It seems pretty obvious…”

“No. No it doesn’t. There are two vice-presidents in QC, which means two potential candidates for the position,” Isabel explained as she linked her hands on the table. “If Walter wants the position, it’s fine. But I would also like to apply my candidacy for the job.”
Oliver stared at her for a few seconds, processing her words. Judging by the silence in the room, he wasn’t the only one.

“Isabel, Walter has been my father’s right hand ever since I can remember. He is a part of QC as much as my family is. QC is a family company, obviously he is going to take over after my father.”

“I’m glad you’re bringing this up, Oliver.” The smile she gave him was tight and didn’t reach her eyes. “That makes me an even more valuable candidate for this position. More valuable than Walter, actually.”

“What… what are you even talking about?” Oliver asked, confused.

“I am pregnant. And it’s Robert’s child.”

One hour later

Oliver was sitting on his chair, his tie hanging loosely around his neck as he absently fiddled with a pen, Isabel’s words still playing in his mind. A part of him was hoping this was all a lie but the rational part of his brain was telling him she was speaking the truth. Suddenly, many things made sense. Why Robert had promoted her so quickly in Russia. It was probably his way to buy her silence about the pregnancy. How his father had been so adamant on fixing his mistakes with him: the possibility of another child had probably forced him to confront what he had achieved as a father.

His father’s betrayal felt even more bitter. Not only did he have an affair, he also had fathered another child.

As a steaming cup appeared suddenly on his desk, he raised his head, meeting Felicity’s soft eyes.

“One,” she mouthed, not waiting for a response as she turned around and walked back to her desk.

He smiled pensively, looking at her as she retreated. Watching her doing her usual routine was calming him, something he had noticed a couple of days ago. There was something oddly reassuring in seeing her typing on the keyboard, scribbling down notes for him, always chewing on the same damn pen.

He lost track of time, quietly observing her as she gathered her things, ready to call it a day. He chuckled when he saw her stepping out of her heels and putting on her panda flats. She put her jacket on, grabbing her bag as she stopped on her way out, a small stack of files in arms. “I need to drop those papers on Sara’s desk. I’ll see you tomorrow?”

He smiled at her reassuringly. “See you tomorrow, Felicity.”

She hesitated, shifting on her feet. “Are you sure you’re gonna be alright?”
“If I say no, will you get me another cup of coffee?” he teased her, raising his now empty mug.

“Don’t push your luck,” she tried to scold him but her twinkling eyes gave her away.

She was deep in thought on her way to Sara’s office. The hallways were empty, the vast majority of employees having left at least an hour ago. The silence was eerie, her feet barely making any noise on the marble floor. She was sitting on Sara’s chair, scribbling a note over the files she was supposed to go through – the reports of their road trip, including all the expenses – when a hushed voice startled her.

“Can we talk here?”

It wasn’t so much the fact that someone else was in the room – probably a few cubicles down from Sara’s – that caught her attention. No. It was the fact that the voice seemed oddly out of place for a reason Felicity couldn’t really understand. She was just about to let her presence known, not willing to intrude on anything personal, when another voice responded. A voice she knew very well.

“Yes, everybody has left hours ago. I take it you thought about what I told you during the funeral?” The voice might have been lower than what Felicity was used to, yet she still recognized it right away. Mandy. As quietly as she could, she lowered down on the floor, hiding underneath Sara’s desk.

“I have. You see, I worry about him. He’s not acting normally.”

“I’ve noticed too.”

“I just don’t want him to do anything he might regret later. Ollie can be… reckless.”

“Boys will be boys, right?” Mandy laughed quietly.

“Right. So… you could keep an eye on him?”

“Yes, of course! Like I told you Monday, you need to be careful who he spends his time with. He could easily be influenced.”

“I hired someone to keep an eye on him. I only want to make sure he doesn’t do anything foolish. But once he’s inside QC, there is nothing much they can do. It’s not that I don’t trust Ollie. It’s just that… with the whole Isabel drama… and now she’s pregnant…”

“You’re so right. I think… there are rumors…”

“Rumors?”

“Well… you know. His assistant has no qualifications whatsoever and ended up with this position God knows how.”

“Ollie has always been a charmer. It runs in the family, I’ve accepted that. But this girl… Moira told me she overheard them fighting pretty bad last week. Obviously she’s not the kind of girl who
knows her place. She’s a bit too similar to Isabel in that aspect.”

“Clearly.”

“QC really can’t afford another scandal right now. I need to make sure Ollie doesn’t do anything stupid that could compromise our future.”

“And it’s also about QC’s future.”

“I hate to ask but… why are you helping me?”

“Let’s just say that Felicity Smoak and I are not the best of friends… And I care a lot about Ollie. I’d hate for someone to take advantage of him when he is in such a vulnerable state. Not to mention, you’ll be my boss’s wife eventually.”

“Thank you. I feel better already. You’ll tell me as soon as you find something, right?”

“Of course.”

Felicity stayed hidden underneath the desk, her brain buzzing with what she had heard, trying to process it. Oliver’s girlfriend was paying someone to spy on him.

As soon as she was sure both women had walked away, she stood up, sighing with relief. Crouching down for several minutes was particularly painful for jointures, something she had never realized before. She pushed back the conversation she had just heard to the back of her head, deciding she would tackle it once she was home, preferably with a glass of wine or two.

Picking up her bag, she slung it over her shoulder, quietly making her way out of the big empty room. She was just about to pass the threshold when she bumped into a black jacket.

Taking a step back, she couldn’t help back a grimace when she recognized who that jacket belonged to.

Frack, frack, frack. Frackity frack.

Chapter End Notes

Ta ta ta ta taaaaaaaaaaaaaa (that's supposed to sound like a proper... well... sound for a cliffhanger)

I wish all of you a Happy New Year! Have fun, don't drink and drive and eat some good food!
I should update around Monday. If you're nice.

That means if you comment lol XD
Hi guys! So I decided to be nice and update a bit sooner because you've all been very supportive and sent a lot of comments. Thank you so, so much for all this amazing feedback. It means the world to me.

So, there you go.

As usual, huge thank yo to my Beta yellowpretendingtobered and to my delta/cheerleader/bodyguard probably... pidanka :)
Now as I always say... be careful what you wish for... One cliffhanger down, one more to go, maybe? Maybe.

Song: A Matter Of Trust - Billy Joel

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"A Matter Of Trust"

Some love is just a lie of the heart
The cold remains of what began with a passionate start
    And they may not want it to end
    But it will it's just a question of when
I've lived long enough to have learned
The closer you get to the fire the more you get burned
    But that won't happen to us
    Because it's always been a matter of trust

I know you're an emotional girl
It took a lot for you to not lose your faith in this world
    I can't offer you proof
    But you're going to face a moment of truth
    It's hard when you're always afraid
You just recover when another belief is betrayed
    So break my heart if you must
    It's a matter of trust

You can't go the distance
With too much resistance
    I know you have doubts
But for God's sake don't shut me out

This time you've got nothing to lose
You can take it, you can leave it
    Whatever you choose
    I won't hold back anything
“Laurel!” Felicity exclaimed, forcing a smile. “What… what a surprise!”

The brunette stood there, examining her. “Felicity… what are you doing there, exactly?”

“I work here,” she huffed out a laugh, showing off the badge that was hanging around her neck.

Laurel narrowed her eyes. “Last time I checked, Oliver’s office wasn’t on this floor…”

“I had to drop some files for Sara, I wasn’t trying to eavesdrop or…” she caught herself, feeling the blush invading her cheeks and she bit her lips. She closed her eyes for a second, mentally cursing herself. When she opened them, she was facing a cold looking Laurel. Felicity took a deep breath, gathering her courage. “Listen… I don’t want to get in the middle of… whatever thingy you were doing with Mandy but…”

“But?” Laurel perked an eyebrow, crossing her arms on her chest. “What are you implying exactly?”

“I… I’m not implying anything,” Felicity stuttered. “I didn’t mean to overhear you but I was there and…”

“Now, I’d be really careful if I were you. I wouldn’t want you to start spreading lies about your boss’s girlfriend.”

Felicity gasped. “We both know what I heard! It wouldn’t be lies!”

“You have no way to prove it.”

“If you hired someone, there are traces somewhere.”
Laurel observed her, pinching her lips. “And how exactly will you find this kind of... traces? I've heard of your abilities to dig up things... under the radar.” She shook her head, huffing a laugh. “Don’t make me use the law against you.”

Felicity took a step back. “Are you threatening me?”

“No... just friendly advice,” Laurel smiled. “You’re a smart woman. I don’t think it would be worth ruining your life, would it?”

“Then tell Oliver. Come clear about it with him. Or I will tell him what I heard.”

Laurel narrowed her eyes, looking at her pensively. “You know, you’re not the first woman trying to get between us. They have all failed. Sure, I am not foolish enough to think he never... slips. But he always comes back to me. Oliver and I have a strong, solid relationship. We share the same dreams and ambitions. I fit in his world, in his family. You’re just the girl who brings him coffee. You’re like his new toy, all shiny and fun. Make no mistake, though. He will get bored. And then he’s going to come back to me. Like he always does. Like he always will.”

“That’s... I’m not trying to get between you,” Felicity blurted out.

“The result will be the same, anyway. If you put him in that position, he will choose me. It’s your word against mine. Sure, at first he might side with you. But we’ve been together for years now. You can’t compete with that. Trust me... there will be no choice to make. You will lose your job. And you will lose him.”

Laurel adjusted her purse on her shoulder and with one last sympathetic look, turned around.

Felicity was still deep in thought when she walked into the nice Italian restaurant where she was supposed to meet Barry, later that night.

The two of them had been growing closer ever since he had started working at QC, trying to see each other as often as possible. He was regularly called in different divisions of the company, sometimes even out of town but they still managed to have a few dates. Or friendly meals. Felicity still didn’t really know what they were exactly. Everything with Barry was easy, and comfortable. They made sense together, shared the same humor, could talk about anything. It had been a long time since Felicity had had that kind of easy connection with someone.

Not surprised to see he still hadn’t arrived, she ordered a glass of water, fumbling with the cutlery as she replayed her conversation with Laurel in her head.

She honestly didn’t know what to do. The idea of losing Oliver had been so terrifying, it had caught her off guard. He had become a friend, a support. She couldn’t really imagine what it would feel like to have him walk out of her life. What had started as a random boss-employee relationship had turned into something more. Their bond had deepened, in a very different way from what she had with Dig. She also knew that Laurel was right: Oliver always went back to her, despite all the affairs, cheating and probably lying. Why would he believe her over someone who had been sharing his life for years? Laurel Lance was probably the future Mrs Queen and she was just a nobody.

“I’m so sorry I’m late!” Barry rushed to her side, sitting down while checking his watch. “Although
you have to admit, it’s only a couple of minutes. I’m making progress.”

Felicity smiled at him. “Don’t worry. I might have asked you to meet me here ten minutes early to make sure I wouldn’t have to wait for too long.”

Barry stopped and stared at her, the menu hanging from his hand. “You did?”

“Yup. I’m a quick learner,” she winked at him, taking a sip of water. “Don’t worry about it. Let’s order.”

They were halfway through their main course – wild mushrooms ravioli for her and osso busso for Barry – when he put down his fork, observing her.

“Are you going to tell me what’s wrong?” he eventually asked softly.

“Mmhh.. what?” she answered, surprised.

“You’ve been quiet most of the night and we both know that is not your normal behavior. You barely ate the antipasti. What’s going on?”

Felicity sighed, dropping her fork in her almost untouched plate. “It’s… getting crazy at work and… I don’t know. I’m sorry, though. It’s none of your fault” she smiled apologetically, reaching across the table to lightly squeeze his hand.

“If you want to talk about it…?”

“Thank you but… it’s just my head acting weird. I probably need a good night of sleep.”

“Does that mean we’ll make a pass on dessert?” he chuckled then sobered up. “Oh, I didn’t mean… I wasn’t implying anything. I was talking about… tiramisu or…”

That brought the first genuine smile on her face since she had left the office as she pushed back her thoughts to the back of her mind, intending on having a good time. Now is not the time to think about the soap-opera that is Oliver’s life.

***

“Oliver? Are you even listening to me?”

His mother’s voice shook him out of his trance. They were having breakfast in one of the main dining rooms. Something a bit too fancy for his taste, especially since it was a week day, but at least his mother was in charge of her own home again. The news of Robert’s illicit unborn child had been a shock for her but it had also awoken a part of her he hadn’t seen in a while. She had straightened her back, already forming plans to find the best way to make sure Walter would get the position of CEO.

Moira Queen getting ready to step on the battlefield was much better than Moira Queen staying in her room mourning the loss of her husband.
“Sorry, mom. You were saying?” he asked politely, putting down the newspaper he had been reading.

“We are going to host a reception this Sunday night. Here, at the Mansion,” Moira explained calmly as she cut a piece of pineapple.

Oliver frowned. “Mom… we just buried dad… I don’t think it’s… proper.”

“I know, honey. But we need to show our strength. We need to show that we support Walter 100%. Isabel is not going to wait to make her move, we would be foolish to just stand around.”

“About that, mom… We found out something about Isabel last month. I never got the chance to talk to dad about it, because he probably wouldn’t have listened to me.”

“What is it?” his mother asked, putting down her knife and giving him her full attention.

He quickly explained everything they had found. The secret visits, the stock shares, the Russian company, the phones calls.

Oliver winced as he finished. “I know I should have told someone but we were trying to gather more info…”

Moira shook her head. “No. You’re right. You didn’t have any real proof, and it would have put you in a difficult situation. And I’m sorry that you didn’t even consider coming to me with that. But that’s my fault, not yours” she closed her eyes for a moment “we have to let Walter know. I’ll talk to him.”

“What about Sunday, then?” Oliver asked as she stood up.

“It’s still on. More than ever. We’ll invite the usual crowd and our partners and backers. Of course it won’t be extremely fancy, it will be to honor your father’s memory. We can’t afford wasting time. And, Oliver… it will also be the perfect occasion to…”

“Mom. Please. One thing at a time, alright?”

She patted his shoulder as she walked past him. “We’ll talk about it later, then.”

Staring at his plate, having suddenly lost his appetite, Oliver pushed back his chair. Might as well go to work early.

***

When Felicity stepped out of the elevator, her hand clutching a triple espresso that she desperately needed after a night of tossing and turning around, she wasn’t surprised to see Oliver’s office was still empty. She always made sure to be there before him and he had had quite a few rough days. Not to mention, she liked to be able to start her workday in silence, making sure everything was ready and on point for when her boss would arrive. *Such a dedicated employee…*

Putting her half-empty travel mug on her desk, she startled when she heard some ruffling noise
coming from the small archive room that was adjacent to her office. To her surprise, she realized that the door, which was usually always closed, was slightly ajar.

Her heart beating faster in her chest, she tiptoed towards the room, noticing that the place was completely dark except for a small flickering light, similar to a torch lamp. Taking a deep breath, she was about to push the door open when the ruffling sound started again, followed by a louder “thump”. Her eyes growing wide, her mind rattling with the conversation she had witnessed between Laurel and Mandy, she looked around her, trying to figure out what to do.

She still didn’t know what to do with the information she had found, not willing to risk her relationship with Oliver but at the same time knowing it wasn’t right to not warn him. The idea of having to start over again, possibly in another company, was causing her stomach to churn. She had been looking for a sense of belonging, a place to call home, a new life with friends and people she liked to work with. She had found that here and wasn’t ready to go back to her lonely days just yet.

Despite everything, she wasn’t about to let some random private look through Oliver’s personal files. Making up her mind, she looked for a possible weapon to confront him. Or her. Isn’t it kind of sexist to assume a private investigator is a man?

Grabbing the first thing she could find on her desk, she took off her shoes, trying to be as discreet as possible as she stepped to the door. Taking a deep breath, holding out her weapon above her head, she kicked the door open, like cops always do on TV, screaming, “Hands in the air!”

“Fuck!” Oliver jumped, startled at the intrusion, the stack of papers he had been holding flying all over him. “Felicity, what the hell?!”

“Oh my… Oliver!” she sighed heavily, sagging on the doorframe. “You scared me to death!”

“I… I scared you to death?!”

“Why are you here in the dark?” she asked him reproachfully as she tried to switch on the light. “Oh. It’s not working.”

“No. It’s not. Hence my torch lamp!” He directed the light towards her, exclaiming, “what… why are you holding a stapler?!”

“I couldn’t exactly face a possibly dangerous intruder weaponless,” she explained defensively with as much dignity as she could.

Oliver knelt down, quickly picking up the papers and walking out of the room. She stepped aside, letting him pass, chewing on her bottom lip.

“What were you planning to do with it? Staple me to death?” he asked as he put down the files on her desk, trying to reorganize them. “Why didn’t you get a vase or something, like normal women do?”

She glared at him. “Like normal women do?”

“Don’t you try to scold me, Miss I-almost-gave-my-boss-a-heart-attack!” he pointed his finger at her.

She pinched her lips as she slipped her shoes back on. “In my defense, I didn’t know you were even aware there was an archive room in your office.”
It was his turn to glare at her as he collected the files and straightened up. He picked up her coffee as well, taking a sip of it as he walked to his office, mug still in hand.

“That’s my coffee!” she huffed out in disbelief.

“Not anymore!” he dryly shouted back. As he sat down at his desk, he winked at her, a lopsided grin growing on his lips. She found herself unable to not smile back as she sat at her own desk, their eyes still locked.

The ring from her desk phone forced them to tear their eyes from each other and they both settled down to work.

Unfortunately, it also brought back the nasty thoughts that had been playing in her head since the day before. Her mood significantly dropped as the hours went by, and her lips became almost raw from being constantly bitten and chewed on. There was a battle going inside her mind and she felt like whatever she would do, it would end up in heartbreak for her. *If I tell Oliver, I am going to put him in an impossible situation. Working together will become awkward, knowing I caused tensions between him and Laurel. And that is if he even believes my word. But I can’t keep this away from him either.*

“Felicity!”

She jumped at the sound of Oliver’s voice. Glancing at him, she saw him looking at her in concern.

“Are you OK?”

“Yes. Peachy. Lost in thought. You know how it is up there,” she laughed, pointing to her head. “Actually, no you don’t. Cause it’s my head. Not yours.”

Oliver narrowed his eyes at her. “You seem on edge… if there’s something wrong, you know you can tell me, right?”

His eyes were so full of concern and honesty that she almost blurted everything out right at this moment but a gut-deep fear kept her from it.

“Don’t worry. I’m just… figuring stuff,” she smiled reassuringly, pointing to the notepad he was holding. “What did you need me for?”

He examined her for a few seconds then nodded his head. “We are having a reception at the Mansion on Sunday.”

“… Hum… what?” she asked, surprised. Robert Queen had been buried a few days ago and it seemed weird to have any kind of festivity within the week.

“We need to reassure our backers. Show our support to Walter. It’s not going to be a party, more like a gathering of my father’s friends and partners. A way to show respect to the businessman he was, I guess. At least that’s how we are going to play it.”

“Oh.” She looked down at the pen she was currently holding. “Are you OK? With everything… Isabel… the surprise bun in the oven?”
Oliver let out a small laugh. “Well. I have to be. It just makes things more complicated with even less sense. Why would she plan a take-over if she was going to have my father’s child?”

Felicity frowned. “I wondered about that too… maybe it was like Plan B? Ironic since Plan B is also a pill that… hum. Nevermind.”

Oliver smiled softly at her, sitting down on her desk. “We just need to keep an eye on her. My mother is going to let Walter know. We absolutely need to make sure there is no big sell off. We have to show a strong front.”

“I guess this whole reception makes sense, now,” she murmured. “Do you need me to do anything?”

“Yes. Be there on time, wear a nice dress. You know... the usual” he winked at her then checked his watch “Lunch time. I’m supposed to meet Dig, want to come with us?”

“No, thank you. I already have plans,” she shook her head.

“Alright, then. I’m supposed to spend the afternoon with Walter. Don’t wait for me, it’s probably going to take a while.”

She watched him pensively as he walked to the staircase. Sighing, she got up and walked to the small kitchenette by the conference room to retrieve her lunch from the small fridge. She wasn’t really in the mood for chitchat anyway, she thought as she waited by the microwave for her broccoli pasta.

***

“Oliver?” she whispered, trying to poke his arm. “Pppssssschhht… Oliver!”

“Mmmh?” he moaned. “Whatisitflecity?”

“I heard something.”

“There is nothing. Sleep.”

“No. I really heard something. Like a scratching sound.”

Oliver grunted. “It’s an old building, it’s probably just the wood cracking. Go back to sleep.”

“I can’t. Oliver we’re in the middle of a town we do not know and they have a corn-dog festival. For all we know, it could be a cannibal festival.”

He raised his head from the pillow. “... what?”

“Tell me it hasn’t crossed your mind.”

“I can honestly tell you that no, it didn’t cross my mind until now.”

She paused, biting her lip as Oliver put his head back on the pillow.

“I’m scared,” she mumbled, her face almost completely hidden underneath her duvet.
Oliver sighed as he sat up on the bed. “If I go check, will you shut up and get back to sleep?”

“Promise. Unless they kidnap you and transform you into junk food. I don’t think I’ll be able to go back to sleep if they do that.”

“That’s reassuring,” groaning, he stood up, mumbling something about how he was still wearing his shoes. He made his way to the door, unlocked it and opened it, glancing in the hallway. “Like I told you... nothing.”

“Oh. OK,” she peeked from underneath the blankets as he locked the door once more, walking back to the bed. He was just about to slip out of his shoes when she asked him, “since you’re up... could you go downstairs and grab me something to eat?”

He stopped, and despite the darkness she could feel his stare. “Are you serious?”

“... I’m hungry.”

“You’re not gonna let me sleep if I say no, am I right?”

She smiled cheekily. “I get cranky when I’m hungry.”

Oliver rubbed his eyes, sighing. He put his hands on his hips, groaning, “so you want me to sneak downstairs and steal food?”

“... I wouldn’t have said it like that but... yes.”

“What do you want?” he asked, apparently resigned. She smirked, proud that he probably knew she wasn't going to give up. The sooner he gave in, the sooner she’d let him sleep.

“Sandwich? Like turkey sandwich. Mustard and mayo. Or chips. Banana! Although I’d like a yogurt as well. Do you think they have chocolate? Fried chicken!”

Oliver stood at the foot of the bed, silent, as if he was trying to make up his mind. “Get up,” he eventually let out, switching on the light on the night stand.

“What? Why?” she whined, clutching the blankets.

“If you want me to raid the fridge, you’re gonna have to do it with me.”

She opened her mouth to protest but he cut her off right away. “Felicity Smoak, I am not going to take the fall for you.”

Smiling, she got up, putting a sweatshirt on. “You know, I never actually raided a fridge before.”

Oliver quirked an eyebrow at her. “Really?”

“Yeah, really,” she whispered as they made their way down the stairs. “It’s kinda exciting, though, I feel like we’re breaking the law.”

Oliver snorted behind her. “Watch for the steps, Bonnie.”
The sun was just rising, and the whole place was completely empty. They had stayed until the very last moment where the owners had kicked out everyone. It was around 4 in the morning and they had been extremely intoxicated when they had walked up the stairs. They had barely slept more than an hour when Felicity had woken up to her rambling stomach. It wasn’t uncommon to her, she always ended up hungry whenever she had too much to drink. Unfortunately, she also knew she would still feel hungover the next day.

As they tiptoed around the bar, reaching for the small kitchen in the back, Oliver turned on the light. Both groaned at the blinding light and he quickly turned it off again. Felicity reached for a small lamp over the stove, switching it on. The light was very dim, but more than enough.

As she opened the fridge, humming, he looked for the cutlery. He paused, eyes wide, when he saw her approaching the table with her arms full of food. He watched her as she set everything on the table. Bread, mayo, a tomato, some turkey, fried chicken, pickles, an apple, and for some odd reason a branch of raw broccoli.

Noticing his stare, she asked, “what?”

“Hum. Nothing.” He shook his head, grabbing the bread, making a sandwich for himself as well. As soon as they were done, they put everything back in the fridge, planning to go back to their room to eat their food. Felicity had just turned off the small light when Oliver put a hand on her arm and used the other to cover her mouth. Startled she looked at him, holding her sandwich close to her heart as she chewed on a piece of broccoli, the noise seemingly loud in the deserted kitchen. He pointed his head to the main door, while gently forcing her to step back.

Swallowing, she focused on her hearing and, horrified, heard some voices coming their way.

Panicked, she looked around her trying to find an escape route and shoved Oliver in the pantry that was just to her right. The space was small, but big enough for the both of them to stand comfortably.

Oliver slowly and quietly closed the door behind them. The room was completely dark until someone turned on the light in the kitchen and a few rays of lights pierced around the door.

Glancing up, she looked at Oliver, worried.

“Oh my God, we’re gonna go to jail”, she murmured, her eyes wide.

She saw his mouth twitching as he shook his head. “No.”

He startled when he heard a female voice giggling on the other side of the door.

“Shhhhhhh, at least close the door!”

Some unintelligible groaning was all they could hear back as the woman shrieked suddenly, “here? On the table?!”

The sound of some ruffling clothes and loud, wet kissing reached them as their faces started to mirror the horror of the situation. They were going to witness some very private cooking lessons.

A banging sound on the wall startled Felicity who slightly jumped. Oliver reassuringly stroked her arm but quickly stopped when the sound kept repeating.

Groaning, Felicity hid her face in his chest as the still unidentified woman started moaning. Oliver
shifted uncomfortably on his feet when the moans turned into small cries.

Fortunately for them, or for the woman, her cries quickly reached their pinnacle, coinciding with a few deep groans. Felicity let out a huge sigh of relief as the banging stopped and a few whispers were heard on the other side of the door. After a few minutes of calm, they heard the couple moving and shared a look of embarrassed relief. Of all the situations they had been in, this one probably was by far the most cringe-worthy. Felicity could feel her face flaming and she was pretty sure Oliver wasn’t feeling that comfortable either.

Oliver was about to open his mouth when the door trembled as if a heavy object had been thrown at it. Both looked at it, horrified at the idea of being caught.

This time, Felicity was the first one to understand. Shifting her eyes, she mouthed a shocked “again?!” as the banging resumed, this time directly against the door. The voices were now much closer and despite their best efforts, they couldn’t ignore the words.

“Yes, oh God, yes, you... big... bad... wolf!”

Her legs shaking, Felicity slowly lowered herself, sitting on the floor. Oliver quickly followed as they both did their best to avoid looking at each other, waiting for Round 2 to finally be over.

As the woman shrieked much louder, Felicity crossed her fingers that this meant it was going to be over soon. She realized pretty fast that they wouldn’t be that lucky as ‘big bad wolf’ didn’t even slow down. With a trembling hand, she munched on the branch of broccoli she was still holding in her hand, having put her sandwich on one of the shelves.

After a few minutes and another set of loud cries on the theme of the little red riding hood, which included Felicity covering her ears in panic when she heard the woman panting, “oh what a... what a big furry tail you've got... between your legs, Mister... Mister Big Bad Wolf?”. Unfortunately, she hadn’t been fast enough to avoid the beginning of the man's answer as he groaned "all the better to...

Oliver had then dropped his food, holding his face between his hands.

When the couple had finally left the kitchen, after what seemed like hours, Felicity and Oliver had quietly walked back to their room. Oliver had just slumped on the bed while Felicity slipped underneath the duvet, her mind racing.

“I can’t believe it.”

“Me neither.”

“Three times.”

That caused Oliver to pause as he turned his head towards her. “Three? What are you talking about? They had round 1 and round 2.”

“The woman! She had three orgasms!” she exclaimed in awe.

Oliver coughed. “You mean you...”

“Three, Oliver. Three!” she glanced at him, “and believe me, she wasn’t faking it.”
She settled back under the duvet, whispering once more, "Three... wow."

BING

Felicity jumped at the sound of the microwave, torn away from the memory. She had completely forgotten that part of their stay in Ivy Town – which wasn’t that surprising considering the amount of alcohol that had been included. She felt her face burning with second-hand embarrassment as she remembered the awkwardness between Oliver and her. *I so hope he never remembers that…*

***

“Dig! Have you seen Felicity?” Oliver asked his bodyguard as soon as he spotted him in the crowd. Despite the circumstances, the Queen Mansion was full. Even on short notice, his mother had managed to gather everyone around. The mood wasn’t exactly cheerful, but people were supportive and encouraging, understanding that this was a reception in honor of Robert Queen’s legacy.

“No. Last time I saw her, she was with some tall dude talking about… sciences and… stuff,” Dig answered, his eyes searching through the busy room.

“Oliver!” the young, cheerful voice brought a smile on his lips.

“Anna! I was wondering where you were.” Oliver crouched down to the little girl, noticing she had some chocolate around her mouth. He quickly grabbed the napkin Dig was handing him and cleaned her face. “I see Thea showed you the kitchen?”

“Yes. She said I wasn’t to tell anyone though, so you’d better not say anything.”

Dig laughed at the bossy tone of her voice.

The little girl noticed him and reached out her hand. “Hello. My name is Anna Frazier and I am seven years-old.”

Obviously amused, Dig shook her tiny hand. “Hello, Anna. My name is John Diggle and I am 32 years-old.”

“Your arms are really big,” she frowned. “Felicity told me she had a friend who had the biggest arms in the whole wide world. Are you a friend of Felicity?”

Dig smiled, “yes, I am.”

“Then she must have been talking about you, cause I don’t think there can be bigger arms in the whole wide world”

Oliver chuckled as he saw the flattered look on his bodyguard’s face.

“Felicity is my friend, indeed. I take it you’re one of hers as well?”
“Yes,” Anna nodded. “we are really good friends. She loves chocolate.”

“Well, Miss Anna. It was a pleasure to meet you.” Dig shook her hand once more and patted Oliver on the back when he saw Moira Queen approaching, leaning to murmur, “I’ll be outside if you need me.”

Oliver nodded as he welcomed his mother with a smile. “Mom. The reception is great. Dad would have been proud.”

His mother’s smile flickered a bit. “I know. I have talked to almost everyone and they all assured me we had their support and if we thought Walter was the best choice, they would follow us.” Taking a breath, she put her hand on his arm. “I am going to make the announcement in about ten minutes, you might want to try and find Laurel.”

“Alright. I think she just went to the bathroom with Sara, though. She should be back soon.”

“Good. I’ll leave you in Anna’s company then.”

Turning her head to the child who was listening to them she added, “you keep Oliver company and make sure he doesn’t eat too much cake, will you?”

Anna smiled, “I will.”

His mother was barely out of his sight when Anna asked him, “who is Laurel?”

Oliver frowned. “You know who she is. You’ve met her before. She’s my girlfriend.”

“The girl in the blue dress that was with you all night?”

“Yes.”

“She’s nice.”

Oliver smiled at the seriousness of her tone.

“But she’s not as nice as Felicity. And you didn’t share your chocolate cake with her.”

“Anna, it’s a buffet, there is no need to share anything.”

“Still. You would have given your plate to Felicity.”

“Maybe. But Felicity adores chocolate cake.”

Anna giggled as she remembered their lunch a couple of weeks ago. Oliver tried once more to spot his assistant, who had been weirdly distant all night. He had tried to talk to her but she had always found a way to escape his attention. And now that he was thinking of it, she had been weird for several days. There was something going on with her, and he didn’t like seeing her distraught.

“She makes you smile.”

Anna’s voice broke through his thoughts. “What?”
“Felicity. She makes you smile.”

“Hum… She’s really funny. But Laurel makes me smile, too.”

“No. You smile when she talks to you. But it’s just your mouth. Daddy always says a real smile makes your eyes twinkle.”

Oliver opened his mouth, trying to come up with an answer.

“Oh, here she is!” Anna gripped his arm, pointing to one of the entrances. He recognized his assistant in her simple black dress, her hair high in a ponytail, glasses in place. She was parting way with Mr Frazier who was laughing at something she said. “I’m gonna go see Grand Pa. Don’t eat too much cake, I don’t want Moira to be mad at me.”

“Promise,” Oliver grinned at her as he quickly walked towards Felicity. He got held up by one of their partners but swiftly encouraged him to talk to Walter. He finally arrived near Felicity, who was exchanging a few words with Laurel. Two birds, one stone.

“Laurel! My mother is looking for us. She’s near the buffet,” Oliver said as soon as he approached the two women.

Laurel smiled at him, lightly squeezing his hand. “Of course.” As she turned around, he noticed the weird look exchanged between her and Felicity.

Felicity turned around instantly, avoiding his eyes, already walking away.

Frowning, Oliver stood there for a second, wondering what exactly he had stepped into. His head swapped from Laurel to Felicity who were both going in different directions.

Quickly making up his mind, he rushed behind his assistant. “Felicity,” he hissed, grabbing her arm.

She stopped near a wall of green plants. “Yes?”

Oliver examined her, noticing how she was still averting his eyes. “What is going on with you?”

“No…”

“And don’t say nothing!” he cut her off right away, not willing to let her deny it once more. He had tried to get her to talk to him several times but she always had an excuse to avoid the confrontation.

He softened as he saw her flinch. “The truth please. What is bothering you so much?” he put his hands on her arms, encouraging her to open up to him.

She took a shaky breath, her eyes finally meeting his. “Oliver… I just. You know I don’t talk much. Well no, I do talk a lot. Not about me or my family or my life before, though.”

“I have noticed that…” he murmured. “Is it about your family? Is something wrong with your mother?”

Felicity huffed out a laugh. “No. It’s not about my family. It’s not even about me.”
“Then tell me, please. Whatever it is, you can tell me.”

“It’s about you, Oliver.”

“Me?” He asked, confused, taking a step back. “Have I done something?”

She shook her head. “No. I’m just… I don’t want to lose you, Oliver. I know I’m just your assistant but we became friends and I love working with you, I love this life I’m building here, so much more than I thought I would because well duh you had that reputation and…”

He lightly squeezed her arms between his hands, efficiently stopping what was going to turn into a massive rambling.

“Thank you,” she said, relieved.

“I know the signs, now,” he smiled at her encouragingly. “And you’re not gonna lose me, Felicity. We are friends. I know I would be completely lost if you hadn’t walked into my life a couple of months ago.”

Her smile was shaking when she took a deep breath. “It’s about Laurel.”

She then proceeded to tell him everything, words coming out of her mouth quickly as if she had been holding them back for way too long. The conversation between Mandy and Laurel. The private investigator. The confrontation she had had with Laurel herself. The threats.

Oliver listened to her, his face never showing doubts, only confusion. He was aware, in the distance, of his mother asking for everyone’s attention. He stood there, eyes locked with Felicity, never doubting, not even for a second, the words she was telling him.

He heard his mother making her speech in the distance. “Thank you so much for your presence tonight. In such dark times, it is good to know our family has your support. You are all our friends and I know Robert would be proud to see us all together in his memory.”

Oliver reassuringly pressed Felicity’s shoulders, forcing a small smile and mouthing a thank you as he made his way across the room, knowing he was supposed to be by his mother’s side in any minute.

“Our family has always been what Robert cherished the most. His priority. Now that he is gone, it became our son’s priority. As parents, we all want the best for our children. We want them to grow, to mature. We hope they will find someone who supports them along the way. A partner. Someone to share their life with. The good times and the bad ones. Someone who will always be there for them, who will encourage them, cheer for them. Someone who will help them become a better person”

He made his way through the crowd, his ears buzzing, his mind flashing pictures while he listened to his mother’s speech - pictures that he tried his best to ignore, to push back in a small corner of his brain. He saw Laurel, beaming, on his right and quickly walked up to her.

“I am so pleased to announce to you that Oliver and his girlfriend, Laurel, are engaged.”

He grabbed Laurel’s arm under the cheers and, as they walked up the small step to the stage where Moira was, he leaned and whispered in her ear, “I know everything.”
*checks if everything is packed and if the cat has enough food for a few days*
*hides behind Pidanka*

... So that happened. Yep. I know, I know. I know. It had to happen, though. For reasons.

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or Tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com (or not if you're really pissed XD)
Chapter Notes

Woot woot! End of the three-chapter trilogy... hope it will be worth all the torture/cliffhangers...

Thank you so much for all your support, it's blowing my mind! I have to mention my beta yellowpretendingtobered and as well as pidanka who are so helpful, each in their own way :)

Remember, we ended last chapter with Felicity telling Oliver about Laurel's schemes while Moira was announcing their engagement in public. By the way, of course Oliver knew about that. He had agreed to it, Moira wouldn't force her son like that. Trying to persuade him, push him a bit, yeah, but not decide for him. You are going to get more on how and why the engagement happened, right in this chapter ;)

Song: Freedom '90 - George Michael

"Freedom '90"

I won't let you down
I will not give you up
Gotta have some faith in the sound
It's the one good thing that i've got
I won't let you down
So please don't give me up
Because i would really, really love to stick around

Heaven knows i was just a young boy
Didn't know what i wanted to be
I was every little hungry schoolgirls pride and joy
And i guess it was enough for me
To win the race? A prettier face!
Brand new clothes and a big fat place
On your rock and roll tv
But today the way i play the game is not the same
No way
Think i'm gonna get me some happy
I think there's something you should know
I think it's time i told you so
There's something deep inside of me
There's someone else i've got to be
Take back your picture in a frame
Take back your singing in the rain
I just hope you understand
Sometimes the clothes do not make the man
All we have to do now
Is take these ties and make them true somehow
All we have to see
Is that I don’t belong to you
And you don’t belong to me
Freedom
You’ve gotta give for what you rake
Freedom
You’ve gotta give for what you take
Heaven knows we sure had some fun boy

What a kick just a buddy and me
We had every big-shot goodtime band on the run boy
We were living in a fantasy
We won the race
Got out of the place
I went back home got a brand new face
For the boys on mtv
But today the way I play the game has got to change
Oh yeah
Now I’m gonna get myself happy

Oliver played his part for the next hour. Shaking hands, smiling, accepting words of congratulations. Laurel was beaming, proudly showing off the ring she had kept hidden for the last few days.

The words he had whispered in her ear had caused some confusion to appear on her face but she had quickly gathered her bearings. She kept throwing him a few glances every now and then while they were standing side by side, being held back by a couple of Moira’s friends.

“Oh what a beautiful ring! Is it from the Dearden’s vault?”

“No, it’s not… We wanted something new. To mark a new beginning,” Laurel smiled, holding out her left hand. The ring was indeed beautiful. A huge sapphire, circled by small white diamonds on a yellow gold band. Oliver smiled briefly, remembering that he had been the one not willing to use the Dearden’s family jewels. If only he had paid more attention to what his guts were telling him, but he had been caught up in the whirlwind. His father’s death, the pressure at QC and at home… It had seemed like a good idea to fulfill Robert Queen’s wish. He and Laurel had talked about it and agreed that this was probably the best time to consider an engagement. It made sense. It was logical. It was the next step. How many times had he repeated those words in his head in the last few days? Hell, he hadn’t even chosen the ring with Laurel. He had stayed at the office to finish off some paperwork, pretending it couldn’t wait. Moira had been more than happy to share that moment with her future daughter-in-law, the three of them pretending it didn’t mean anything that the future groom couldn’t find one hour to pick his fiancée’s engagement ring. It meant everything but like always, they had chosen to ignore the meaning behind the action.

During the next thirty minutes, Oliver kept the mask firmly on his face. His mind was buzzing with what Felicity had told him, the warning bells in his head screaming louder and louder with each passing minute. Laurel noticed his strange behavior and started to show worry and apprehension. At some point, their eyes briefly met and something must have clicked for her because her hand started
shaking as she drank her champagne and she instinctively glanced at Felicity who was being held back by one of their potential investors. Oliver had seen how uncomfortable his assistant had been once she had heard Moira announcing the engagement. Her face had paled and even from the other side of the room he had been able to see her shaking her head, her hand covering her mouth in horror, probably blaming herself and her sucky timing. She had looked at him mouthing, “I’m sorry”, her eyes wide.

Sighing, he finally put down his glass, not able to take any more of the fakeness.

“Will you excuse us?” Not waiting for an answer from whoever Laurel was talking to, he grabbed her by the arm murmuring, “we need to talk.”

“Ollie… surely, it can wait? We have guests!” she hissed, trying to resist.

Oliver stopped and stared at her. “Laurel. I told you: I know. So either you come with me and we talk like adults, or I just leave you here and you’ll have to wait for your detective to tell you where I went.”

Her face paled suddenly at his words before a blush started to creep on her cheeks. “Ollie, I don’t know what…”

“In private or I leave you here?” he repeated, his tone much colder.

She pinched her lips, her head bowing a little as she too put her champagne down, following him.

He stopped briefly by Dig’s side, letting him know he didn’t want to be disturbed for the rest of the night. Deciding the best place to make sure they wouldn’t be interrupted was probably the upstairs library, he led Laurel to the staircase, barely slowing down.

As he let her inside the room, stepping behind her and closing the door, he took a deep breath, considering his options. Should he confront her right away or at least give her a chance to come clean?

“Ollie. I don’t know what this is all about but…”

Confrontation it is, then.

“You hired someone to tail me. That’s what this is all about,” he curtly explained.

“Well, I don’t know what she told you but she misunderstood me, obviously.” Laurel crossed her arms, leaning on one of the chairs as Oliver started pacing in front of the large sofa.

Oliver stared at her. “When you say ‘she’… I’m curious… are you talking about Felicity or Mandy?”

Laurel visibly gulped, then passed her fingers across her forehead. “Listen, it’s not what you think it is.”

“Laurel. Let’s keep it simple, alright? Felicity told me everything. You’re spying on me, inside and outside of QC.”

“That’s not true!”
Oliver pinched his lips, looking at her, not even bothering to answer.

She huffed out a dry laugh. “I can’t believe it. You would choose to believe her over me.”

Oliver observed her for a few seconds. “Laurel. There is no choice to make. Felicity and I… we don’t lie to each other. We both know I can’t say the same about us.”

“You’re not fair, Ollie! I’m the one who’s had to deal with all your lies for years!” she shouted, anger causing her to straighten her shoulders as she walked towards him.

“Exactly, Laurel. I lied to you, you lied to me. You lied to yourself… I lied to myself. That’s the base of our relationship: lies,” he calmly explained, shoving his hands in his pockets.

“Ollie… I was scared. Worried about you… about us. I felt it, in my bones, that something was bothering you and you were so distant. We barely talk these days. With the whole Isabel drama, I panicked, thinking maybe you would make the same mistakes your father did,” Laurel explained, her eyes tearing up.

“I can understand your lack of trust towards me. God knows I gave you plenty of reasons,” Oliver softened. “But that doesn’t mean I can forget about it. We can’t continue like this, Laurel. It’s not fair for you or for me.”

“Ollie… we just got engaged. We can work around it,” Laurel all but pleaded, her hands twisting as she played with her engagement ring.

Oliver sighed as he sat down on the couch. “And then, what’s next, Laurel?”

“What do you mean? We just get past it, like mature couples do.”

“I can’t… I can’t do that. You and me… it’s a mistake. It has been a mistake for a long time.” He threw his arms in the air as he finally realized how true his words were. “This whole thing, the engagement… it’s just a huge fucking mistake!”

“Ollie, don’t talk like that. We can work it out. We will.” At that moment, she sounded so confident, so sure of herself that it reminded him of how she was when they met. It also reminded him of how much his parents were rooting for her, so pleasantly surprised he was dating a girl like her.

“Laurel…” Oliver sighed as she kneeled in front of him, putting her arms on his thighs. She leaned in, softly kissing him. He let her, knowing deep down this would be the last time, then gently pushed her away.

“I have cheated on you so many times I lost count,” he told her, his eyes never leaving hers.

“Ollie, I know it didn’t mean… I know how you are and I know you didn’t do it to hurt me. You’ve always been a charmer, your father has always been one. I know you never loved them like you love me.” She sat down next to him on the couch, leaving a hand on his thigh.

“So it’s OK? You’re fine with it?” Oliver raised an eyebrow. God, Laurel, how can you be OK with that? Can’t you see you deserve better?

“No, I’m not. Of course it hurts to think of it, but I also can separate those meaningless affairs with
what we have. What we’ve built together. It’s something I have accepted, Queen men…” she trailed off, her voice trembling.

He cut her off. “Can’t you see, Laurel? A part of me needed you to confront me! Needed you to show me you cared enough to tell me to stop! Show me that you cared more about me than about my last name. You always acted as all that mattered was that you could publicly date me, Oliver Queen. No matter the cost, no matter what I did on the side as long as you were ‘the official’.”

He pushed her hand away, getting up from the couch as he resumed his pacing.

“That’s not true. I love you, Ollie. I just accepted the dark part of you as well.”

“You shouldn’t have!” he shouted, startling her. He knew she wasn’t used to see him that way. Ollie never got mad, never screamed. He did sarcasm, not anger. But he was tired of being Ollie.

“God, Laurel. Don’t you think you deserve better than this?”

“I love you, Ollie,” she repeated, her voice trembling.

“No. You love the idea of me. The ideal person you wish I could be, and you just ignore the parts that don’t fit. I’m not blaming you. I did the same with you. But you and I… we will never be happy together.”

“You can’t do this to me. We just got engaged, what will people say?” she cried, protectively holding her arms around her waist.

“We don’t have to make a big deal out of it. Just… keep our distances from each other until people understand what happened,” he said, dismissively waving his hand.

“I did this to help you and your family, I’ve always been there for you.” Her anger started to rise as she confronted him reproachfully. She angrily wiped her tears, balling her fists as her tone turned bitter. “And now I’m just going to be the poor girl who got abandoned at the altar. I suppose you’d rather we wait to announce the wedding is cancelled until QC is safe and sound?”

“Don’t,” he warned her, holding out a finger.

“It’s true!” she stood up, screaming, “don’t think I’m not aware of how important it is to present the face of a responsible family. I know Robert’s death is what pushed you to agree to it!”

Oliver took a breath, ready to snap back at her when her words caught his attention. “Really? You knew that?” he asked, narrowing his eyes.

She was about to answer when he cut her off, approaching her, forcing her to look in his eyes. “You were fully, 100% aware of that and yet you were still fine with us going on with it? My main motivation was appearances, QC, my family but never, not once did you ever stop and think that this wasn’t right, that this wasn’t the moment to take this kind of decision, that maybe my head wasn’t in the game?”

He waited for an answer but she just lowered her head, playing with her engagement ring.

Oliver snorted. “Laurel. You didn’t care how or why we were getting engaged. You wanted that ring on your finger and that’s all that mattered. You don’t get to lecture me about my motives when
yours were just as poor.”

He leaned on the wall near the small fireplace, feeling a pinching in his heart when he saw the tears streaming down her face. But he was determined to come clean with her, for him and for her. “I know most of this is my fault. I should have been honest with you as soon as I had doubts. We can cancel everything right now, if you want to. Tomorrow, next week… it doesn’t matter to me. I will deal with the consequences. I will make an announcement, or you will. We can end this any way you want to.”

She looked at him, shaking her head as if to convince herself this whole conversation was just a very bad dream. “It can’t end like this. You and me… we’re meant to be together. We’ve been through too much for it to be any other way.”

Oliver sighed, grabbing a box of tissues on the small coffee table and handing it to her.

“Maybe the reason we’ve been through that much was because we were never meant to be, in the first place. All those lies, the struggles,… maybe they were just trying to show us we were never the right person for each other?”

Laurel sniffled, wiping the tears on her face. “Ollie… Let’s give us a couple of weeks to think things through. Maybe there’s still a chance for us?”

“I can’t. I can’t get past this,” Oliver calmly said.

“But… but you said yourself you didn’t blame me?” Her eyes were full of hope, as if she was still clinging on a dream that somehow she could fix everything.

“I don’t blame you for what you did behind my back. It’s mostly my fault. What I can’t understand… Hell, what I can’t accept is that you would threaten Felicity”. His voice hardened as he approached her, his steps decided. “You threatened someone who was trying to do the decent thing. You made her believe she would lose her job, the new life she had just started to build just to cover up your lies. You emotionally blackmailed her. That… that I can’t forgive. You put her in a position where she thought she had to either betray me or risk losing everything she had been building.”

He paused, shaking his head. “Laurel… this isn’t you. That’s not who you are. You’re not someone who would even consider doing that. At least you weren’t when we met.” He gently grabbed her arms, murmuring, “can you see it now? We just bring out the worst in each other. Not the best.”

She stayed quiet for a long moment as if she was processing his words. “I’d like to be alone.”

“Of course. I’ll be in my room. Do you want me to ask someone to drive you back?”

“No. I’ll call a cab,” she softly declined.

Oliver was almost near the door when he heard her laugh softly. It was a sad, bitter laugh… the kind of laugh people get at funerals.

“I can’t believe it. I’ve been wary of so many women in your life who could have taken my place. I never even saw her as a threat. Isn’t it ironic she would be the one causing us to break up?”

Oliver pinched his lips, nodding, knowing it was futile to deny. “I’m sorry, Laurel. I never wanted to hurt you.”
She shook her head. “No. I’m just as responsible, I guess… I let you hurt me for years, pretending it was fine… I only have myself to blame for that.”

A part of him agreed with that. At what point did the strong woman turn into someone who would willingly accept his attitude?

So, he stayed silent and walked out of the room. He quietly closed the door behind him, knowing that for once in his life, he had done the right thing.

As he made his way to his own bedroom, untying his tie and rolling up his sleeves, he sighed with relief, feeling like a huge weight had been lifted off his shoulders. He felt sorry for hurting Laurel but knew that, in the end, he had done it as much for her as for him. It was ironic, in a way, that this break up was probably the most respectful thing he had ever done concerning her. He still cared for her, probably always would. He wasn’t sure he had ever been in love with her but there had been feelings. Those feelings had just never been enough for him to put her front and center in his life. She deserved much better and probably needed time to figure it all by herself as well. All he could hope was that she would take the time for herself, learn what she wanted in life and what she deserved and not be willing to compromise on those things anymore.

He was glad to find the hallways empty despite the fact that the reception was still going strong, judging by the muffled noise coming from downstairs. He pinched his lips as he reached his bedroom, locking the door behind him. He honestly had no idea how everything would turn out, how they would cancel the wedding, how it would impact QC and his own family. He carelessly threw his tie on the small sofa at the foot of his bed and went straight to the window facing the main entrance. He had left Laurel alone, respecting her wishes but that didn’t mean he didn’t want to check if she made it home safely with a cab. He lost track of time as he stood there, watching the dimly lit gardens as a few guests started to leave.

It was such a weird feeling, how the night was supposed to go and eventually turned out. Nothing had gone to plan, and he knew he would have to come face to face with his choices sooner rather than later. He wasn’t nervous in the slightest about it, knowing deep down he had made the right call. The road his father had traced for him, with Laurel by his side, hadn’t been a bad one. Now he understood that. He understood his father wanted him to be established, mature, settled. He finally understood that, in his own weird way, Robert Queen had always wanted to be a good father. By encouraging him to commit to Laurel, he had just wanted to show Oliver he believed he was ready for the next step in his life.

There had just been a miscast in the process. Oliver himself was to blame. He should have told his father much sooner about his own struggles, his own insecurities. He should have ended things with Laurel as soon as he started to cheat on her and stopped having remorse. A part of him had been so willing to cave in, to please his parents, that he had continued the relationship. Thinking that, at least in one part of his life, he was making them proud.

Now, with his father gone, Oliver was starting to understand that one cannot live a life just to get someone’s approval. Robert Queen wanted his son to become a man and a man needs to take a stand. He was 26, and it was time.

All of his life had been games, fun, girls, parties, nice clothes, nice cars, nice hotels. Things had always been handed to him on a silver platter and a longing inside of him had grown bigger and bigger through the years. It had finally reached the point where he couldn’t ignore it anymore. There was somebody else he wanted to be. He needed to be. He still didn’t know for sure who that new
person was going to be – Hell he was just figuring it out. But there wasn’t a part of his body that
didn’t scream he was, finally, on the right path.

Oliver didn’t want easy. He didn’t want simple. He wanted fights, passion, challenges. He wanted to
earn his success, not be handed the keys to the kingdom by default. The last few days had taught him
something valuable: life is short. It is precious. You don’t get a second chance.

It had taken his assistant bravely opening up to him, thinking she was about to lose the life she had
just started to build, but still willing to do it because she’d rather lose it all than lose sight of who she
is. That had been the real eye-opener for him. It was as if a thick curtain had separated him from the
world all his life and someone had finally torn it down. Felicity was way ahead of him on… most
things, that one included. She knew who she was, while it seemed to Oliver he was just starting to
figure it out.

The sight of a yellow cab driving the alley caught his attention. He saw Laurel discreetly walking
down the main stairs and hopping in the back seat of the car, not looking back.

He stepped away from the window and fell onto his bed, not bothering with a shower. He just
kicked off his shoes and laid an arm over his eyes. He was asleep within minutes.

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Oliver was just finishing breakfast the next morning, getting ready for work, when his mother and
sister joined him. Both women were wearing a huge, yet tired, smile on their faces.

“So, now that it’s official, have you and Laurel set the date? Please say it’s gonna be a June
Wedding!” Thea all but squealed as she grabbed a cinnamon roll.

“Thea. Don’t annoy your brother. And please, sit up straight,” Moira lightly scolded her as she
poured herself a cup of coffee.

Oliver briefly closed his eyes, taking a sip of orange juice.

“That being said, your sister is right. It’s time to start planning, one year is the strict minimum to plan
a wedding like yours.”

Putting his glass down, Oliver looked at his mother. “There won’t be a wedding next year.”

Buttering a piece of toast, Moira barely glanced at him. “Oh… winter wedding is it then? Funny, I
always assumed Laurel would want a summer wedding.”

“No. I mean there won’t be any wedding at all. Not in the winter, not in the summer,” Oliver
explained, his voice firm and calm.

“What…” Thea looked at him, confused, holding her knife in mid-air. “Oh my God are you guys
eloping??”

“Thea, don’t be silly. Of course not,” Moira scolded her, her eyes frowning. She then turned her eyes
to her son, obviously waiting for him to explain.
“Laurel and I broke off our engagement last night.”

Silence welcomed his words. Thea started mumbling things about dresses and bridesmaids while Moira carefully put her coffee down on the table.

“Thea, can you please go to your room? I need to talk with your brother.”

“But…”

“Now,” Moira curtly added.

Thea picked up her plate, grumbling. Moira waited until she was out of the room to turn to her son.

“Oliver, what are you talking about? You just got engaged. Whatever happened can be worked out.”

“No, mom. This was a huge mistake. I shouldn’t have agreed to it. I don’t want to marry Laurel. I don’t want to share my life with her.”

“And you only realized that last night?” Moira raised an eyebrow.

“No. I’ve been thinking about it for a while now. Then, dad died and everyone seemed to believe it was such a great idea…” Oliver trailed off.

“I didn’t see you contradicting anyone, Oliver,” Moira snapped.

“You didn’t see me happy about it either, did you?”

Moira gasped but Oliver wasn’t done.

“I understand you and dad loved Laurel. I loved her, too, I guess. Just not enough to commit to her for the rest of my life.”

“If this is about getting cold feet or…” Moira softened as she reached for Oliver’s hand.

“No. It’s not. Quite the opposite. I got cold feet so many times before, chickening out when I wanted to break up with her. I finally had the guts to do it last night. It’s not the best time, I’m aware of that…”

“Not the best time?” Moira interrupted him. “That must be the understatement of the year! Oliver you just got engaged! Oh my… is that why we didn’t see any of you after the announcement? Why would you do that? Poor Laurel, she must be devastated. How could you do that to her, Oliver?”

Oliver pinched his lips, willing himself to keep quiet on the whole private investigator drama. He felt like he at least owed her that.

“Laurel and I talked a lot last night and I think we both came to the same understanding. We want different things in life.”

“What exactly does she want that you can’t give her, Oliver? You’re a Queen, you could give her the world!” Moira threw her napkin on the table, standing up.

Oliver snorted. “Is that all you think of me? Any woman would be happy to be with me because I’m
the definition of a good provider? I could give them anything they want because I’m part of a wealthy, respectable family?”

“That’s not what I meant.” Moira started pacing, clutching at her necklace.

“Yes, mom. That’s what you meant. Is it that wrong of me to want someone who would see past this?” he asked, encircling the room with his hand. “Is it that wrong to think there might be something else to love about me?”

“Oh, Oliver…” Moira softened her tone as she took a seat next to him. “There is so much more in you than all of this. What makes you think Laurel doesn’t see it?”

“Mom… I cheated on Laurel. All the time. I lied to her face and she knew it but she just pretended like it didn’t really matter.”

Moira pinched her lips, lowering her eyes.

“I acted with her exactly the way dad acted with you. I don’t… I don’t want to be that kind of husband,” Oliver whispered, distractedly playing with a piece of bacon on his plate. “I don’t want to be that kind of man.”

“You don’t have to, sweetheart. There are therapists who could help you and she would support you.”

Oliver snickered. “Mom, I’m not a sex-addict. And even if I was… OK, Laurel and I get married, I go to therapy, it works. What happens when it’s not working anymore, when I slip back into bad habits? How could I trust her to stand up to me when she has never done it?”

Moira stayed silent for a moment, pondering his words.

“I knew this whole thing between your father and Isabel was messing with you…”

“Yes. It took me a while to understand why, though. I was so angry with dad and even with you. I didn’t realize it was because I was mad at myself; disgusted with how I was acting in my personal life. I’m sorry, mom. You were right, what happened between Dad and you was none of my business. It was your marriage, your rules. I just don’t want my marriage to be like yours. Marrying Laurel would be repeating history. I don’t want that.” He lightly pressed her hand back, smiling reassuringly at her. There was no anger in his word, no judgement. Just acceptance. “Laurel and I… we don’t belong together. We don’t make each other stronger or better.”

“I loved your dad, and he loved me too, you know,” Moira murmured, her eyes shining with tears.

“I know. I just… I’d like to try and see if there’s another kind of love out there for me. Something maybe a little less proper and a little more messy?”

“What about QC?” Moira straightened up, blinking away the tears.

“I don’t know, mom. I know the smartest move for QC would be this marriage. I know that’s what dad would do because he always knew what was best for the company. I don’t think I’ll ever be as good a business man as he was. But I’d really like to try to be a better man.”

Oliver stood up, lightly kissing his mother’s cheek. He was pushing back his chair when she stopped.
him, grabbing his arm.

“What… what happened to make you change your mind last night?”

He took a deep breath, his eyes travelling on the table and landing on a plate of green apples. It stood out weirdly with the rest, everything so white and creamy. He smiled peacefully as he remembered his mother’s words last night and the images they had unconsciously brought up in his mind: “… Someone to share their life with. The good times and the bad ones. Someone who will always be there for them, who will encourage them, cheer for them. Someone who will help them become a better person.”

“You did. Your speech… it was a lovely speech, mom. It’s just that… it’s not Laurel that I saw.”

“Is there someone else in your life?” Moira asked, narrowing her eyes.

Oliver chuckled. “God. No. I swear to you, mom, no. I don’t plan on having anyone in my life anytime soon. I think I need to focus on other things first.”

“Then I hope you’ll find her, whoever she is,” Moira smiled softly at him.

He smiled back at her, relieved to see the understanding in her eyes. “I just hope I’ll be worthy of her.”

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Felicity was pacing. There were no other words. She was pacing, biting her nails or whatever was left of them. The night had been short, she had laid on her bed staring at the ceiling most of it.

Oliver was engaged. He was engaged. He was going to get married. Start a new life. Commit.

With Laurel.

The girl who had threatened to ruin her life.

The girl she had warned Oliver about, 2 and a half minutes before their engagement was announced. 

I really have the suckiest sense of timing in the entire universe.

“I always thought punctuality was one of your main qualities, on the contrary.”

She violently jumped, her hand already covering her chest as she turned around, facing her boss. “Oliver, you scared the hell out of me!”

“My bad. Consider yourself lucky, I’m not threatening you with a stapler,” he snickered as he put down his jacket on her desk.

She bit her lips, trying to read his body language. He was relaxed, even slightly cheerful and definitely not looking as if he was about to fire her. Which really didn’t make much sense. If he’s happy, then he must have sorted everything out with Laurel, so that should mean I’m fired…

“You’re not fired, Felicity.”
“Ugh!” she groaned, pinching her nose. “I’m sorry I didn’t sleep last night and it just makes it so much harder to filter my thoughts.”

He smiled tenderly at her. “We both know I probably couldn’t function without you.”

“I know I probably should deny that but… that would be lying,” she smiled sweetly at him.

“Although my coffee maker would probably function better.”

She shrugged a shoulder, rolling her eyes as she mumbled under her breath, “that’s a matter of perspective.”

“Felicity, I… I wanted to thank you,” he said in a much more serious tone as he sat on her desk.

“Hum… are you sure?” she asked, disbelief making her voice higher.

He huffed out a laugh. “Yes. Thank you for coming to me, despite… everything that could have happened to you. Thank you for trusting me and being my friend.”

“I didn’t know you were going to…”

“No one knew. It was more like a secret agreement. But it’s cancelled now, anyway.”

“Oh,” she murmured, her eyes slightly confused.

“Oh!” she repeated as she understood the implications. “Oh my… I’m so sorry!”

“No.”

“Don’t be. It was a mistake. Laurel and I broke things off for good, this time. We’re just keeping it quiet for now, though. I don’t know when we are going to let people know there will be no wedding so I’d appreciate it if…”

“Of course! I’ll keep your secret!” she pretended to zip her mouth and throw the key. “But before I never ever mention it again… can I ask you something?” she grimaced, twisting her hands.

“Sure.”

“Is it… it’s not because of me, is it?” she asked quietly, staring into his eyes as if she wanted to make sure he wouldn’t lie to her.

“No. It’s not. I promise you. There were many things that weren’t working between Laurel and me, as you’re aware of. I don’t even blame her for spying on me, to be honest. God knows I never gave her any reason to trust me. You shouldn’t commit yourself to someone you don’t trust… or don’t respect, in my case. You just gave me the opportunity to realize that.”

“So… are you saying I helped you make the right decision? Again?” she asked cheekily, proudly holding her head high.

“Yup. You should have put that in your resume, you know. MIT, class of 09 and ‘very good at inspiring wise life decisions’,” he joked, doing the little air quote gesture.

“Does that mean I can expect a raise?”

“Don’t push your luck,” he winked at her, laughing slightly at the fake pout she gave him.

He coughed lightly, his tone growing more serious. “But really. Thank you. My head hasn’t been in the game ever since last week… I thought that honoring one of my father’s wish would make me feel
“You shouldn’t blame yourself, Oliver. You standing up to your father probably made him proud. Of course, the conversation could have been better but at least he saw his son becoming a man; a strong, confident man. I’m sure fulfilling that wish is much more important than anything else.”

He gazed at her in wonder, as if he was suddenly realizing something. What, she didn't know, but his eyes shone up at once.

“Well. I don’t know about you but all those emotions wrecked me. I think that calls for Big Belly Burger for lunch?” she eventually rubbed her hands, trying to lighten up the mood.

“Well. I did tell you I didn’t sleep last night.”

“Fine. Let Dig know.” He shook his head as he stood up, adding, “any messages?”

“Not really. I added an appointment for you tomorrow afternoon, if that’s alright with you?”

“Sure. With who?”

“Mister Palmer. Of Palmer Tech. He was there yesterday and we talked a lot about the new wind turbines. Turns out his company has been working on a similar project and maybe a cooperation could be a good idea?”

Oliver frowned as he remembered having seen Felicity talking with someone vaguely familiar. “Palmer, Palmer,… tall guy, dark hair?”

“Yup. That’s the one!” she beamed. “So since your schedule was clear and he’s not in Starling City for more than a few days, I thought…”

He cut her off. “No, you’re right. That’s fine. It could be interesting.”

***

“So… you just broke the record of shortest engagement ever?” Dig snorted, biting into his burger. They had, for once, decided to go to Big Belly Burger instead of having take-out.

“Yep,” Oliver nodded, chewing on a fry. “You don’t seem so surprised?”

“No, I’m not. I was more surprised by the engagement announcement, to be honest.”

Oliver opened his burger, taking out the pickles and putting them on Felicity’s plate. She grinned broadly at him, while stealing a handful of his fries. He rolled his eyes, knowing there was no point in telling her she should order her own.

“I just wish I had stopped things before. I got caught up.”
Dig put his burger down, wiping his mouth with a napkin. “Man… I’m not blaming you. You shouldn’t be expected to make rational decisions about your private life right now. You’re dealing with too much stuff as it is.”

“Speaking of which…” Felicity chimed in, chewing on the straw of her milkshake. “I’ve been thinking a lot. Like a lot. I didn’t sleep last night so my brain went all cray cray.”

“To the point, Felicity,” Oliver smiled as he took a sip of his drink.

“Yes. Right. Sorry. So I was thinking… if Isabel wanted to be CEO, why would she plan a hostile takeover? It doesn’t make sense. At all.”

Oliver frowned. “You’re right… it doesn’t.”

“Do you think we might have looked at it the wrong way?” Dig asked.

“Maybe? What if she just wanted some leverage to force your dad to name her VP? Having a lot of backers on your side can be pretty convincing?”

“And when it didn’t work, she tried to get knocked up?” Oliver asked, playing with a fry.

“Who knows? I’ve seen people do crazier things.”

“But if her main goal was to be CEO…” Dig trailed off, glancing at Oliver.

“You don’t think… ?” Oliver threw his fry back in the basket as Felicity gasped, her hand covering her mouth.

Dig held out his hands. “No idea, man. Just trying to see things from another perspective. Things have been weird since this whole trip to Russia. The gas explosion, her being named VP, the whole business trip and then the helicopter accident. It’s just a lot of things in a very short period of time and she is linked to all of them somehow.”

“I can’t see her do that…” Oliver murmured. “I mean, I don’t trust her at all but I can’t see her as psychopath.”

“We still don’t know what caused the helicopter to crash, anyway. So let’s not get ahead of ourselves until we do, alright?” Dig placated him. “As for the gas explosion, you know the investigation has only been able to prove that it’s arson so far. No evidence pointing to the culprit yet. Not sure we’ll ever find out.”

Oliver turned to Felicity. “You’re awfully quiet.”

She bit her lips, glancing at him. “I’m just very confused about everything. I have all this info and my brain just can’t make sense of it” she groaned “it’s so frustrating.”

Dig smiled fondly at her then turned his attention back to Oliver. “Do you know when the meeting to appoint the next CEO will take place?”

“Yep. There is a meeting in a couple of weeks, they should make their decision around that time. I’m supposed to meet Walter in a few days, as well as some of our trusted board members.”
“Wow. Just wow.” Tommy Merlyn sat back on his chair, looking at his best friend with big, rounded eyes.

“I know,” Oliver winced, loosening his tie.

“I can’t believe I missed all this. When I saw you and Laurel sneaking upstairs, I just assumed you guys were going to celebrate, not…” He waved off his hand. “That almost makes me feel bad about my own night.”

Oliver smirked. “Judging by the hickey on your neck, you probably were pretty busy yourself. I take it the lady of the night wanted to mark her territory?”

Tommy snorted. “Please. Lady? Surely, you mean… ladies?”

“Oh, wow. Really?”

“What can I say… you getting engaged really broke a lot of hearts. I had a very busy night trying to mend some of them.”

Oliver laughed. “I knew I could count on you!”

“You know what is the best thing in all of this?”

“Hum. No?”

“There will probably be another engagement at some point. More ladies to comfort.” Tommy raised his glass. “Thank you.”

“Yeah, I wouldn’t hold my breath. Not planning on getting back in the whole dating thing anytime soon.”

Tommy observed him quietly for a while then got up, walking to the small bar area. Oliver had stopped by this best friend’s place after work, intending on at least breaking the news himself.

Tommy hadn’t been really surprised by the news, judging from his nonplussed face and the fact he had been more shocked by the fact Oliver had stood up to his mother. For some reason that he would never admit out loud, Tommy had always been a bit scared of Moira Queen, saying there was fire beneath the ice and that one stare from her was enough to make him feel like he was eight years-old again.

“You sure you don’t want something to drink?” Tommy asked as he poured himself another martini.

“I guess one drink won’t hurt, right?”
“That’s my boy!” Tommy tilted his head at him, smiling proudly. “The usual?”

“Yep!” Oliver nodded, then caught himself as he saw his friend grabbing the bottle of scotch. “You know what… No. I think I’d rather a martini.”

Tommy’s hand lingered above the bottle of scotch, pausing. He caught himself and, as he poured martini in a glass, asked, “Let’s talk about important things, now.”

“Like?” Oliver took the hand Tommy handed him.

“I don’t know… like who’s the guy your assistant brought as her plus one, maybe?”

Chapter End Notes

Oki doki… so… I hope it was worth it? We really are closing this part of Oliver’s life. Now he is going to face a very celibate era, until he sorts things out with Felicity, of course :p

What did you think? Did it answer all your questions? Are there still things that are unclear to you? Don’t hesitate to ask, I’ll be happy to answer :D

Next chapter is going to be pretty different in tone… hopefully a fun one ;)

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim and tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Chapter Notes

Hi guys! Here is chapter 28. It is mostly Oliver's POV and for those of you who asked for jealous Oliver... you're getting a bit of that.
There is also Tommy and the two of them together might remind you of Dumb and Dumber (right, pidanka?)

Thanks a lot to yellowpretendingtobered, my beta, Pidanka my delta/cheerleader and also nad who specializes in innuendos!

Also thank you for your support, each one of your comment is just incredible for me to read.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Mr. Brightside"

I'm coming out of my cage
And I've been doing just fine
Gotta gotta be down
Because I want it all

It started out with a kiss
How did it end up like this?
   It was only a kiss
   It was only a kiss

Now I’m falling asleep
And she’s calling a cab
While he’s having a smoke
And she’s taking a drag

Now they’re going to bed
And my stomach is sick
And it’s all in my head

But she’s touching his chest now
He takes off her dress now
   Let me go

And I just can’t look its killing me
And taking control

Jealousy, turning saints into the sea
Swimming through sick lullabies
Choking on your alibis
But it’s just the price I pay
Destiny is calling me
Open up my eager eyes
‘Cause I’m Mr Brightside

I’m coming out of my cage
And I’ve been doing just fine
Gotta gotta be down
Because I want it all

It started out with a kiss
How did it end up like this?
   It was only a kiss
   It was only a kiss

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Choking on your alibis

But it’s just the price I pay
Destiny is calling me
Open up my eager eyes
‘Cause I’m Mr Brightside

I never
I never
I never
I never

“So… what were you saying about Miss Felicity’s plus one, again?” Tommy asked with a smirk.
“That he was just one of your consultants who wasn’t going to stay very long anyway?”

Oliver frowned, not bothering to answer. They had decided to grab a drink together in a nice wine club. The place was comfy, the music giving it a nice jazzy vibe. It wasn’t a top-furnished bar, but
perfect to have a good, lazy time.

Which was obviously what Felicity had had in mind as well. They were enjoying their drinks when Tommy had nudged him, pointing his chin towards the bar area.

Felicity was sitting there, enjoying a glass of red wine. She was wearing a black dress and her hair was hanging freely around her face, her glasses gone. Oliver was just about to stand up and invite her when she was joined by her date. That damn kid.

Oliver had tried to focus on Tommy and his complete – and very detailed- tale of last night, not fully able to ignore what he could see from the corner of his eyes. Felicity and Barry had left after a single drink and if seeing the young man putting his hand on the small of her back – naked back as her dress had a nice little cut – had been uncomfortable, he had done his best to blame it on the friendship he had with his assistant. The urge of protectiveness was the only reason why he had wanted to grab Barry’s hand and possibly break it. And his stomach churning was probably because the wine was corked… right?

“And then she told me her mother was there so of course, I invited her in. Thank God the bed was big enough for three. But then her grandma got jealous and who am I to deny a lady? So we made a bit of room for her as well. I just had to veto the dog, though, cause that’s pushing my limits,” Tommy rambled.

“… limits… yeah,” Oliver nodded absent-mindedly, his eyes now staring through the window as the young couple waited for a cab.

“But I was OK with the cat. You know me, I’ve always been a cat person. And you have to admit, cats are much cleaner than dogs. Great lickers, those little ones… right? Ollie?” Tommy nudged him as he took a look at Felicity and Barry as well. He winced as he saw them sharing a small kiss, Felicity having to reach on her tiptoes. He quickly glanced at his friend who looked like he was about to gouge his own eyes out.

Oliver grabbed his glass, finished his drink and put it back on the table with perhaps a little more force than necessary under Tommy’s understanding look.

“I guess we’re getting hammered?”

“Yep.”

Two hours, one bottle of tequila and one club later

“The thing is… I’m sure Gary… Larry… Andy…”

“Barry”

“Yeah Berry! He’s probably a good kid!” Oliver slurred as he licked the last drop of his tequila shot. “I mean he’s awkward and I feel like he’s hiding something. But I don’t know what, Tommy,” he sighed deeply, putting his glass down. “I don’t know what.”
Tommy patiently nodded, notably more sober than his friend. He only had taken a couple of shots, mostly keeping Oliver company who was dealing with the last tough days in the most common way: alcohol. They even had invited a couple of girls with them, one being currently on Oliver’s lap who was mostly ignoring her, too busy rambling about his assistant and her date.

“She deserves so much more. She deserves… The best. Tommy. She deserves the best!” Oliver stared at his best friend, his eyes wide and slightly insane. “She deserves to be woo… wooooped? Woooo…”

“She deserves to be wooed,” Tommy finished for him. ”I know.”

Oliver looked at him suspiciously. “You want to woo her?”

“No… But that’s what you’ve been repeating for the last hour.”

“Ollie… are we going home?” the pretty girl on his lap whined, her patience growing obviously thin.

“I can’t. I have work tomorrow,” Oliver answered, waving his hand and almost slapping the girl in the process. “And my assistant will be pissed if I’m late.”

Oliver leaned towards Tommy, whispering, “she uses her loud voice when she’s pissed at me. She’s scary. Tiny. Buuuut scary.”

“I remember. She can be violent, our little Felicity,” Tommy smiled fondly.

“No. No no no no. She’s not violent. She’s so kind. And funny. And smart.” Oliver held out his index finger, waving it in front of Tommy’s face. “So smart… sooo smart, Tommy.”

Oliver was about to reply when their companions stood up, having understood their night was not going to end the way they hoped for. “Ladies, no, where are you going? I can take care of both of you!”

One of them smiled and handed him a small business card with her name and phone number. “Call me another time?”

“Thanks, dude. I get that you’re not in the mood, but did you really have to…” Tommy trailed off as he saw Oliver tearing off a poster on the wall, carefully placing it on the table.

“What are you doing?!”

“I want to thank her. She’s been… Tommy she’s been awesome. I was an ass with her in the beginning and she stayed with me. She stayed with me the whole time.”

“What the fuck do you want her to do with a poster of…” Tommy tilted his head, trying to get a better view on the poster. “Some random chicks in thongs?!”

“I’m not going to give her that! I’m gonna write her a poem!” Oliver explained slowly as tried to fish for a pen in his shirt, not realizing it didn’t have any pockets.

Tommy paused. “A poem?”

“Yes, a poem. Damn it, where is my pen?”
Tommy rolled his eyes, picked up his jacket and handed him one. “There you go. Why don’t you just send her flowers?”

“Flowers are so easy; No. I want her to know I took the time,” Oliver hummed as he started to scribble down on the piece of paper. “She deserves to be wooed, you know.”

Tommy sighed deeply, pinching his nose. “I know… I know.”

Oliver raised his head, narrowing his eyes. “You want to woo her?”

“No, dude,… I… Oh, fuck this. Give me the tequila,” Tommy answered as he grabbed the bottle. ”The things I do for you…”

***

Felicity,
Your name is so pretty
It rhymes with spaghetti.
You’re so sweet and nice
Like chicken fried rice.

“All that food… it sounds like you wanna eat her,” Tommy slurred, nursing what was left of their second bottle of tequila.

Oliver stopped in his writing, a goofy grin appearing on his face while he gazed dreamily into emptiness. He then shook his head, trying to focus on his poem. “No. She’s my assistant. You can’t eat your assistant. And lemme finish!” He vaguely tried to push Tommy away, only managing to slap him in the face.

You smell like green apples
I want to be your saddle.

Tommy snorted as he cuddled his bottle. “Dude, pretty sure apples does not rhyme with saddle.”

“Yeah, it does!” Oliver answered, unscrewing their third bottle and taking a long sip of it. They had long forgone the shot glasses.

“No! look! Apples has ‘p’ in it and saddle had ‘d’; not to mention you say apples, not apple,” Tommy explained, pointing at the words.

Oliver stared blankly for a few seconds. “Damn.”

He suddenly gasped. “But look, if I turn the paper around, the ‘d’ becomes a p’!”

“You genius,” Tommy looked at him in awe, his mouth hanging open.
Oliver started biting his pen again, already focusing on the next verse. “You’re as graceful as… as something… in a field of clovers.”

“Why clovers?”

“Because it’s green. Heifer! You’re as graceful as a heifer in a field of clovers!”

“Oh, good one! She likes animals!” Tommy approved enthusiastically. “Say something about how intelligent she is!”

“You brains are like… grains. You make… good bread… with your head!” Oliver scribbled down, his tongue pointing out. “We’re pretty good. We need to finish strong, though.”

“We need to talk about her hair. Poems always talk about girl’s hair.”

“Yeah… her hair is so blond… so blond… like,” Oliver mumbled, “like… like very blond. You think she’ll like it?”

“Yeah… girls love poetry!” Tommy raised his bottle, taking a long sip. Seeing one of the waitresses walking by, he called her. “Miss… oh lovely miss with the brown hair!”

She smiled at the pair, having noticed their antics. They gave great tips and were funny, slightly flirty but not pushy.

“Gentlemen. What can I do for you?”

“It’s for my buddy, here.” Tommy put his arm around Oliver’s shoulders. “See, he’s in love with that girl…”

“I… I’m not in love with Felicity,” Oliver snorted, spitting a bit of tequila in the process. He used his sleeve to wipe his mouth, rolling his eyes. “She’s my assistant. I respect her.”

“You can be in love with someone and respect them as well. It’s usually even better”, the young woman laughed.

“But I’m not in love with her. I know a lot about love and it’s not like that between us. She’s… she’s a friend and I really like her and she smells really, really good but she’s my assistant,” Oliver rambled. “I wrote her a poem because… why did I write her a poem, again?”

Tommy looked at him, confused. “I… I don’t know. You wanted to woo her?”

“Yes! I wanted to woo her because I’m not in love with her and I’m not jealous she is dating Bernie,” Oliver grinned triumphantly.

“Barry.”

“Whatever.”
“Aaargh…” Felicity blindly reached for her alarm clock, knocking a few books in the process. She tapped on the on/off button but the annoying sound didn’t stop. Cursing in her pillow, she pushed her messy hair out of her face, trying to open her eyes. Sitting grumpily on her bed, she turned on the lamp on her night stand, groaning at the burst of light. It took her a few seconds to realize the sound wasn’t coming from her alarm clock but from her cellphone. She picked it up, along with her glasses and her heart started beating faster when she saw who was calling her.

“Oliver? Is everything alright?” she asked with a throaty voice as soon as she accepted the call.

“Feli… Felili… Feci… Felicily!” Her boss’s voice reached her foggy brain. There was something weird about it, other than the fact that he never had a problem pronouncing her name.

“… Oliver?” she repeated once more, frowning. “Are you OK?”

She was already getting up, heading to her wardrobe when she heard Tommy’s voice in the background. “It’s Miss Felicity, you dumbass.”

She dropped the pair of jeans she was just about to put on and went back to bed. Whatever the reason Oliver was calling her, she had a strong suspicion it wasn’t life threatening.

Taking a deep calming breath, she listened to the two men bickering on the phone. She could barely understand them, and had a fairly good idea of the reason behind their slurry voice.

*I swear to God if you just drunk dialed me…*

“Come on, tell her!” she heard Tommy say, followed by the sound of papers being ruffled.

“Oliver…” she tried to get his attention.

“I’m gonna tell her but gimme a minute!”

“Oliver!” she barked, efficiently gaining his attention.

“Oh, no, not the loud voice. See, Tommy. It’s scary. She’s a tiny little thing but she…”

“But she would really like to know why the hell you’re calling her at,” she checked her alarm clock, groaning, “3 in the morning!”

“You’re my assistant! I can call you! It’s in that thing we signed on your first day!”

“Contract. It’s called a contract,” Tommy chirped.

“But in the middle of the night without good reason!” she snapped back, considering hanging up on him when a sudden thought filled her with dread. “Oh my God, did you guys have an accident or something?”

“Nooo. Well. I did spill a bit of tequila on my pants,” Oliver giggled – *Oliver Queen is downright giggling. Like a freaking school girl.*
“Do you remember when we drank tequila? In Ivy Town?” Oliver continued, interrupting her thoughts.

“Yes but… what does it have to do with anything?”

Oliver sighed deeply. “You were so pretty with your hair down.”

Felicity stayed silent, taken aback by the unexpected compliment.

“And so nice. You’re always so nice. I don’t deserve you,” Oliver rambled on. “You don’t make coffee but you’re such a good friend, Feli… Fel… Fe… You’re such a good friend, Smoak.”

“O… Kay… Oliver, can you tell me where you are? Do you need me to pick you up?”

“Nah, we’re at Tommy’s.”

"Then what can I do for you?” she forced herself to keep her cool, mentally picturing all the ways she could get revenge on the both of them for waking her up in the middle of the night for no fucking reason.

“Marry him and have his babies!” Tommy screamed in the background then fell into what was probably hysterical drunken laugh but sounded more like a hyena dealing with an asthma attack.

Felicity felt herself blush, secretly hoping that they both would be too drunk to remember anything in the morning.

The sound of a fight could be heard as they both seemed to battle for the phone. Finally Oliver yelled triumphantly, “I wrote a poem for you!”

“… what?” she asked, seriously doubting her hearing.

“He said he wrote a poem for you!” Tommy yelled in the phone, causing her to wince and move her own cellphone as far away from her ear as possible.

“It says Feli… Feli… why is your name so difficult?” Oliver whined.

“Felicity, your name is so pretty… it rhymes with spaghetti” Tommy recited theatrically while she covered her eyes with her hand. Fortunately for her, he seemed to drop the phone to focus on what he was reading and she could barely make out the rest.

“Oliver, I’m gonna hang up, now. You drink a big glass of water and go to bed, now,” she said as calmly as she could.

“But my poem?” he whined, sounding like a scolded little boy. She couldn’t help but smile at the idea of a pouting Oliver Queen.

Forcing herself to keep a stern voice, she cleared her throat. “Believe me, you’ll thank me later.”

“… Your hair is so blond, like a good Belgian beer. I feel like James Bond when you’re shaking your rear!” Tommy finished proudly in the background. “I wrote that line myself, Miss Felicity!”

She honestly didn’t know at that moment whether to feel offended or let the laugh take over.
Fighting off the smile, she told Oliver, “I’m hanging up. Do not call me again, OK? I will see you at
the office.”

“You promise?” Oliver asked hopefully. “I need you. I really need you. Like the desert needs the
rain. Or the cow needs the cowboy. Not that you’re a cow. You’re not. If you were, you’d be the
prettiest of all, though. Like a heifer in a field of…”

“Clovers, yeah… I heard that part,” she grinned. “I promise. Good night, Oliver.”

“’Night.”

The last thing she heard as she hung up was Tommy’s slurring voice, “so… di’ she like it?”

Shaking her head, she let out a small giggle as she climbed back into bed. *Those idiots… Still getting
back at them, though.*

As she was getting ready for work, several hours later, she carefully picked her shoes, making sure
their heels were the loudest she had. Smirking, she also added a couple of clinking bracelets to her
outfit.

Unsurprisingly, Oliver didn’t show up until 9:30, wearing a simple shirt, his hair ruffled and his face
as white as a sheet. She hid her smile as she saw him walking to her desk more slowly than usual.

“Oliver! Good morning!” she greeted him in a high, cheerful voice.

He winced right away, his eyes shutting. “Morning, Felicity,” he groaned as he went straight to his
office and fell on his chair, holding his head between his hands.

His voice was throaty, even deeper than usual. It caused a few butterflies in her stomach, which she
quickly tried to ignore.

“So I might have a thing for grumpy guys in a suit. Big deal.”

Placing a big smile on her face, she quickly grabbed a few files, following him. “I have those files
that you need to sign ASAP.”

She dropped the files on his desk, smirking at the loud bang they made in the empty office.

Groaning, Oliver lowered his head and looked at her. “Could you please step away from the
window? I have a little bit of…”

“A hangover?” she chirped as she leant on his desk, her bracelets clinking loudly on the glass
surface. “tell me about it…”

“You don’t have an aspirin, by any chance?” he murmured, closing his eyes.

“Nope. I can get you a glass of water though?”

“That would be nice, thank you.”

She went to the small kitchenette, humming as she filled a glass of water. She had to pinch her lips
when she saw him still in the same position, moaning about his dying day.
She loudly put the glass on his desk, smiling innocently when he glared at her for the unwelcome noise.

“Don’t forget, you have an appointment with Mister Palmer at 11:30,” she reminded him as she closed the door to his office, deciding she had teased him enough for now.

Luckily for him, Oliver had a long experience with hangovers. After a small nap on his sofa and more water, he was somehow back to himself. At least from what she could see through the glass wall. He signed the papers she had left for him and brought them back to her office. By the time she had taken them to the appropriate services, he was already on the phone and Ray Palmer was waiting by the elevator.

“Mister Palmer!” she greeted him, shaking his hand.

“Miss Smoak. What a pleasure to meet you again. I am a few minutes early, I hope you don’t mind? I thought we could continue our interesting conversation,” he smiled warmly at her. “That is while Mr Queen is busy, I mean.”

She laughed lightly. “To be fair you are early, indeed. Have you thought about my suggestion for the wind turbine? That would really cut the costs. And please, call me Felicity.”

“I have actually! It’s a brilliant idea, I have to say. Mister Queen is very lucky to have you, that’s for sure. He won’t object you suggesting ideas to me, I hope?”

She shook her head, patting his arm reassuringly. “It has nothing to do with our own project, don’t worry. I’d never do that. Mr Queen will probably tell you that our approach is very different. We won’t even be using the same techniques.”

Oliver cleared his throat interrupting them. “Felicity?”

“Oliver! Your 11:30 appointment is here,” she smiled widely at him, not noticing how his eyes travelled down to her hand that was still on Ray’s arm. “Mr Palmer, Mr Queen.”

Oliver nodded, locking his jaw as he shook Ray’s hand. “Mr Palmer.”

“Mr Queen, such a pleasure to meet you! Your assistant and I have had the time to get to know each other at your reception… congratulations, by the way.”

“Congra…?” Oliver asked, confused, as Felicity winced behind Palmer’s back showing her left hand frantically.

“Oh. Right. Thank you, I guess?” he smiled stiffly while the other man looked at him, confused by his lack of enthusiasm.

“But you’re not here to talk about engagement and white dresses, right?” Felicity chimed in, distracting them while she shuffled them to Oliver’s office. “In you go. Would you like some coffee, Mister Palmer?”

Oliver frowned glancing between the two of them. “The coffee maker is broken, Felicity.”

“I thought you said we got a new one?”
“It broke down as well,” Oliver glared at her as she eyed him suspiciously.

“You really don’t have much luck with your coffee makers,” Ray laughed. “Nevermind, Felicity. I’ve had enough coffee this morning.”

“Alright, then. I’ll leave you two to it.” She quickly closed the door behind her, mumbling to herself about grumpy hungover bosses.

She felt like it had only been a couple of minutes when Ray opened the door again. Quickly hiding her surprise, she smiled at him. “So? How did it go?”

“Well… you were right, we are going to use different techniques. Your boss didn’t seem very enthusiastic about a partnership,” Ray chuckled. “Although I’m not sure if it’s because he doesn’t believe in the project or if it’s because I asked if your contract was long-term.”

Felicity shifted her eyes, quickly glancing at Oliver who was still sitting on his chair, a sore expression on his face. “Hum… excuse me?”

“My company is always on the look-out for bright people. Like you. I’d like to offer you a job as technical advisor.”

Her jaw dropped. “What? But… I’m an IT girl, not a technical advisor.”

Ray raised an eyebrow. “Yet, you’re working as an executive assistant right now.”

“Yes, I know. But it’s… temporary.”

“Hence why I’m proposing you another job.” He grinned as he fished a business card from his pocket. “Take a few days to think about it.”

“Well. Isn’t your company based in New York?”

“For now, yes. We are looking to open a new branch in California, though. We are always on the lookout for promising talents, and I’d be a fool not to offer you a position.”

Felicity frowned, looking at the small card between her fingers. “I can’t… it’s not the right time. With everything that’s happening at QC… I can’t leave the ship now.”

Ray smiled softly. “Loyalty is an admirable quality. But don’t let it dull your abilities, Felicity. Call me if you ever change your mind. You would be working in the Sciences Department, developing some of our advanced technology projects.”

She watched him as he made his way to the elevator in a few quick steps, her mouth still slightly agape. What the hell just happened?

“And so, he offered you a job? Just like that?” Barry snapped his fingers.

“Yeah… I know we talked a lot during the reception at the Queen Mansion but it still seems crazy,”
Felicity answered, playing with her fork.

“He probably made some searches. Looked through your records at MIT, stuff like that,” Sara explained, biting in her sandwich.

The three of them were having lunch together and Felicity had told them about Ray Palmer’s unexpected proposal. She was still slightly in shock and had barely touched her food.

“So what are you going to do?” Barry asked, munching on his ciabatta.

“I can’t. I mean, I can’t leave Oliver right now. Not to mention the job is in New York. I don’t want to move again,” she explained, biting her lips. “You think I should say yes?”

“I don’t know. It’s clearly a job that fits you more,” Barry shrugged. “But is it worth moving across the country?”

“I just got here. I love my apartment, I… I don’t want to start over again.”

“Then you got your answer,” Sara winked at her. “Although I admire you for your loyalty to QC. That’s taking it a step too far for me.”

Felicity frowned. “What do you mean?”

“Well, I have just been told my usual schedule has to be rearranged. I had an arrangement where I could work four days instead of five, as long as I did all the hours required in my contract. That way I was able to take long weekends and…” she trailed off as she crossed her arms, suddenly lost in thought.

“And? Why is it so important for you to have long weekends?” Felicity asked. She had been wondering several times where Sara was going, and why she was travelling that much but didn’t want to be intrusive.

“I might have… met someone. Problem is she doesn’t live here, so I visit her a lot.”

“Oh,” Felicity said, surprised, sharing a look with Barry. “I’m sorry, I had no idea.”

Sara waved dismissively. “I don’t really talk about it. It’s a long distance relationship and I wasn’t sure it was going to work out… but it is. Things have been great, actually.”

“Where does she…” Felicity started to ask but was interrupted by her phone ringing. “Argh, sorry. It’s Oliver… Hello?”

“Felicity? There is a package for you here.”

“… what? What kind of package?”

“I think it’s from your mom. Donna Smoak?”

Felicity groaned. “Of course… I didn’t give her my address so she wouldn’t send me anything but she knows I’m your assistant.”

Oliver chuckled. “Looks like I found out where you get your stubbornness from. Anyway, are you
stopping by your office or heading to Walter’s right away?”

“I was planning on heading there right away,” Felicity bit her lips.

“No problem. I’ll take it with me, then.”

“Thank you. It’s not too big, is it?”

“No, no. Like a shoebox.”

“Oh… bath stuff,” Felicity smiled.

“Bath stuff?”

“Yeah. She used to send me parcels with tons of things ‘for a relaxing bath’. For a minute I was afraid she had sent me another of her slutty dresses,” she laughed out loud. “Thank you. I’ll be there in ten minutes.”

She quickly hung up, turning to Sara again. “So… who is she, where does she live, what does she do?”

Sara grinned, blushing slightly. “Well. Her name is Nyssa, she is a consultant in armory. She is specialized in historical weapons and apparently works for different museums. Hence the travel a lot part.”

“Nyssa. What a pretty name,” Barry chimed in. “Where is she from?”

“Originally from the Middle East.”

Caught up in her conversation with Sara, Felicity didn’t realize it was almost time for the meeting with Walter and Moira Queen. She hurriedly left her companions, running to catch an elevator. She was slightly out of breath when she walked into the conference, noticing that at least Mrs Queen had not arrived yet. Oliver was already sitting, and sure enough a small box was on the table in front of him.

Raising his head, he smiled as he saw her walking to him. “Almost late, Miss Smoak.”

“Key word being almost, Mister Queen.” She looked around her, making sure no one was observing them, then quickly stuck her tongue at him.

He chuckled, shaking his head then tapped the little box. “There you go. I’ve been really careful with it. I wouldn’t want you to miss out on relaxing baths.”

She smiled at him. “Why, thank you. God knows I need them. Being your assistant can really wear me out.”

He was just about to reply when Walter and Moira walked into the room, along with two board members: Alfred, the head of the board and a woman who was about the same age as Moira.
“So. I have made sure everyone knows about what you have found out, Oliver,” Moira explained as she took a seat.

“Yes. I have to say it didn’t surprise us as much as it should have,” Walter nodded. “So far we are sure that we have about 45% of the voices on our side. As you know, your family has the biggest part of the shares, so that makes you the main shareholders. That has a lot of weight when it comes to making a decision like this. But we shouldn’t underestimate Isabel’s influence.”

“That’s why we’ve decided to play the card of the one who knows the company the best. Walter knows it like the back of his hand. We are also going to prove that his decisions as VP were more than healthy for the company – financially speaking.” Alfred stood up, adding, “we prepared a small presentation, going back five years ago.”

He took the small remote used to lower the white screen, pressing the button. The white screen lowered but Felicity also heard a small buzzing sound near her. Frowning, she looked for the source of the noise, thinking it might be her cellphone – or Oliver’s. But none were at proximity.

Oliver glanced at her, having picked up the sound as well.

Felicity placed her hand on the table and narrowed her eyes when she felt there were some vibrations shaking the sleek glass surface.

She narrowed her eyes, searching for the source. Realization dawned on her as she looked at the parcel on the table, horrified.

Oliver must have come to the same conclusion as she eye-sided him glancing at the innocent-looking box as well.

“Oh no… she didn’t…” Felicity murmured in shock. “Please tell me she didn’t dare…”

“Where is that sound coming from?” Moira asked suddenly, interrupting Alfred who was still talking.

Felicity felt her face growing hot as everyone’s head turned their way. She opened her mouth, trying to come up with something when she heard Oliver snickering at her side. She turned her head glancing at him.

“Relaxing bath?” he mouthed at her, winking. Clearing his throat, he answered his mother. “It’s nothing, mom. Felicity’s mother sent her some… toys and apparently the remote activated them as well.”

“Toys? I didn’t know you had kids, Miss Smoak,” Moira smiled kindly at her.

“Oh no. I don’t have kids. It’s not for kids. It’s not even a toy. It’s more like…” she babbled, desperately trying to come up with something.

“It’s for her kitten,” Oliver chimed in, ignoring the glare she threw at him. “Felicity loves to play with her kitten after a long day at work. Apparently, it’s very… relaxing.”

Walter looked at her expectantly. “Well, let’s just open the box and turn it off, dear.”

Felicity froze as she saw Moira standing up and reaching for the box. Oh no. Oh no oh no oh no oh
She jumped from her seat, launching at the package. Protectively holding the still vibrating box against her chest, she glared at Oliver who was doing his best to hide his smile behind his hand. She shoved the box in her bag, throwing her jacket over it and putting it all on the floor.

Moira looked at her, surprised. “Are you sure you wouldn’t rather turn it off? It is so frustrating when you run out of batteries.”

Oliver lost the battle as laughter started to shake his shoulders. Felicity kicked him as hard as she could under the table.

His yelp was mostly covered by Felicity’s reply. “No. Don’t worry. She got the wrong object, I’d rather she sends the package back right away, so she can get a refund.”

Oliver crouched, rubbing his shin, grumbling.

“That hurt,” he whispered furiously.

“Good,” she gritted back between her teeth.

***

Felicity had always taken pride in the fact that whatever her job was, she always did it conscientiously. She was hard-working, loyal.
Yet, as everyone was leaving the conference room, she was fully aware that she barely knew what they had talked about.

She had tried to focus on what Alfred was explaining, but Oliver had suddenly passed her a small note and she had been unable to concentrate on anything.

So, that night, on your birthday… the long relaxing bath…?

She had glared at him but unfortunately had been unable to get her mind out of the gutter for the rest of the meeting. Trust my mother to send me a freaking vibrator at work. Did she even think someone might have opened the box for safety? Oh my… please tell me the security doesn’t scan parcels. I’ll never be able to face Dig if they do. Maybe I should accept Ray’s offer and move to New York.

You know, you can tell me. I just hope I didn’t ruin your night.

Quickly glancing at him, she noticed his smirk as he was pretending to listen to the Board Members, nodding his head every now and then. Their eyes briefly met and she felt her breath caught in her throat when she saw the laughter in his. They were twinkling with mischief and teasing, his finger tapping his lips as if to keep the smile at bay. Being this close, she couldn’t ignore how the crisp white of his shirt brought out his eyes. So perfectly blue, with a light in them she had never seen before.

As if I needed to start dreaming about his eyes as well. She shook her head, trying to clear her thoughts and keep them from wandering to her boss. Suddenly, she was hyper aware of everything.
How his arm kept on brushing against hers. How he smelt like softener, soap and that little something that was uniquely him. How his voice, so deep and calm and reassuring could make her heart beat faster.

It was with relief that she gathered her belongings, the damn parcel having stopped vibrating. She took it out in order to put her notebook and pens back in her bag. Oliver picked it up right away, wearing a wolfish grin as he whispered, “Let me help you with that. Wouldn’t want you to forget it in Walter’s office.”

As they were waiting by the elevator, having parted ways with the others, she let out a resigned sigh.

“OK. Get on with it. Whatever you’re thinking… let it all out.”

Oliver grinned widely, shaking his head. “No idea what you’re talking about. I am pleased to know you have a healthy life.”

Groaning, she tilted her head back, looking at the ceiling. “I swear to God, she is so gonna hear about it.”

“Hey, I think it’s sweet that your mother cares so much about your well-being!” Oliver laughed, still holding the box despite her protests. “Although, I have to say… maybe you should tell her you have a boyfriend?”

Felicity sighed. “And have her planning my wedding? No, thank you.”

Oliver grimaced at her words. “I didn’t know it was that serious between you and Barry.”

“What do you mean?” she frowned as they stepped inside the elevator.

“Well. He’s a good guy. I mean he seems like one but… you’re young and he doesn’t even live in Starling so…”

“Long distance relationships can work, you know,” she explained calmly. “Not to mention, for now, he lives in Starling. Who knows if I won’t eventually find a job closer to him?”

“You wouldn’t choose a job just because of a boyfriend, I hope?” he asked, raising his eyebrows.

She eyed him suspiciously as they stepped out of the elevator, then stopped abruptly in the hallway leading to her office.

“Oh my God! You’re one of those friends!” she exclaimed, adjusting her handbag on her shoulder.

“What?” he asked, confused. “What kind of friend?”

“You know, the kind of friends who really don’t mind about your love life until they are single. Then it’s suddenly their business because God forbid you’d find someone good while they are alone themselves!”

Oliver gasped. “That’s… totally not true! I care about you and I don’t want you to get hurt or to do something you might regret later!”

“Yet you never mentioned any of this until you broke up with your girlfriend… fiancée… whatever
she was,” Felicity snorted, hurrying to her desk and putting her bag down.

“I’m trying to be a good friend! Good friends give advice, everyone knows that!”

“Yeah, right!” she laughed dryly, her hands on her hips as he shifted on his feet, fiddling with the box in his hands.

“What is wrong with you?” Oliver asked defensively.

“What is wrong… what is wrong with me?” she shouted in disbelief. “What is wrong is that you, Mister-I-just-broke-off-my-engagement, are trying to give me advice about my love life while we both know you don’t give a damn about that!”

“Of course I care! I want you to be happy!” Oliver raised his voice as well, fuming.

Felicity snorted, raising her arms. “You just don’t want lose your assistant, we both know that!”

Oliver paused, taken aback. “That is… You think I only…”

“Yes. You never had anything to say about my private life until Ray Palmer offered me a job in New York!”

He took a step back as surprise shown on his face. “He… he offered you a job? In New York? But that’s… that's on the other side of the country!”

“Like you didn’t know, he told me he mentioned it to you!”

“He asked me about your contract, I had no idea that he would…” Oliver paled. “And what did you tell him?”

She glared at him, her hands on her hips. “He gave me a couple of days to think about it.”

“And when exactly were you going to mention it to, oh I don’t know… your boss?!”

Felicity narrowed her eyes at him. “I wasn't going to bring this up because I had no intention to say yes, Oliver. But you should remember that my contract allows me to leave whenever I want to. This,” she circled the room with her arms, ”is only temporary.”

“The implied condition was that it would be in case you applied for another job inside this company!” he shouted, his hands picking nervously at the box he was still holding.

“If a condition is implied then it’s not written, so sue me!” She walked to him, her finger poking his chest furiously, finally noticing the parcel still in his arms.

“And stop playing with my dildo!” She snatched the box from his hand, fuming as she picked up her bag once more. “You know what. It’s 4 PM. I’m taking the rest of the day.”

She stormed out of her office, grumbling about childish behaviors.

“If it vibrates, it’s a vibrator, not a dildo!” he yelled after her as she threw him one last dirty look across her shoulder “Everyone knows that too!”
“Such a pity you don’t have the same love for semantics when you’re writing poetry! FYI apples does **not** rhyme with saddle!” she yelled back just as the elevator doors were closing on her.

Oliver stood there, in her office, confused. *What the fuck just happened?*

They had been teasing one minute then screaming at each other the next and he honestly couldn’t even remember about what.

*And what the hell was she talking about, apples doesn't rhyme with… Oh Fuck.*

He groaned, falling more than sitting on the corner of her desk, his hand covering his eyes. *So last night wasn’t a dream, I guess.*

Chapter End Notes

Sooo... no cliffhanger. And a much lighter chapter.
Did you like it? What did you think? My jealous Oliver is a bit different from the one on the show, but I couldn't resist having a bit of fun with him and Tommy ;)

Let me know what you thought of it!

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi ;)
Hi guys!
I was soooo pleased by your feedback for last chapter! I had a blast writing it, and I'm so happy to know it made you laugh as well ;)
So we saw a bit more of what was going on inside Oliver's head regarding Felicity and now I suggest we do the same for our IT girl ;)

Thanks a lot to all of you who left a comment or reached through Twitter/Tumblr. Special thank you to my Beta, yellowpretendingtobered, my Delta, Pidanka and once again to Nadia who is my little helper when it comes to innuendos ;)

Since a couple of you asked, I'm updating this tonight instead of tomorrow. Hope you'll like it ;)

Oh and remember; we left those two fighting about God knows what ;)

Song: Ooh la la - Goldfrapp

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Ooh La La"

Dial up my number now
Weaving it through the wire
Switch me on, turn me up
Don't want it baudelaire
    Just glitter lust
Switch me on, turn me up
    I want to touch you
You're just made for love

I need la la la la la la
I need ooh la la la la
I need la la la la la la
I need ooh la la la la

Coils up and round me
Teasing your poetry
Switch me on, turn me up
Oh child of Venus
You're just made for love

I need la la la la la la
I need ooh la la la la
I need la la la la la la
Felicity was still in a bad mood when she stepped into her apartment, two hours later. She had thought that taking a small stroll through the park near QC would calm her down a bit. It had, but she still felt restless and fidgety, the tension lingering in her body. Throwing her purse and the damn parcel on her table, she kicked off her shoes and took off her jacket. Walking to the kitchen area, she grabbed a glass and a bottle of red wine.

Sitting down on the couch, she propped up her feet on the coffee table as she savored her Bordeaux. Closing her eyes, she rested her head on the back of the sofa, trying to clear her thoughts. To be fair, she honestly didn’t really know what had happened at the office with Oliver. One minute they were just innocently bickering and the other she felt like throwing something out of the window. Or grab him by the tie and…

She sat up suddenly, her eyes popping open at the mental picture her brain had just conjured. Where did that come from?!

With a shaky hand, she put her glass back on the coffee table, her fingers rubbing her forehead. She and Barry had been on a few dates and a few kisses had been exchanged. Everything was going on just fine, they got along extremely well. It was easy, smooth, friendly. So what was her brain trying to do? Confuse her? Was it because of the –heated- argument she had had with Oliver? She couldn’t deny the man was handsome, attractive. Sex on legs, even. The fact that she hadn’t had sex in over a
year probably didn’t help. But why did she feel like that with Oliver and not with Barry? Barry who
could probably compete for boyfriend of the year title. Well if they had taken that step yet. They
were still in the casual dating, having avoided any serious conversation about their official Facebook
status.

Was her mother right? … Could too much sexual frustration really be messing with her?

Biting her lips, she couldn’t help her eyes traveling over her dining table, where the parcel was still
waiting.

*No. Felicity, don’t even think about it.*

She was far from a prude and felt no shame whatsoever in getting to know her own body, but using
toys… now that was something she had never done.

Groaning, she got up from her seat and gulped down the rest of her glass, walking purposefully to
the offending package. She snatched a pair of scissors from her secretary and before her nerves got
the better of her, quickly opened the box. Taking a deep breath, she poured the content on her table,
her eyes growing wide at the vision in front of her.

*Holy mother of…*

**One hour later**

“That can’t be… that’s way too big to fit in there,” Felicity mumbled to herself, “and what am I even
supposed to do with that… whatever that thing is?”

A knock on the door startled her, making her drop her brand new Bombex Temptation Collection 3
– thank you Google. Groaning, she let her head fall in frustration. Guessing it was probably Mrs
Leyers, the very friendly old lady that was also her direct neighbor, Felicity knew it would be
pointless to ignore her. *She and her bloody cat…*

She was almost at the door when she realized she was only wearing an oversized t-shirt. As a second
knock was heard, she screamed, “I’m coming!” while grabbing a pair of sweat pans. Putting them on
while jumping-walking to the door, she let out a dry laugh at the irony of the situation. *I’m coming…
yeah… right…*

Taking a deep breath, she opened the door but stopped dead in her tracks when she realized that the
person in front of her clearly wasn’t Mrs Leyers.

“Oh, Oliver?” she frowned. “What are you doing here?”

He winced, shifting on his feet. “Hum… I felt like I owed you an apology? Or at the very least an
explanation?”

Crossing her arms on her chest, she narrowed her eyes. “And that couldn’t wait until tomorrow
because…?”
“Because I feel like a fool and I’d rather get over with the embarrassment,” he finished her sentence in one go, his eyes averting hers as he visibly gulped.

She pinched her lips to prevent a smile as she witnessed his ears turning slightly pink. She had had the time to work on her own anger and felt like she, too, owed him an apology for snapping at him the way she had.

Stepping aside, she tilted her head. “Well, come on in.”

Felicity let him in then walked to her kitchen. “Chamomile, as usual?”

As she was grabbing two mugs from a cupboard, she noticed he hadn’t answered her. “Oliver? Chamomile?” she repeated, a bit louder.

Hearing him clearing his throat but still not answering, she leaned over the small counter. “Are you OK?”

That seemed to finally get his attention as he quickly turned towards her. “Yes. It’s mine. I mean it’s fine,” he stuttered. “I just… I’m sorry I should have called or… something. I didn’t mean to interrupt anything.”

She waved her hand dismissively. “Nah, don’t worry. Nothing that can’t wait. Besides I’ve had the time to cool down a bit, so I’m good now.”

Smiling reassuringly, she rummaged through another cupboard. “Do you want some shortbreads?”

“No, thanks. I’m not really hungry.” He shifted awkwardly on his feet, hands in his pockets. She handed him his cup of tea and grabbed the package of cookies as she joined him in the living room.

“Oh. Well I’m absolutely starving so I hope you don’t mind,” she laughed slightly, biting in the buttery delicacy.

Oliver choked on the sip he took, quickly putting the cup down. Coughing violently, his eyes watering he murmured something that sounded vaguely like “Yeah, not really surprised, there…”

Frowning at him while patting his back, she asked again. “Are you sure you’re alright?”

“Mmhmm,” he answered non-committedly, looking at his shoes.

“If you say so…” she said slowly, still unsure of his behavior. “Let’s have a…” she stopped herself mid-sentence as she saw what had probably caused Oliver’s discomfort. The multiple vibrators and dildos her mother had sent her were all neatly organized on her table – by size because she might have that ridiculous habit.

Opening and closing her mouth like a fish out of the water, she felt her face burning, rivaling with Oliver’s now crimson face. “That’s… that is so… so not what you… what you think it is.”

Oliver’s eyes switched from her face to the table, doubt written on his face.

“No, really. It just relaxes me.” She closed her eyes when she saw him wince. “Not like this!”
Taking a deep breath, she forced herself to look at him. “I dismantle things. Then build them back again. It calms me.”

Walking to the table, she picked the biggest vibrator, the one she had been working on when he had knocked on her door. “That’s the one that switched on during the meeting. There must be a short-circuit but God help me I can’t find what’s wrong. It’s so much more complex than I thought,” she explained, talking with her hands and waving the sex toy around.

“Can we please not mention God when we’re having this particular conversation?” Oliver deadpanned. “I’m pretty sure he’d very much rather be left out of it.”

She glared at him. “It’s not like I was using it on myself. I opened it, played a bit with the wires, tried to fix it. I swear, Oliver, it’s like a puzzle but much more simple, you just have to sort the wires. It’s very… stress-relieving.”

“Pretty sure that’s not what your mother had in mind when she sent them to you,” he smirked.

She smiled cheekily as she finally put the sex toy down again. “It worked anyway.”

He grinned back at her, obviously reassured that their relationship seemed to be back to normal.

Felicity took a sip of her tea, sitting on a chair while inviting him to do the same. She folded a leg on the chair as she took another cookie.

“Listen, Oliver…”

“Felicity, I…”

They both started at the same time. Oliver shook his head, smiling softly at her. “Ladies first.”

Breathing deeply, she fiddled with her mug. “I’m sorry I snapped at you. I wasn’t being fair. I think I might have over-reacted. A bit. A tiny teeny little bit,” she added, bringing her thumb and index finger close.

He chuckled. “No. I shouldn’t have tried to meddle with your personal life. And… despite how much I try not to think about it, you were right… our work situation was only meant to be temporary. And God knows you deserve to find the job of your dreams.”

She smiled, touched by his words. “thank you. While we’re at it, I meant it. What I said about not considering Ray’s offer. I don’t intend on leaving you when QC is in such an unstable position.”

Pausing, she drank a sip. “Also, I have to admit. Being your assistant is not as awful as I thought it would be.”

“Is it, now?” Oliver smiled widely at her “Maybe I’ve been too easy on you, then.”

Felicity grinned “Perhaps. As you know, I love a challenge.”

“That I do know, Miss Smoak” he gazed at her, his hand still on his mug “although I have to admit I would have never expected to walk on you autopsying half a dozen innocent dildos.”

“Vibrators. If it vibrate, it’s a vibrator. Not a dildo. Semantics, Mister Queen…” she teasingly
corrected him, trying not to laugh when she saw his cheeks burning up again.

“I’m so sorry about last night. I… I honestly thought I had dreamed that part or I would have apologized right away” he rubbed his forehead, grimacing with embarrassment.

“Well… the whole phone call at 3 am is a big no no for me” she unfolded her legs, sitting straight on her chair “but the poem wasn’t that bad…”

Oliver snorted “please. I have the original version on a poster of… it doesn’t matter. Point is, I know it was dreadful.”

“I give you B. For the effort” she giggled “and the imagination. I was very pleased to know I am as gracious as a cow.”

“A heifer. Not a cow. Don’t flatter yourself” he mockingly glared at her.

“Can you blame me though? Two of the most eligible bachelors of the country all but serenaded me in the middle of the night. My ego got a big boost out of it” she straightened her shoulders, pointing her chin upwards.

He laughed, relaxing back on his chair as his eyes wandered on her table “so we can pretend last night never happened?”

“Oh, I’m not sure about that. You have excuses. I mean you’ve had a lot going on. Tommy, on the other hand… I might have to get back at him for that” she sighed “It’s a matter of honor, after all. Wouldn’t want him to think he can get away with waking me up at 3 in the morning.”

“If you need any help with that, don’t hesitate.”

“I thought he was your friend?” she exclaimed, her eyes twinkling.

“Exactly. His role was to make sure I wouldn’t make an ass of myself. He miserably failed,” Oliver explained sternly.

“Well… to be fair, it’s a pretty hard quest to begin with.”

As she noticed him looking at the vibrator she had been working on, for at least the second time since she had put it down, she cleared her throat. “OK, are you going to tell me what’s up with my Bombex Temptation Collection 3?”

“That’s its name?” Oliver snorted.

“Yes, it is. I even googled it to try to find some kind of plan of the wirings.” She paused, thinking out loud. “weirdly enough, I couldn’t find any. What do people do when they malfunction? I’d figure you wouldn’t bring it back to the store, so it would make sense to have a list like a guidelines or a checklist or something…”

Oliver raised his eyebrows.

“Hey, don’t judge. You’re the one who’s been staring at it.” she defended herself. “So come on… what’s wrong? I would have never thought Oliver Queen would be squeamish about anything related to sexuality.”
He glared at her, pinching his lips. “It just… it’s distracting, OK? And you have to admit that the size of that thing makes it hard to look away!”

She perked an eyebrow. “I’m pretty sure that’s a sentence you never thought you’d say, right?”

“Oh, I can’t deny I usually hear it, not say it,” he smirked, “but that line was never about something purple, or made of plastic or…” he trailed off, his attention caught by another object. “Is that a duck?!”

“Mmh?” she glanced at the small pink rubber duck that was mostly hidden by the big pot of flowers on her table. “Yep. They make some for adults, now.”

“Really? What’s the point?” he asked, genuinely intrigued.

Smirking, she reached across the table, picking up the innocent-looking toy. She flicked the little button and watched as it roared to life.

“It goes in the bath,” she winked as she handed him the small duck. “Does Mister Queen want to feel the difference from a regular rubber duck?”

Oliver shook his head vehemently, hiding his hands on his lap. “Just please… can you cover them or something?”

Felicity fist pumped in victory as she covered the offending objects with a big scarf. “You really are squeamish!”

Her little fist pump made him laugh as he tried to defend himself. “I’m not! But you’re… you’re just there and… I’m here and… we’re sitting in your living room, at a table covered in sex toys and screwdrivers and…”

She giggled, trying to muffle the sound behind her hand. “If it’s the screwdriver that is turning you off, I can put it in my tool box.”

Oliver tilted his head, his grin so wide it hurt.

She shook her head, her eyes wide with horror. “Oh God. No. Tell me that didn’t sound like I think it did.”

“Well, if you’re asking…”

“No. I wasn’t asking!” She stood up, picking up their mugs as she mumbled to herself, “I need more chamomile.”

Still smiling, Oliver followed her to the small kitchen area where she was already boiling water. “I don’t know if you remember but Tommy mentioned, a while ago, that we could go to Las Vegas. I think I’d like to meet your mom. She seems… interesting.”

Felicity rolled her eyes. “Oh, believe me. Interesting doesn’t even begin to cover it. And no way.”

“You still have to celebrate your birthday, though…” he trailed off innocently.
She turned her head to glare at him, ready to threaten to put him on the non-fly list when she suddenly yelped.

“Damn it!” she screamed, holding her hand.

“You OK?” asked Oliver, alarmed. “Did you burn yourself?”

Wincing, Felicity turned off the stove, still clutching her hand to her chest. “Yes. Frack. I touched the stove.”

Oliver gently nudged her to the sink, softly grabbing her hand as he put it under the cold water. “Stay put.”

He quickly went to the living room, coming back with a chair. “Come on, sit. You need to keep it under water for at least a few minutes. Do you have any balm or aloe vera?”


He was barely gone a minute when he came back with an ointment and a bandage. Leaning over her, he tried to get a look at her hand. “Hard to see but it looks pretty big. Maybe we should go to the hospital.”

“Oliver, don’t be ridiculous. It’s a stupid burn. It hurts like a bitch, but it will be gone in a few days.”

“Are you sure?” he asked, worried.

She huffed a laugh. “Yes. It’s not that I don’t want to test that wonderful healthcare QC offers to its employees, believe me. As long as it hurts, it means there is no severe damage.”

He went to grab another chair and sat down next to her, shutting the tap. He carefully held her hand, patting it dry with a couple of tissues. She quietly observed him while he was absorbed by his task, his eyebrows crinkling lightly. She felt her fingers twitching with the desire to touch his cheeks, to see if his scruff was as rough as it looked… Would it scratch her fingertips? Her eyes were attracted to his mouth as he absently licked his lips before he raised her hand to his face, softly blowing on the still tender skin. How come she had never noticed how soft his lips looked, offering such a deep contrast with his strong jaw?

He put her hand on his own thigh for a few seconds while he opened the tube of balm. It’s only when she saw his lips moving for the second time that she realized he had been talking to her.

“Felicity? Felicity? Does it hurt?”

She shook her head, clearing her thoughts. “Hum. No. It’s OK.”

She forced her eyes to focus on more innocent parts of him. *Hands. Hands are good.*

He delicately picked up her hand, lightly massaging the balm into her inflamed skin. How could hands so big and strong be so tender and delicate when they were touching her? Was his touch always this hesitant, almost… venerating?

The buzzing sound coming from her bell startled the both of them.
“Were you waiting for someone?” Oliver asked, drying his hands on a towel.

“… No… I don’t think so,” she answered as she went to pick up the small interphone. “Hello? Oh… Hi. Sure.”

Biting her lips, she turned back to Oliver. “I completely forgot. Barry was supposed to come by.”

His face fell as he stood up, quickly washing his hands. “It’s my fault. I dropped by unannounced.”

Felicity was about to reply when a soft knock on her door interrupted her. Smiling apologetically at Oliver, she opened it, letting Barry in as he leaned down to gently peck her on the lips.

Oliver cringed, diverting his eyes. “I’ll just… I’ll leave you two to… I’ll just go.”

“Oh, Oliver! Hi!” Barry grinned at him.

“You don’t have to, we were just going to…”

Oliver interrupted her. “No, really. I just wanted us to clear the air and we did. It’s good. I’ll see you at the office!”

In his haste to get his jacket from the living room, he almost tripped on a chair. “Don’t forget to put the bandage on your hand.”

Felicity didn’t even have time to reply, he was already walking past them, almost running down the hallway.

She blinked several times, wondering what the hell had shaken him until she finally closed the door behind him.

“You’re hurt?” Barry asked in concern as he stepped out of his shoes.

“Stupid burn,” she mumbled as she showed her left palm. “I just need to cover it. Oliver already took care of it.”

He winced. “Ouch. Let me help you.”

She followed him back to the sink where Oliver had left the medical supplies. Barry carefully washed his hands then picked up the bandage.

Felicity obediently gave him her hand which he proceeded to wrap. She couldn’t help a hiss when his nail grazed the tender skin.

“Sorry!” Barry looked at her, wide-eyed. “So sorry!”

“No, it’s OK. Caught me off guard more than anything,” she reassured him stiffly while she observed him getting back to his task. His hands were a bit smaller than Oliver’s, definitely frailer. Clumsier as well, which suited his personality. At least I’m not fantasizing about them…

“You’re alright? Your face is quite red,” Barry asked as he finished wrapping her hand.

“Hum. Yeah. Yeah, fine. Peachy! It’s probably all that chamomile I’ve had. I read somewhere it can
cause vasodilatation,” she rambled, praying Barry wasn’t a connoisseur.

He stared at her for a few seconds. “I… I didn’t know that.”

“Me neither! New studies, from England, I think…” she trailed off.

Barry was about to reply when his phone rang. *Saved by the bell.*

Smiling apologetically at her, he fished it out of his pocket, a soft expression appearing on his face as he saw the caller’s identity. “I’m sorry, I should probably get this.”

“Go ahead!” Felicity reassured him, relieved by the distraction. She barely paid attention to him and his conversation as he sat down on the couch in the living room, her mind buzzing with thoughts and emotions. Why does proximity with Oliver makes her heart beat faster, while the same situation with Barry just feels borderline awkward? She was physically more used to Barry touching her, but she had never felt her fingers tingling with the need to touch him. She bit nervously on her nail, absentmindedly looking at Barry who was wrapping up his call.

“Sorry. It was Iris,” he quickly explained.

Felicity pinched her lips as she joined him on the sofa. “You two are really close, aren’t you? I mean she’s probably the only person you never decline a call from.”

Barry smiled as a small blush started to appear on his face. “We’re just… we’re very good friends and she’s… she’s been a part of my life ever since I can… hum.”

Felicity’s gentle smile stopped him as she put a reassuring hand on his arm. “I’m not judging or being jealous or anything. But the smile you get when she calls you… that makes me think she might be a bit more than a good friend.”

Barry opened his mouth, then closed it again as if struggling with forming the right words. Taking a deep breath, he finally said, “I’m sorry. I really like you, Felicity. You’re amazing. Perfect. Absolutely perfect, you’re everything I want…”

She cut him off. “But the spark isn’t there, right?”

He was about to apologize again when he saw the relief in her eyes.

“No. I take it it’s not there for you either?” he winced as he settled back more comfortably.

Felicity giggled. “No. I wish it was, because we are so perfect for each other… on paper. Everything is so simple and easy but I feel like maybe we’re just supposed to…”

“To be friends,” he finished for her, grinning.

“Yep,” she said, accentuating the p. “So… tell me about that someone who is probably more than a good friend.”

“Alright. But afterwards, it’s your turn,” Barry smiled teasingly at her.

“I don’t… there’s no one,” she shook her head vehemently.
He observed her quietly, his eyes soft and understanding. “I think there is. It takes one to know one, after all.”

The next three weeks were mostly quiet for Felicity and Oliver. They both fell back into their comfortable routine, secretly glad Walter and Alfred were mostly taking charge of the whole Isabel issue. That finally allowed Oliver to focus 100% on his job, and what a difference did it make. He was hell bent on supporting Walter the best he could, charming potential investors and long-term backers with an ease that was troubling to her. When she had arrived at work a few days after their small fight, she had been surprised to see one of the janitors installing a brand new coffee maker directly in Oliver’s office. She had raised her eyebrows at her boss who had just shrugged and mumbled that at least now he wouldn’t have to come up with ridiculous excuses to his guests as to why he couldn’t ask her.

She had pinched her lips, having witnessed his lame attempts several times. Her favorite so far was when he had told Walter that her mother had forgotten her in a Starbucks when she was just a kid and the resulting trauma was still paralyzing her whenever she had to come close to a coffee maker.

Despite having teased him mercilessly about it, she had been secretly touched that he was ready to go to such lengths for the well-being of their relationship – his words, not hers.

If Oliver’s work had been stellar, Felicity, on the other hand, had been suffering from distraction. She had found herself staring more and more at her boss, wondering quietly why she had never noticed how his back would stretch his shirts up to the point she could guess each and every one of his muscles. Or how his hands were always so warm whenever he was touching her. Always innocently, lightly pressing her shoulder or her arm when he was trying to get her attention – which happened more and more these days, him being unaware that it only made the situation worse for her.

She then tried to keep his eyes off him as much as possible, focusing on anything else she could find. Her pen, a green plant, his pen,… Oh God, no, not his pen, he’s holding it and his fingers are so assured and strong and…

Forcing her attention on the sound of his voice wasn’t helping either. Somehow, her brain had come up with this ridiculous idea that Oliver used a special voice just for her. Softer, quieter. Intimate. It was like liquid salted butter caramel, comforting, soothing and making her want to lick every single one of… OK, so focusing on the voice is a bad idea too.

She had no idea when she had started seeing Oliver as… well, Oliver. It probably had been gradual, but when he was still with Laurel it was easy to ignore those feelings and push them aside. Now, on the other hand…

“Felicity? Are you listening to me?” Oliver’s voice reached through her daydream. They were sitting side by side at the conference table, going through a new contract.

“Oh God, yes. Yes I am,” she answered in a painful voice.

Oliver stared at her, narrowing his eyes. “Are you OK? Last time you were that distracted, it was
because of that private…”

“Private? I wasn’t thinking about your privates!” she quickly defended herself.

“… investigator my ex hired,” he finished slowly, eyeing her suspiciously. “Felicity, you look like you’re hiding something. Is there anything you need to tell me?”

He slowly rubbed his hand on her shoulder in what was supposed to be a comforting gesture but really didn’t help her clear her head.

Taking a deep breath, she willed herself to calm down a bit, cursing at whatever was happening inside her body to make her feel like a fourteen year-old girl sitting next to her crush for the first time.

“I think all this pressure is finally catching up with me. These last few months have been crazy,” she answered, offering a small reassuring smile. There. Stay vague. Nothing specific.

Oliver frowned. “Are you sure that’s it?”

“I promise. I’m a bit on edge, I won’t lie, but it’s gonna pass eventually.” Oh God, I hope it’s going to pass.

Sighing, she glanced at the clock, noticing it was almost time for the board meeting. Isabel and Walter were supposed to officially defend their candidacy for the CEO position. Hopefully everything would go smoothly and Walter would be appointed by the end of the day. That was if the board could reach an agreement with a majority of six against four. If not, they would have to ask all share-holders to cast a vote, something they really wanted to avoid seeing as how Isabel had managed to get in touch with a lot of them. Not knowing how far her influence extended to, it was a situation they were hoping to avoid.

“It’s almost time,” she grimaced, nervously munching on her pen.

“Yes.” Oliver quickly checked the time on his watch. “We probably should get going.”

As he stood up, picking up his jacket and straightening his tie, she realized for the first time the height difference between them. She was only a bit shorter than the norm, but Oliver was taller than the norm.

Thankfully she had invested into a few pairs of higher heels, but despite them she was still noticeably shorter than him, barely reaching his shoulder.

“Felicity… you’re daydreaming again,” Oliver teased her, noticing her eyes lingering on his shoulders.

Shaking her head, she mumbled, “sorry. You’re just tall. It’s distracting.”

He raised his eyebrows. “I’ve been this tall for a while, you know.”

Glaring at him, she picked up the files that were still discarded on the conference table. “Hey it took you a while to notice I had legs, remember?”

He had the decency to look sheepish at her words, a small nervous smile turning up the corner of his lips. Leaning, he whispered in her ear, “To my defense, I never really saw them until that morning in
Feeling her eyes fluttering at the feeling of his warm breath caressing the sensitive skin of her neck, Felicity mentally cursed her too long forced celibacy.

“We’re going to be late,” she squeaked, not recognizing her own voice as he took a step back.

She all but rushed out of the room, carelessly dropping the files on her desk, not trusting herself to put them back in the right place. Grabbing her bag and notes, she followed him to the elevator, noticing the thoughtful look he threw at her but doing her best to act as normally as possible. Which would have probably been easier if her brain didn’t keep on sending her explicit pictures of how handy such a height difference could be.

Felicity had barely gathered her thoughts when she sat down next to Oliver in the big conference room on the top floor. The board members were there, as well as Isabel and her own assistant, Mark. Moira arrived shortly after them, sitting on the other side of Oliver.

Walter was given the stand first. Felicity let his charming voice lull her, thinking that if she could, she would probably vote for him just to get to hear his accent as much as possible.

The presentation Alfred had prepared was thorough, professional, very much like the candidate. Numbers and graphics were shown, focusing on the experience Walter had and how reliable he was seen in the business world. Moira also voiced the unconditional support of her family, assuring that this would have been Robert’s choice. Oliver also took the stand, confirming that Walter at the head of the company was the most stable move, having been his father’s right hand for years.

Isabel’s presentation was brief, short, and straight to the point. She insisted on how her approach for the company had always been innovative, turned to the future, and how much, now that she was expecting Robert’s child, securing his legacy had more value to her than it could have to Walter or any other candidate. In short, not only was she more than capable, but she also had personal motives to make sure this company would be as thriving as possible.

“I want QC to be a world leader in new resources. Because I want my child to see what his father has built, since he won’t get to know him personally. And because this company means everything to me. I don’t want to look back, I don’t want to carry on the same old policy. I want to respect what Robert built and take it to the next generation.” She concluded, her hand lingering over her stomach; she was barely showing, probably just around 4 months along.

Moira had stayed stoic during the entire speech, her head held high. You’ve got to give this to Moira Queen. She does deserve her last name. It was only when Isabel was about to sit down that she asked, “How can we be sure the child you are carrying is indeed Robert’s? Don’t get me wrong… I am not implying anything, merely making sure that the members don’t take a decision based on elements that we are not sure of.”

Isabel looked at her, her eyes hard and defiant. “I knew you were going to ask that. That’s why I had an amniocentesis as soon as I hit the 4 month mark. They have extracted DNA which can be compared as soon as you want with another child of Robert.”

Both women stared at each other from across the table, neither willing to back down, until Alfred coughed awkwardly, forcing everyone’s attention on him once more.

“Alright. We are going to vote. Take the ballot you have in front of you on the table, circle the name
of the one you want to establish as the new CEO of Queen Consolidated.”

Another of the board members then proceeded to collect them all in a small basket. Alfred didn’t waste any time, reading the small pieces of paper aloud.

“Walter, Isabel, Isabel, Isabel, Walter, Walter, Isabel, Walter, Walter…”

Only one ballot was still in the basket. If it was Walter, then he would be officially named CEO. It if was Isabel…

Alfred opened the last ballot, pinching his lips. Oliver and Felicity shared a look, already understanding that the outcome wouldn’t be the one they had hoped for.

“Isabel. We have a tie.”

Everyone started to whisper, Isabel looking triumphant while Moira took a deep calming breath, her face stoic.

“Quiet, everyone. We all know the rules. We are going to have to ask the share-holders to vote. The more shares they have, the more votes they will get. I guess the rest of my week is going to be busier than I thought…” Alfred trailed off.

“When can we expect this vote to take place?” Isabel asked.

“As soon as possible. But we are going to need at least 10 days to make sure everything is legally binding. Every share-holder has to be informed and given the possibility to cast his vote.”

“How are they going to do so? Some don’t even live in the country,” one of the members asked, frowning.

“That’s something for the legal department… I assume they are going to be have to elect a representative. Usually it’s one of the board members or a neutral attorney at law. They can also choose to pass on the vote.”

Felicity, having kept her eyes on Isabel the whole time noticed right away the flicker of satisfaction on her face. It suddenly dawned on her. And that’s how having a lot of share-holders on your side can make you CEO…

She discreetly grabbed Oliver’s arm, who was whispering something in his mother’s ear. He turned to her and she understood, from his dark expression, that he had come to the same conclusion as her.

As the board members left the room, having set their eyes on the small buffet waiting for them, Isabel took her time gathering her things.

“So I assume that’s why you visited Mrs Keiffer and so many of her investors in the past months,” Oliver quietly said, startling Isabel.

“What are you talking about?” she answered but her shoulders stiffening gave her away.

“You know exactly what I am talking about. I’ve known for a while and we’ve been on the lookout for your next move actually.” Oliver stood up, helping his mother put on her coat. “What I’d really like to know, though, is how on earth could you have foreseen my father’s death?”
His tone was light, as if he was talking about the weather and not implying she might have had something to do with Robert’s passing away.

“Oliver.” Moira put a hand on his chest. “Maybe it’s not…”

“I think it is the right time, mom,” Oliver quickly assured her, not looking at her, his eyes still firmly on the brunette.

Having taken a few breaths, Isabel finally replied. “I don’t know what you’re implying exactly…”

Oliver cut her off. “I’m not implying anything. I’m genuinely wondering. It will be easy to prove how you spent months scheming behind everybody’s back. It will be even more easy for everyone to assume that you are either a seer or…”

“I have nothing to do with Robert’s death!” Isabel curtly said, her breathing short and ragged.

Oliver let out a dry laugh. “Ever since you’ve been promoted, many weird things have happened at QC… it’s not that hard for people to come to conclusions. The gas explosion, my father’s accident… it almost looks as if someone had the idea of weakening the company to get their hands on it.”

Isabel paled, flinching. “I don’t know where you’re going with this…”

“You know exactly where I’m going with that, let’s not fool ourselves.”

Moira and Felicity shared a look, both feeling useless in this duel.

Oliver and Isabel glared at each other for what seemed like hours, until she let her eyes down, defeating a bit.

“It’s not what you think this is…” Isabel sat down, her voice smaller than usual.

“Oh really? Feel free to explain, then.” Oliver leaned on the table, resting on his hands.

“Your father promised to promote me last year. He kept on pushing back the deadline,” she laughed bitterly. “The truth is he was hoping for you to step up so he could give you the job. You never did, though.”

Oliver’s head bowed slightly at her words and Felicity had to fight the urge to put a comforting hand on his back. She knew Isabel’s words must have hurt him, knowing his father still had hoped for him to take his responsibilities.

“I got tired of his empty promises. I deserved… I deserve that job. I’m dedicated to work and great at it,” Isabel continued, her eyes hardening, her finger tapping on the table. “I wasn’t getting it because of you. Because you’re his son, even if you never did anything to earn that position. He was holding out this promotion for you.”

“So you decided that getting knocked up and having his child would put us even?” Oliver snorted. Felicity knew he was just hiding the pain of knowing that his father had always wanted for him to become vice-president and had waited as long as possible for him to get it together. Unfortunately, he had died before he could see the man his son was turning into.
Isabel shook her head, her eyes tearing up lightly. She gulped, visibly forcing herself to swallow her emotions. “I never intended to get pregnant. Your father didn’t want any other child, he had always been clear about that. I knew it would be pointless.”

“Then… what happened to make him change his mind?” Felicity asked out loud, unable to stop herself.

“He offered you the position in exchange for your silence.”

Everyone turned their head to Moira. She was looking at Isabel, understanding written all over her face.

Isabel briefly closed her eyes. “Yes.”

“But… everyone would have known it was his child anyway, how…” Oliver trailed off as the answer became obvious. “Did he offer you the job under the condition you would abandon the child or…”

“The condition was an abortion. I accepted. I was supposed to go through with it the day after Robert died. Then knowing he… that child is all I have left of him, I couldn’t… I couldn’t do it.” Isabel struggled to finish her sentence, her hands shaking on the glass table.

She took a deep breath. “I loved him. He loved me too. But he had always been clear he would never leave his family. I accepted that. That’s why I worked so hard here. It became the family I could never have with him.”

Oliver and Felicity shared a look while Moira was still looking at the other woman. Both could read easily what the other one was thinking. They felt, deep down in their guts, that Isabel was telling the truth.

Seeing their expressions softening and showing pity, Isabel straightened her shoulders, her eyes darkening as she stared at Moira. "Don't get me wrong. You had the man, the husband, the father. I'm going to fight to get the company, tooth and nail."

Chapter End Notes

Sooo...
Obviously our poor Felicity is suffering from UST. A lot. Who could blame her, though?

What did you think? Do you want to grab them and make them kiss as much as I do? XD

You learned a whole lot about Isabel, and judging from your comments from previous chapters, I think this might have surprised you and... actually caused even more questions to pop up, right? I will explain more and more in future chapters as well ;)

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi!
Miss Sweeney

Chapter Notes

Hi guys :)
Hope you had a good week, and didn't we get tons of funny little things from HVFF?
Thank you to all of those who took the time to share what they were living.

Thank you for your comments, kudos and everything you do to show me your support,
it's more than appreciated. I've had a bad cold most of the week, so I was a bit behind
schedule... Next chapter probably won't be posted until next sunday or... even maybe
monday. Unless I get hit by the muse or something.

Thank you to the beta yellowpretendingtobered, who spends her time editing my
chapter and offering advice for more technical things (like business stuff) and to
pidanka, the delta who makes sure I write at a steady pace O_O

Song: Miss Sweeney, Weezer

QUICK REMINDER: we left with Isabel/Oliver/Moira confrontation, Isabel saying she
would do anything and everything to get the company.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Miss Sweeney"

Bzzz.... Bzzz....
Hi, hello, Miss Sweeney?
Could you please come in my office for a second?
I'm heading home for the day
And I thought it'd be good for you and me to check in
I met with the gal from Expo
And they do have the "slab" cabinets in white
She thinks we can take the measurements
down at the site
If we do that, we'll be just fine, Miss Sweeney
That's all I got to say to you at this time, Miss Sweeney
Actually there's one other thing on my mind

Girl, you make the rain clouds disappear
The sun always shines when you're near
I'm waiting until you love me

I'm so sorry Miss Sweeney
I don't know where that came from
I think I was overcome by spontaneous emotion
Anyway, the cash deposit of $5,000 will need to be sent to the property owner tomorrow. If there are any problems with the deposit or contract:

- Don't be afraid to holler,
- I don't want to have a approve each stinking dollar that we borrow

Aww forget it, Miss Sweeney

Girl, you make the rain clouds disappear
The sun always shines when you're near
I'm waiting until you love me

Miss Sweeney, I got to admit the truth
I am totally head over heels in love with you
Every day you come to the office looking fine
Navy business suit clinging tightly to your spine
You ask me if I'm ready to get down to work
Sweeney, baby, I'm ready... be my...

Girl, you make the rain clouds disappear
The sun always shines when you're near
I'm waiting until you love me
Girl, you light the skies of my life
I swear I will make you my wife
I'm waiting until you love me

The walk back to their office was silent. Felicity’s mind was already trying to solve the puzzle of Isabel’s new revelations. Sure enough, it brought light to her actions and answered a lot of questions. Yet Felicity felt like there were still many things that were left without explanation. Something was nagging her, as if she was supposed to remember a detail but her mind was completely blank.

Sighing, she sat down at her desk, willing herself to focus on the most urging matters. Moira had left the conference room quickly after Isabel, telling Oliver about getting in touch with their lawyer. The rumors of another potential heir to Robert Queen’s wealth were surely going to reach the news outlets sooner rather than later. Not to mention all the legal implications of that. Could this still unborn child be given a part of Robert’s inheritance? Judging from the hard look on Mrs Queen’s face, Felicity had a strong feeling she wouldn’t let that happen without a fierce fight.

Grabbing the contract she and Oliver had been working on earlier, she quickly glanced through it, checking one last time that they had edited all the problematic parts before she could send it to the legal department. She was just about to go through the marketing budget of a new campaign when she realized how silent the whole place was. Even if they were working in separate offices, Oliver usually left the door open and she could always hear him scribbling down, generally groaning with frustration at yet another technical report he could barely make sense of, or the faint sound of his pacing when he was facing a problem he couldn’t solve. Yet, apart from the sound of the paper sheets she was turning every now and then, there wasn’t a sound to be heard. Glancing up, she saw him standing at the window, staring down to the city at his feet. It had been a while since she had last seen him do that and she felt a pinch in her heart, knowing it was his own way of dealing with the emotions caused by Isabel’s words. Oliver had had the time to accept his father’s actions, and made relative peace with it. But the new reveal that Robert had kept faith in him for as long as he possibly could, that he had always hoped for his son to step up and be willing to take charge in his professional life… it reopened a wound Oliver had barely stitched up. Felicity knew that Robert’s death would always haunt his son, because of the last words they had shared but also because Oliver
knew his father would never see the man he was becoming. He had finally understood what Robert had always wanted for him. But it had taken him too long.

Pinching her lips, she went back to her task, knowing there was nothing she could do or say at the moment to help him. He needed a bit of time to digest everything, to let everything sink in. There was a time where he would have coped with all those feelings with girls and parties… but that time was over now.

When she looked up from the report, the light had visibly dimmed. Checking the clock, she saw that it was already way past six, much later than the time when she usually left the office. As she saw Oliver still in the same position, she sighed, shaking her head.

Standing up, she quietly made her way to his office, softly knocking on the glass to attract his attention. He turned his head instantly, his eyes still lost in thought as a small smile stretched his lips when he saw her standing on the threshold, bare foot.

“Why do you keep wearing heels if you just take them off as soon as you can?” he asked, laughing slightly.

“If you were a woman, you wouldn’t have to ask that question,” she scolded him as she walked to him, secretly relieved to see he was at least in the mood to tease her. “I went through the marketing budget like you asked. There are several points that don’t add up, you should take a look at it.”

He grabbed the file, already opening it.

“Tomorrow,” she added sternly. “It’s almost 7, you should go home.”

Oliver distractedly shook his head. “No. I’d rather go through this first.”

“Oliver…” she whispered, the tenderness in her voice efficiently forcing him to look at her. “You won’t find what you’re looking for in those papers.”

He gazed into her eyes, probably knowing it was foolish to pretend he didn’t understand what she meant.

She kept her eyes on his, not breaking away, seeing the regrets and remorse that tore her heart. At that moment, she realized there was little she wouldn’t do to bring a smile back on his face, and chase the darkness away. “Although if you’re having problems sleeping, that might be exactly what you need. I swear to God, you almost ended up with a snoring assistant sprawled on her desk.”

He huffed out a small laugh, closing his eyes for the shortest second. His shoulders visibly relaxed as she witnessed a bit of light coming back in his eyes.

“That’s something I would pay good money to see,” he lightly tapped her nose, smiling softly at her. “Although I already had the unfortunate chance to hear your snoring.”

She was grinning at him, amused by his familiar “nose-tapping”, as she had secretly called it, when the rest of his words caught up with her.

Gasping, she took a step back. “I do NOT snore!”

“How would you know that exactly?” he smirked, folding his arms.
“Because… because I know it!” she huffed, grabbing the file from his hand and lightly tapping him on the arm with it. “And even if I did, a real gentleman would never mention it in the first place!”

“Oh, Miss Smoak… I thought I already warned you: I am no gentleman,” he murmured, his voice deeper than usual as he took her hand in his, gently forcing her to give back the file.

She unconsciously licked her lips as she realized how close he was. Close enough to hear the sound of his breathing, to feel how warm his breath was on her skin. Feeling her heart beat faster, she tried to keep her own breathing calm and slow but miserably failed when his eyes dropped to her lips, darkening with what she could only describe as desire. The thought was enough to shake her from her trance. Oliver Queen, looking at you with desire? Yeah, right. Must be the lighting.

Gulping, she tried to get back to her senses, her hand reaching nervously for her high ponytail. “I should… I guess I should go?”

He gazed at her fondly, a small smile tucking at his lips. “Yes. It’s late.”

“Alright. I’m going to go. Like now. Right… right now,” she mumbled, unable to force her feet to move away from him, from the hand that was still holding hers, his thumb lightly stroking her wrist.

“Yes,” he whispered again. “You should.”

“I’m…” she coughed, “I’m going to need my hand.”

Oliver frowned, obviously not understanding her. “For what?”

“For… well. For things. And stuff. Stuff where I need both my hands. Or at least the right one. Because I’m right handed,” she rambled, her voice becoming smaller with each word, ending up being barely above a whisper. “And you’re holding it. My hand, I mean. The right one.”

His gaze dropped to their hands and she could pin-point the exact moment when he realized he had been stroking her skin for a while as his cheeks turned a light shade of pink. A part of her cheered at the idea that she had the power to make Oliver Queen blush and that was enough to bring a smile on her lips.

“I’m sorry,” Oliver said, letting go of her hand immediately.

“Not a problem. I tend to grip on things regularly as well,” she reassured him, waving her hand dismissively.

As he raised an eyebrow, she tried to backtrack. “I mean… unconsciously speaking. And by things, I mean objects. Like… like a pen or…”

“… a duck?” he asked her teasingly.

Gasping, she felt her cheeks burn with embarrassment. “Oliver!”

He grinned widely. “Did you just stomp your foot?”

“No… I… maybe!” putting her hands on her hips, she glared at him, daring him to add anything as she grabbed his file and threw it on his desk “Anyway… This can wait until tomorrow. You go
home, spend time with your family. Get some sleep.”

Oliver winced, shoving his hands in his pockets.

Eyeing him suspiciously, Felicity wondered out loud “Is this the reason why you’re still here? You don’t want to go home?”

Pinching his lips, he ruffled his hair “I just don’t feel like… going home right now. It’s not that I’m trying to run away or avoid them but… I don’t feel like there’s anything I can do over there.”

She quietly observed him, understanding he needed more time to process everything. Nodding her head, she silently went to his desk, picking up the phone “What do you say? Chinese or Italian?”

Oliver let out a relieved sigh as he untied his tie “Chinese.”

**

“So, you mean we should cancel the TV ads and focus on our website?” Oliver asked, as he picked up the box of caramelized pork.

“No. What I mean is that if we want to send the message that we are orienting our projects towards the future, we also need to be consistent in the way we advertise it. We need to be more present on the internet, and that starts with our own website. It really needs some improvement,” Felicity answered, battling with a springroll.

Oliver grinned at her unsuccessful efforts. “You know, it’d be much easier with chopsticks.”

He then proceeded to grab one of her springrolls with his own sticks, wiggling his eyebrows as he shoved the whole thing in his mouth.

She narrowed her eyes at him. “Are you done with the whole show-off thingy? Mister Oliver Queen can eat with chopsticks. Congratulations.”

He quickly swallowed his food, smirking. “You’re only saying that because you’re jealous you can’t do it.”

Felicity pinched her lips, trying to look as dignified as possible “Forks are perfectly acceptable cutlery, even when you’re eating Asian food.”

“Again, you’re only saying that because…”

She threw one of her own useless sticks at him, cutting him off. “If you say that once more…”

He raised his eyebrows at her as he saw the stick bouncing off his chest and landing on the floor. He was sitting at the table of their conference room, his legs stretched out on another chair next to him. The first buttons of his shirt were open and he had rolled up his sleeves. He calmly put his box of food back on the table and leaned towards her, putting his feet down. She was sitting right next to the chair he had used to prop up his legs and he only had to move a couple of inches to tower over her.

“I believe this calls for measures,” he playfully lectured her. “I can’t let you think it’s OK to throw dangerous objects at your boss.”
“Dangerous? It’s a chopstick,” she rolled her eyes. “And I barely threw it at you.”

“I think it’s a call for help. I think you want another lesson,” he whispered as he grabbed her own food and moved it back on the table as well.

“A… lesson?” Her eyes widened slightly.

“Yes. Chopsticks lesson.”

“Oh,” she breathed with a slight hint of disappointment.

Oliver smirked. “Why… are we disappointed, Miss Smoak?”

She bit her lip. “Well, I have to admit, I was hoping for a different kind of lesson, Mister Queen.”

“Let me guess… does it involve any type of cutlery?”

She shook her head, her mouth pouting.

“Does it involve any type of food?”

“Mmmh…” she hummed, “depends what you mean by ‘food’.”

His eyes darkening, he felt his breathing quickening as he approached her close enough to count the freckles on her nose. *I never noticed she had freckles.*

“I think I like your kind of lessons better, Miss Smoak…” he whispered, his lips barely an inch away from hers.

Her eyes fluttered, visibly battling to stay open as she gripped the sides of her chair. “Oliver… I don’t think this is a good idea.”

“On the contrary, I think it’s probably the best idea I’ve ever had,” he murmured softly.

“Really? Because naming our new website GreenQueen makes it sound as if some kind of a Grinch drag-queen took over as CEO.”

Oliver shook his head, clearing his thoughts. They were both sitting at the conference room, several chairs between them, Chinese leftovers discarded on the table. Groaning, he rubbed his eyes, understanding he had been day-dreaming.

“Oliver, are you alright?” his assistant asked him, concerned. “I think we should call it a night. You almost fell asleep on me.”

The image her words brought up was so vivid and so clear that he had to bite back a moan, shifting uncomfortably on his chair, trying to hide what was happening south of his body.

He cleared his throat. “Yes. You’re right. Let me just… finish the duck.” He shook his head, horrified, remembering the small plastic duck that her mother had sent her. “No. Not the duck. Chicken. Chicken is safe.”
Felicity observed him warily. “We didn’t order duck anyway, you know…”

He blindly reached for the first box of food he could find, not even paying attention to what he was eating.

“Hum. Oliver. That’s the beef,” Felicity hesitantly interrupted him while gathering the papers that were all over the table.

Oliver briefly closed his eyes, chewing on the suddenly tasteless food. “That’s what I meant.”

He tried to focus on what he was eating, tried to keep his eyes off of her but she was everywhere and his eyes kept traveling back to her. Her ponytail was a mess, far away from the neat one she had had earlier that day. Her make-up was slightly smudged, lipstick completely gone. She was still bare foot, and the neat pink blouse she had been wearing earlier was now hanging loosely around her hips instead of being securely inside her waist-band. The sight of her nails, covered in a pale green nail polish, brought a smile to his lips and he couldn’t help his eyes traveling down to her feet. He cursed himself as soon as he had the answer to a question he’d been asking himself for a long time. *Yep. It matches her toes.*

After a few minutes of forcing his brain to stay as far away as possible from anything even slightly… stimulating, Oliver finally got control of himself enough to push back the empty box of food and stand up. He noticed Felicity had already cleared up the room and he could hear her mumbling in her office. Turning off the light, he quickly joined her, leaning on the doorway as he quietly observed her setting things straight on her own desk. It dawned on him, suddenly, how used he was to have her by his side. How normal it felt to wait for her at the end of a long day at work. How suddenly driving her home wasn’t just about a matter of safety and peace of mind, but also a way to delay the moment they would part ways.

“I’m all set,” she brightly said, interrupting his thoughts.

He smiled, his hand reaching for the lights, waiting for her to make it to the elevator. As he joined her inside the small space, she was trying to slip her panda flats on.

Chuckling, he helped her keep her balance by holding her elbow. “Why don’t you just put these on in the morning if you’re more comfortable wearing them?”

Felicity glared at him. “It’s not really appropriate. I’m the assistant of an executive, in case you forgot.”

He smiled. “It’s such a pity. I like them on you.”

“You’re only saying that because you bought them for me,” she teased him as they stepped out of the elevator, onto the garage level.

“What can I say? I have great taste.” He winked at her, opening the passenger door for her.

Buckling her seatbelt, Felicity let her hands caress the soft leather of her seat. “It’s been a while…”

“Mmmh?” Oliver asked as he slipped behind the wheel.

“I think I missed your car,” she laughed slightly.
“Lucky car,” he smirked as the motor roared to life. Handling the car swiftly, it only took them a minute to leave the building and speed through the night, the city almost completely asleep. It was already way past 10 and the streets were mostly empty.

“Why pandas?”

Oliver’s question seemed to catch her by surprise. “What?”

“Pandas. I noticed you had a small panda figurine on your secretary as well.”

“Oh,” she shrugged. “I’m not sure. I always loved them. They are the cuddliest animals I have ever seen, I guess. I used to have a panda plush when I was a kid.”

She frowned as if remembering an unpleasant memory. “My father gave it to me when I started kindergarten, actually.”

Oliver quickly glanced at her. “You never talk much about him…”

“No. There isn’t much to say, I guess. Classic story. He left when I was 7. I never heard from him ever again. Apart from that congratulations card he sent me when I graduated MIT. I still wonder how he found out about that.”

Sensing she wasn’t comfortable discussing that topic, Oliver quickly asked her, “I’ve always wanted to ask… were you really sixteen when you got into MIT?”

Felicity laughed, looking at him. “Are you implying I lied on my resume?”

“No. Of course not! And I know you’re more than capable to. I mean did you already know what you wanted to do? How did you manage to move halfway across the country?”

“I... I don’t know. I’ve always loved computers. All those wires, the possibilities,… it’s like a gigantic puzzle to me. A big mystery. They fascinate me. I had a full scholarship and I didn’t even hesitate when I got accepted. It’s only when I walked into my dorm room that I realized I was away from everything and everyone I ever knew and that I was two years younger than the other students.”

Oliver pulled the car onto her street a few buildings away from her apartment, then turned to face her. “That must have been hard.”

Felicity sighed. “Yes… and no. It surely helped me focus on my classes. I didn’t have that many friends to begin with and I had two part-time jobs. If I had been older, maybe I would have given into the constant partying during my spare time instead of studying. Like my boss probably did,” she teased him.

“Guilty.” Oliver raised his hands in defense, grinning.

“Where did you graduate?” she asked him seriously. “I don’t think I ever asked you.”

“Princeton. Like my parents.”

“The Queens go to Princeton. Obviously,” she giggled. “You think Thea is going to follow the same
He frowned. “I don’t know. I hope not. If she wants to, that’s fine. But I’d like her to feel free to choose where she wants to go. I assume MIT was your choice?”

“You could have gotten in both?” he asked, surprised.

“Yes, I was offered scholarships for both. In the end, the prospect of having snowy winters won me over,” she smiled. “Boston is so pretty in the winter. All those old buildings, the narrow streets, the snow…”

“Why… why did you want to leave, then? When you missed your interview, you know… the day we met? I’m sure you could have gotten a job in a company in Boston or New York.”

“Well. At first I wanted to stay at MIT. As a researcher, or a professor. It just didn’t turn out that way.”

He quietly observed her, the dim light coming from the street casting a shadow on her face.

“Do you regret it?” he finally asked.

She tilted her head, confused. “Regret what?”

“Coming to Starling. I mean you could be working anywhere you want to.”

“No. I don’t regret it. The thing is I hadn’t saved enough money to make several trips across the USA. I was really hoping I’d get this job at QC, because it’s a company I’ve been following closely in the past years. The job I got isn’t exactly what I had in mind, but… the boss is decent and the pay is nice,” she smiled cheekily at him.

“Ugh. Decent?” he grimaced, pretending to be hurt by her words.

She laughed at the offense in his tone. “Well. Consider yourself lucky. I could have said worse. Although, I have to admit you have dramatically improved over the last couple of months.”

“I’ve had help,” he smiled peacefully at her. “I was such an ass with you at first. I never really… apologized for that. I’m sorry.”

Felicity looked at him thoughtfully. “You kinda were. But it really didn’t last long. You’ve made up for it, anyway.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows. “Really?”

She smiled reassuringly at him, putting a hand on his arm. “Really. That poem was heartwarming.”

He pinched his lips, wincing at the memory. “Could we please never mention it… again?”

“We could,” she nodded, “but no. No way I’m letting this go. When am I getting the original of it, signed by the authors?”
“Never. Not to mention it’s on the back of a nude poster.”

She burst out laughing. “what?!”

“We were in a club, I didn’t exactly bring a notepad with me.”

Felicity grinned widely at his discomfort. “You know, I think you should stop drinking tequila. It’s obviously not for you.”

He smiled shyly at her. “but we had a good time, didn’t we? In Ivy Town, I mean.”

Nodding, she whispered, “Yes. Yes, we did.”

Having no idea how it happened, he suddenly realized how close they were to each other. Both had moved to the edge of their seat at some point and his hand reached for her ear without him realizing it, gently caressing the barbell piercing. For a split second, her eyes closed as she leaned into his touch and despite a little voice in the back of his head screaming that this was a bad idea, he found himself closing the gap between them even more, his eyes fixed on hers as he saw them darkening and mirroring the longing he had been feeling for a while now. His breathing quickened as she licked her lips, her teeth lingering in a gentle bite, the small pinch of it causing them to turn a deeper shade of red. As he let his hand drop from her ear down to the tender skin between her neck and shoulder, she visibly gulped, letting him feel her pulse speeding up, no doubt matching his own. At this moment there was nothing he wanted more than to close the gap separating them, to feel the relief and comfort her mouth could bring him, to finally find out for sure if what he suspected was true. But it was not the right time, and it was not the right place and he wanted to give her so much more than what he could offer right now.

“Felicity.” The whisper on his mouth was as light as a feather but he knew she heard him, he knew she heard the words he did not say out loud, like she always did because she always saw right through him.

“I should go,” she smiled, her eyes soft and understanding.

“I’ll walk you,” he offered, already opening his door.

“There’s no need, really,” she answered softly as she climbed out of the car as well. “It’s barely a few buildings away.”

As he locked the car, he put a hand on the small of her back, feeling the heat of her skin warm his fingers, causing them to twitch with the need for more.

Oliver shook his head. “I insist. I don’t think I’d ever forgive myself if something was to happen to you.”

“You’re only saying that because then you’d have to find another assistant and you hate going through resumes,” she teased him, lightly nudging him.

“Hey! I think I did a great job hiring the last one!” he huffed out a laugh as they climbed up the few steps leading to her building entrance.

“Please. I wouldn’t consider bumping into a girl as a hiring process,” she dryly said, rolling her eyes.
“Of all the girls I could have bumped into, I think I chose the perfect one,” he smiled as he leaned against the door while she looked for her keys inside her bag.

She stopped, glaring at him. “Next time, just make sure she doesn’t drop half of her belongings on the floor, will you?”

“Hey!” he held out his hands in defense. “I helped you pick them up!”

“Please. You picked up a pen,” she snorted but was unable to hide her amusement.

“… It was red.” He smiled softly, his eyes bright and tender as he remembered the scene like it was yesterday.

Felicity’s lips parted with surprise. “Yes. Yes, it was.”

He honestly had no idea how long they stayed on the threshold of her door, smiling at each other as they remembered how they had met several months ago and how their lives had changed ever since that day.

“Are you two going to gaze at each other for the rest of the night or will I be able to walk through that door and get to bed at a decent hour?”

Dig’s sarcastic voice reached them as they both jumped and turn to look at him, both feeling like they’d been caught with their hands in the cookie jar. He rolled his eyes at them as he took the few steps two at a time, already reaching for the door as the two of them stepped out of his way.

“We weren’t…”

“I wasn’t…”

Felicity and Oliver started at the same time, the same guilty blush growing on their cheeks as Dig passed by them, shaking his head. He was just about to close the door behind him, when he peeked at Felicity, “Will you still need a ride to work tomorrow morning?”

Felicity gaped, the slight blush on her cheeks invading her neck. “What, wow, yes, of course, I mean he’s not staying or…”

Dig sighed, closing his eyes. “I didn’t mean it like that. Since you worked late, do you still have to be at work as early as usual?”

“Oh,” Felicity stuttered, “Oh. Of… of course. Late night. Yeah.”

“No,” Oliver finally came to her rescue. “I don’t think so. We’re quite ahead of schedule so she can take the morning off.”

“Good,” Dig nodded as he closed the door. “I’ll see you tomorrow, then.”

Groaning, Felicity hid her face behind her hands. “I’m so sorry, I… that was so inappropriate.”

Chuckling, Oliver lowered her hands. “It wouldn’t really be you if you didn’t drop an inappropriate comment every now and then.” He took a deep breath, adding, “I should get going.”
She smiled understandingly. “Your mother needs you. It’s a hard blow. I mean your husband having an affair is one thing, then learning he fathered another child, only to find out mother of said child wants to get her hands on his company… that’s a lot to take in.”

He laughed dryly. “I just don’t think I’m that great at being the supportive son.”

“I think you’re doing a great job so far. Don’t be so hard on yourself,” she said as she took a small step towards him, reaching on her toes to plant a soft kiss on his cheek. The gesture caught him off guard and he barely noticed when she opened the door and told him goodnight.

Standing on the threshold, he watched her silhouette through the thick glass window of the door she had just closed. A small smile tugged at his lips as he realized this was the first time she had allowed such an intimate gesture. Of course, the kiss was more than innocent, more like a peck really, and his old self would probably be rolling his eyes at him right now if he could see him. At what point exactly did he turn into a man perfectly content to be kissed goodnight so innocently?

Shoving his hands in his pockets, he quickly walked back to his car, whistling, suddenly feeling much lighter and carefree. The drive back home was short, too short for a man who was trying to sort his own thoughts – and feelings. Yet, for the first time in what seemed like forever, there was a bounce in his steps as he stepped out of his car and made his way to the main foyer. He directly went to the kitchen, intending to grab a bottle of water and head straight to bed. He had just opened the fridge when a voice behind him startled him.

“Great minds think alike, I see.”

“Mom. You scared the hell out of me,” Oliver groaned as he picked up the bottle he had dropped on the floor.

Moira laughed slightly as she stood up from the kitchen table. “I’m sorry. I wasn’t exactly trying to scare you. You just walked past me and didn’t even see me.”

“Sorry. It’s been a long day,” he apologized, taking a long sip of water.

“Don’t apologize. I’m more curious as to what put that smile on your face,” she gently teased him as she poured herself a glass of apple juice.

“What smile?” he frowned, wiping his mouth with his sleeve.

“The one you had when you walked in this room. I don’t know what… or who caused it but I’d really like to see that smile on your face more often. It’s been a while since I last saw my son happy.”

Oliver cleared his throat. “It’s… it’s not what you think.”

Moira smiled knowingly as she took a sip of her drink. “If you say so.”

They both drank in silence for a few minutes, both comforted by the other without needing any words. Ever since Robert’s death, they had gotten closer and the talk they had had about Oliver’s short-lived engagement had brought a new understanding in their relationship.

Eventually, Moira put her glass down in the sink and took a deep breath. “Oliver. I spoke with David, our attorney. Isabel already made a move to get a part of your father’s inheritance. Nothing to be surprised about, we saw that coming ever since we heard of that pregnancy.”
Leaning on the counter, Oliver crossed his arms. “I knew she would try to do something like that. What kind of legal ground does she have exactly?”

“Well, you know the law… if she can prove the child is his, as soon as he or she is born, they will be legally considered as potential heir. Which means Isabel could be her child’s legal representative…”

“Which means she’s going to be around for a while,” he groaned, bowing his head.

“Yes. David is hopeful, though. Judging the circumstances and how Robert didn’t want that child, maybe she will be denied. And if she’s not… we can still try to make a deal with her.”

“You mean a financial deal? You would compromise with her?” Oliver asked in surprise.

“Yes.” Moira looked at him, her eyes assured and confident. “If that means getting her out of our lives… Yes. There are a few number of things that I won’t do to make sure this woman is as far away from my family as possible. I should have done that much earlier. Maybe we wouldn’t be in this mess if I had.”

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... what do you think?
Oliver is suffering just as much as Felicity was last chapter, isn't he? ;)

A little thing might have been borrowed from the show, I hope you caught it :p

Now how long is it going to take until they snap... I guess it won't be that long anymore.

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Hi guys :)  
Thank you very much for all the positive feedback, I was a bit overwhelmed by your reactions to be honest! So glad you enjoyed that quiet, intimate chapter... despite the tiny little teasing.  
I would like to take a moment to publicly thank Pidanka, my fearless Delta and Mysticaldetectivepanda who beta'd this chapter for me :)  

Remember, we left Oliver talking with his mother about Isabel, after he had walked Felicity back to her place.  

Song: Only When I Sleep - The Corrs

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Only When I Sleep"

You're only just a dreamboat  
  Sailing in my head  
You swim my secret oceans  
  Of coral blue and red  
Your smell is incense burning  
  Your touch is silken yet  
It reaches through my skin  
And moving from within  
  It clutches at my breast  

But it's only when I sleep  
  See you in my dreams  
You got me spinning round and round  
  Turning upside-down  
But I only hear you breathe  

  Somewhere in my sleep  
Got me spinning round and round  
  Turning upside-down  
But its only when I sleep  

And when I wake from slumber  
  Your shadow's disappear  
Your breath is just a sea mist  
  Surrounding my body  
I'm workin' through the daytime
But when it's time to rest
I'm lying in my bed
Listening to my breath
Falling from the edge

But it's only when I sleep
See you in my dreams, (dreams)
You got me spinning round and round
Turning upside-down
But I only hear you breathe
Somewhere in my sleep, (in my sleep)
Got me spinning round and round
Turning upside-down
But it's only when I sleep
It's only when I sleep

Up to the sky
Where angels fly
I'll never die
Hawaiian High
In bed I lie
No need to cry
My sleeping cry
Hawaiian High

It's reaching through my skin
Movin' from within
And clutches at my breasts...

But it's only when I sleep...
See you in my dreams, (dreams)
You got me spinning round and round
Turning upside-down
But I only hear you breathe

In bed I lie
No need to cry
My sleeping cry
Hawaiian High

But it's only when I sleep... aaaaaaa....
Got me spinning round and round
(Turning upside-down)

Up to the sky
Where angels fly
I'll never die
Hawaiian High
But it's only when I sleep...
Felicity closed the door of her apartment, feeling more breathless than the single flight of stairs could justify. Resting her back against it, she closed her eyes, trying to calm the beating of her heart. *Nothing happened. Absolutely nothing happened. We talked, he walked me to my door and nothing happened.*

Then why was her heart beating so fast, her breathing short and heavy? Something was shifting between them, she had been aware of that for a while. But tonight, for the first time, she had realized that it wasn’t one-sided. Oliver felt something too. She didn’t know if she should feel relieved that her mind hadn’t been playing tricks on her or freaked out because trying to ignore and muffle an unrequired love was one thing… but a mutual attraction was something else. It was so wrong, on so many levels. As she finally decided to move away from the door, dropping her purse and carelessly throwing her jacket on the couch, she mentally listed all the reasons why this was a very, very bad idea.

1. His your boss.
2. He’s a friend. One of the only friends you have here.
3. He’s Oliver freaking Queen, heir of a wealthy family and you’re just an IT girl from Vegas.
4. He just got out of a long term relationship. Hell, he just got out of an engagement. Thanks to you, actually.
5. His life is the definition of messy at the moment.

As she was lying in bed, some thirty minutes later, her mind was still reeling with the memories of the night. The way he had whispered her name, his eyes showing her his longing, his desire, but also his hesitation and his fear to destroy their relationship. If she was honest with herself, she was sharing the same fears, the same doubts. She was falling for the wrong person, at the wrong time. So why oh why did everything feel so right whenever she was near him? Why did she feel stronger, more confident, more of a woman than she had ever felt? What exactly was it in him that brought up that side of her, the one that was daring and bold? At first, she had thought it was his own confidence, born from the privileged life he led. But now she knew the man, she knew the doubts and lack of self-esteem. She knew the man under the suit, the one with flaws and insecurities. The less than perfect son, the still learning businessman. The loyal friend. The caring boss. The more layers of Oliver she had discovered, the more she had been drawn to him. The coveted bachelor, wealthy playboy she had met had done very little to cause an impression on her. But that person was long gone and the man she had been discovering day by day was more than worthy of love.

Love. She bit her lips, her eyes staring at the ceiling above her. She shook her head at the choice of word. Whatever was going on between them… it couldn’t be love. They were too different, for a start. Lust, desire, affection, tenderness… yes. But love? That was a big word, one she hadn’t dared to use in over a year. One that had only led her to make poor decisions. One that had almost ruined her life. She wasn’t about to make the same mistake again.

Turning over, she closed her eyes, willing herself to keep her feelings at bay. And if a little voice told her that it might be too late for that, she stubbornly decided to ignore it.

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1 week later
“Oliver! I told you, repeatedly, that if the printer doesn’t work, it’s probably because you forgot to load paper. Hitting on the button over and over again isn’t going to make paper appear magically!” Felicity yelled at him from the small archive room.

“There is paper!” he shouted back from her office where he was frustratingly pacing, having been kicked out of said room a few minutes earlier by his more than pissed off assistant.

“No. There. Isn’t.”

“I put some back yesterday, exactly like you told me!”

“Then we must have used it all!”

“How can we use an entire rack of paper in less than 24 hours?!” he asked in disbelief. “Although, knowing you, you probably printed the full instructions of every single electronic device we own in this building,” he added, snorting.

He barely had the time to worry at the silence that answered him before Felicity appeared on the threshold, her eyes dark and furious.

“Excuse me?” she asked, her voice low and cold as ice.

“Come on, you printed the plans for three different wind turbines last week,” he dismissively explained, ruffling his hair.

“Only because my dimwit of a boss wasn’t able to recognize one from another.”

Oliver gasped. “What did you call me?!”

“Dimwit. D-I-M…”

“I know how to spell it!”

“Good. So now maybe we can focus on how to properly load paper in the printer because this,” she waved a crumpled sheet in front of his eyes, “was stuck inside of it.”

Oliver frowned, staring at the offending piece of paper. “I swear I did everything like you told me to, Felicity.”

She glared at him.

“I did!” he raised his hands in defense. “That thing only answers to you anyway.”

Felicity tilted her head, then turned around and went back to the small room. She reappeared a few seconds later with a small pile of papers.

Handing it to Oliver, she sarcastically said, “are you sure you’re gonna be able to work the stapler?”

“Depends if it’s for binding those papers or try to assault someone,” he smirked.

Narrowing her eyes, she walked past him, heading to his own office and dropping the stack of documents on his desk. She quickly divided the papers in two neat piles and stapled them, not paying attention to him.

“Alright. So you’ve got one for you and another one for Mrs Anderson.” She glanced at the clock, pinching her lips. “You’re supposed to meet her at Walter’s office in 15 minutes.”
Oliver picked up the documents, quickly checking to see that everything was in order. Felicity moved to face him, nudging his arm away as she straightened his tie.

Still reading, his arm outstretched to let her work her magic, he asked absent-mindedly, “My mother is supposed to stop by Walter’s office later. Do you mind waiting for me? I should be done before 6.”

Smoothing the few wrinkles on the silky material, Felicity nodded. “No problem. There you go. Looking all dapper.”

He smiled at her. “what would I do without you?”

Raising an eyebrow, she snickered, “probably murder that poor innocent printer for starts.”

“For the last time… I did everything like you told me to!” Oliver exclaimed, putting the papers back on his desk and grabbing his jacket.

Felicity rolled her eyes, her hands on her hips. “Like for the fax machine?”

Pinching his lips, he pointed a finger at her. “That was different. That thing hates me!”

“If I didn’t know you any better, I’d say you’re purposely harming those poor things!”

“What?! This is ridiculous!” Oliver protested.

Glaring at him, Felicity held out her hand, counting on her fingers. “The printer – twice- even though I already showed you how to reload paper; the fax machine that you somehow forgot to plug in; that laptop…”

Oliver cut her off. “That was different, spilling a drink on something can happen to anyone!”

“Oliver, the screen was barely holding on.”

“… Tommy spilled a drink then let it fall on the floor,” he mumbled sheepishly.

“So it was Tommy! I knew it! You don’t drink pineapple juice!” She fist-pumped in triumph.

“Of course I drink pineapple juice!”

“No, you don’t!”

“Yes, I do!”

“OK. When was the last time you had some?”

Oliver opened his mouth, trying to remember. Closing it, he stubbornly crossed his arms. “I don’t actually remember but that doesn’t mean…”

“Yes it does! I had pineapple for breakfast last week and you told me, I quote ‘there is something fishy about a fruit named after another fruit even though they have nothing in common whatsoever.’”

“I… might have said that but… it was just so… It was the morning, OK?” he huffed.

She narrowed her eyes as she took a step closer, lowering her voice. “Now, I’d really like to know why I ended up fixing your best friend’s laptop and even more important, why you wanted to hide it
was his.

He held her glare, shoving his hands in his pockets. “Because I know you’re really good with computers.”

She snorted. “Please. As if he couldn’t get anyone from Merlyn Global to help him. Why did he even ask you?”

“Because there was no one else I could have trusted with my hidden porn, that’s why.” Tommy’s lazy voice reached them. Both turned around, seeing him leaning on the doorframe, one of his trademark smirks firmly on his face. “And absolutely not because my best friend destroyed my laptop on purpose so he could ask his charming assistant to fix it because she might have mentioned once, and I quote, ‘that she missed playing with computers and techy things’… obviously.”

Felicity slowly turned her head, facing her boss who was furiously glaring at his best friend. “… for real?”

“That’s… not exactly how it happened,” Oliver explained, trying to placate her but she cut him off right away.

“You hurt those very nice pieces of technology on purpose? Just so I could fix them?” Felicity asked, disbelief obvious in her voice.

“… No?” he asked hesitantly, not sure if she was mad or touched by the gesture. Seeing her taking a deep breath and exhaling slowly made him understand it was the former. “It was his idea!” he rushed to say, pointing at his best friend. “And we didn’t hurt them that bad, the laptop was really an accident… at first.”

Tommy approached them, fake-whispering. “Dude… I think you’re making it worse.”

Felicity swapped her head from one man to the other. “I can’t believe it. How old are you exactly?”

“He’s 26, but I’d really like to point out I’m still only 25. Which is also the reason for my…”

She cut him off with a furious glare. “Don’t even try to charm your way out of this, Merlyn.”

Tommy grinned widely, ignoring her anger. “You finally dropped the Mister!” Turning to Oliver, he added, "we're making progress. We're making great progress."

Felicity groaned in frustration as she picked up the papers once more, shoving them in Oliver’s arms. “You go to that meeting. And you,” she added to Tommy , her voice low and threatening, “better never drink pineapple juice next to your laptop. Ever. Again.”

With one last furious look, she turned around, storming out of Oliver’s office under their stare.

“How you even manage to get any work done is beyond me, honestly.” Tommy’s dreamy voice distracted Oliver from the enchanting vision of Felicity walking away from them, her tight grey dress fitting all of her curves in the most perfect way, the yellow squares on her waist capturing his attention.

“What?” Oliver asked confusedly then realized where his best friend’s eyes were resting. “Stop it.”

“I’m just a man! And I’ve told you before… it’s… it’s a piece of art. That dress is devilish, though. How do you even focus on… well, anything?”
“I used my pen to stir my coffee this morning. Does that answer your question?” Oliver deadpanned, his eyes never leaving Felicity’s retreating form.

“Damn, that loud voice of her is… hot as hell.”

“I know. I know,” Oliver answered miserably, his head bowing.

“Anyway, I was here to remind you of my birthday party. It’s next Saturday, don’t forget. Same theme as usual.”

Oliver shook his head. “really? You’ve been having the same theme ever since you were 8!”

“And I will go with it until my very last birthday party,” Tommy answered as they both started to walk out of Oliver’s office.

“I could understand when we were kids, but now? What’s the point?”

“Mistletoe. That’s the point. Mistletoe.”

“How old are you, again?” Oliver asked, smiling at his best friend’s childish behavior.

“Old enough to know that if I like a girl, I ask her out, not destroy my best friend’s laptop to get her attention…” Tommy whispered discreetly as they walked past Felicity’s desk who was pointedly ignoring them. Clearing his throat, he fished out a small envelope from his suit. “Miss Felicity?”

Taking a deep breath, Felicity raised her head. “Yes?”

Not letting her cold tone deter him, he charmingly smiled at her, handing the invitation. “My birthday party. I won’t take no for an answer.”

She raised her eyebrows at him, opening the card. “Christmas in July?” she asked, surprised. “I would have pictured you as a James Bond theme kind of guy…”

He narrowed his eyes. “I thought we had agreed to not mention that unfortunate incident… ever again?”

“Oh no. I didn’t agree. I might have humored you, but believe me… there is no way in hell I’m going to let this one go until I have my payback,” she answered sweetly with an innocent smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes.

Coughing, Oliver interrupted them. “Sorry, but I have to go. Tommy? If you want Walter to give you these papers, you should come with me.”

“What pap… Oh yeah… those papers,” Tommy nodded knowingly, barely hiding his smirk. “Well, Miss Felicity, I look forward to seeing you there. Hopefully, under the mistletoe?”

Felicity pinched her lips, her mouth twitching as if she was battling a smile. “I’ll come. But don’t get your hopes too high for that mistletoe. I’m very good at avoiding it.”

“I like a challenge,” Tommy winked at her as he followed Oliver to the elevator.

Once they were inside, Tommy turned to Oliver. “OK, where can I get mistletoe in July?”

Oliver frowned. “Probably where you usually get it every year?”

“I always keep a few from December, but I’m going to need much, much more. Miss Felicity is a
sneaky little one,” Tommy explained as they stepped out onto the top floor.

Locking his jaw, Oliver shook his head. “Tommy… Don’t.”

“I’m not doing anything! It’s the tradition, surely she won’t object that!” Looking around him, Tommy finally noticed where they were. "And by the way, is there any good reason why you dragged me along to that meeting with Walter?"

Oliver had the decency to look sheepish.

"... are you jealous?” Tommy asked suspiciously, his doubts probably confirmed when his best friend pointedly avoided his eyes. "Oh my... Oliver Queen, jealous? That is something I thought I'd never see. I wasn't going to ask her out on a date, you know."

Oliver groaned. "I'm not jealous, I just didn't want... she had work and you're distracting."

"Excuse me? I am distracting? You guys were fighting over pineapple juice, like an old-married couple by the way, but of course I would distract her from work!” Tommy snorted, rolling his eyes as they finally reached the door leading to Walter’s office. “Anyway… good luck at the board meeting… it’s the day after tomorrow, right?”

“Yes,” Oliver nodded shortly.

“Let me know if there’s anything I can do.” Tommy vigorously clapped his best friend’s back, already distractingly glancing at a group of young women having coffee nearby. “In the meantime, I’m going to ask these charming ladies what they are doing next Saturday night…”

“Really? How many girls have you invited yet?” Oliver chuckled.

“Not enough, Ollie… Not enough!”

Oliver raised his eyes, amused by his friend’s antics, then proceeded to walk to Walter’s office to discuss their new marketing campaign. Their legal department and the board members had managed to put up another vote, with the shareholders this time. Most of them had already cast their votes and Moira was supposed to stop by later so the three of them could talk about it. He had a bad feeling about it, but had done his best to push those thoughts back and focus on what he could do for QC. He was also very aware there was little they could do, except wait until the day after tomorrow to get the final results. The one good thing that had come out of this mess was his mother, who had been taking charge again instead of staying at home most of the day. He had seen a new side of her, vindictive and strong-minded and his only hope was that, whatever the outcome was, the new Moira Queen was here to stay.

**

The small presentation with Mrs Anderson, of their new advertising agency had gone much faster than expected. Felicity’s notes were concise and clear, as usual, and she had promised to get back to them within the month with the first draft for their new campaign.

Moira arrived shortly after the appointment was over, and as he had feared, the news was not good. His mind was still reeling with every bit of information he had learned over the past hour as he took the stairs to get back to his own office, cursing under his breath when he realized it was later than he
Swiftly walking the steps two at a time, he made it back to his own floor in record time.

“I’m sorry, Felicity, this was longer than…” he stopped mid-sentence when he realized his assistant wasn’t at her desk. Frowning, he stepped forward, quickly glancing in the archive room. Seeing the room was just as empty, he was already fishing in his jacket to get his cellphone when he saw her sitting in the middle of his own office, surrounded by papers.

Intrigued, he softly knocked on the glass wall, trying to get her attention without scaring her off.

She raised her head, her hand reaching for the pen she was currently chewing on, her eyes big and wary. “Oh, Oliver. Good. You’re here.”

Smiling, he cautiously approached her, trying to avoid all the documents that were literally scattered on the floor. “Do I even want to know what this is all about?”

Felicity groaned, leaning her head from one side to the other to stretch her neck. “Mandy stopped by to give you a few documents. They’re on your desk, no need to hurry, though. You just have to sign them. Anyway, she might have mentioned rumors about Isabel being in the lead and…” She sighed “I’m trying to find something. Anything. So I’ve looked up her contract, Walter’s contract, which I know is pointless because if there was something we could legally do, we have a more than capable department that can take care of that but I just have this nagging feeling that…”

“Felicity. Breathe.” Oliver kneeled down next to her. “Those rumors are true, by the way. Did Mandy behave?”

She glared at him. “Really? You’re confirming that in two days we might end up with Isabel as our boss and the thing you’re worried about is if Mandy was her usual bitchy self?”

“First of all, I don’t think there is anything we can do about Isabel. And I know Mandy isn’t exactly your greatest fan…” he trailed off, wincing.

“That might be the understatement of the year,” she snorted. “but she actually did behave. I think she was already celebrating. You know how she close she is to Isabel’s assistant so she has no reason to worry about her future in this company. Unlike others. Like myself.”

He frowned. “Felicity… even if she ends up CEO, I’m not going to let her do anything against you, you know that, right?”

Felicity sighed, her shoulders slumping. “I know that. Rationally, I do know that. But it still makes me nervous.”

Trying to cheer her up, he nudged her shoulder. “Come on. It’s our first Big Belly Burger night. Don’t let her ruin that.”

Standing up, he held out his hand, helping her to get back on her feet. Together, they quickly picked up the documents off the floor, Felicity holding them in her arms protectively.

It was only when he saw the word 'confidential' on one of them that he paused. “Wait… how did you even get those?”

Felicity blushed, biting her lower lip.

Oliver tilted his head at her. “Again?”
Felicity nodded lightly, looking only mildly embarrassed.

He sighed, shaking his head. “We are really gonna have to work on that habit of yours of hacking into everything and anything whenever you are bored.”

Smiling, she grabbed him by the tie. “Or we could talk about that habit of yours of destroying perfectly good technology?”

Oliver grinned, but didn’t have time to reply as he heard the familiar ping of the elevator announcing a newcomer. The two of them took a step backwards, Felicity letting his tie fall from her hand.

“I guess Dig is done, too,” she said as she made her way to her own office, ready to greet their friend.

He watched her retreat, the longing feeling in his chest growing stronger and stronger. It was getting hard for him to keep his emotions at bay where she was concerned. At first he thought it was lust, but the more time he spent with her, the more he understood he was craving something more than sex. He wanted intimacy, tenderness. He wanted her smiles and her laughter, breakfast in bed, his fingers gently stroking the tender skin of her neck, his hand playing with her hair. He was fighting himself more and more each day, his own body acting almost on reflex when she was around him. He knew she felt something similar, but he also knew that this wasn’t the right time. She was his assistant and the last thing he wanted was to put her in the position of all his former assistants: the girl who slept with her boss. The world was cruel for working women: they were always the ones taking the blame and facing the consequences. With Isabel possibly becoming the new CEO, getting involved with Felicity would only put a giant target on her back, not to mention taint her reputation. People would disregard her achievements, her abilities and only see how she was the last one of a very long list. Pushing the depressing thoughts in the back of his mind, he turned off the light in his office, joining his friends.

**

“So… from what they know, Isabel has a majority of votes?” Dig asked as soon as they were all seated in their usual booth. They sometimes came there for lunch, but having missed it this week, they had decided to come for dinner instead.

“Yep,” Oliver answered, distractingly looking through the menu.

“And there’s nothing we can do about that?”

“I’m sure there is something to do. It’s there, we just don’t know where to look,” Felicity said, her fist landing on the table with a big thump.

Oliver turned his head, raising an eyebrow. They were both sitting next to each other, facing Dig on the other side of the booth.

“I don’t get how you can stay so calm about it!” Felicity exclaimed, furiously closing the menu and putting it back on the table.

“Because I know when the fight is over, Felicity,” Oliver explained calmly, sharing a look with Dig. “And also because I might have other things that need my attention?”
Dig and Felicity didn’t have time to ask more about his cryptic line as a waitress arrived to take their order. Felicity waited as patiently as possible until the young woman left them alone to fire the first question.

“What other things?”

Oliver sighed. “Isabel is asking for a third of my father’s inheritance.”

Dig let out a low whistle. "She’s not wasting any time, is she?"

Felicity gasped. “But he didn’t even want that child? How can she be using it to get money from him when he didn’t even… How? I mean she got the job and now she wants the money as well?”

Oliver nodded. “Apparently. And our attorney is not the most optimistic about it. When the child is born, it is officially an heir according to the law. If DNA proves it, obviously.”

“So that won’t be addressed until what… 5 months?” Dig asked, frowning.

“Probably. My mother tried to get a deal, but Isabel would rather go to court. She has way too much to gain, she could be the legal representative of her child and…”

“Therefore get even more weight at QC,” Felicity finished for him. “God, whatever we do, it looks like she’s always one step ahead.”

“At least, her being CEO could eventually change, if the board decides to. But if her child is recognized as a legal heir…” Dig trailed off.

“She is going to get access to a third of my father’s shares at QC, plus a third of his wealth,” Oliver explained, playing with the straw of his glass of water. “David, our attorney, says there won’t be any decision until the birth.”

“It also freezes your inheritance, doesn’t it?” Felicity asked. “As well as Thea’s obviously.”

“Yes. I don’t really mind about that, though,” Oliver shrugged. “It’s more what’s gonna happen once it’s born that concerns me.”

Felicity grabbed a few tortilla chips that the waitress had brought as appetizers, munching on them and not paying much attention to what Dig and Oliver were talking about. Her mind was reeling, and knowing the clock was ticking wasn’t helping.

Taking a deep breath, she interrupted them in the middle of what seemed to be predictions for football season. “So… let me get this straight. There is nothing in your father’s will that could prevent her from claiming a third of his wealth, am I right?”

Oliver sighed, a small smile playing on his lips. “No. The attorneys already checked that.”

“And there is also nothing in her contract, or Walter’s contract or anything QC related to stop her either from becoming CEO or getting shares?”

“Doesn’t seem like it,” he confirmed once more. “Which drives my mother crazy, knowing this family company will be even more divided than it already is. Having shareholders is one thing, having your late husband’s mistress being almost equal to you is another one.”

Felicity groaned. “Oh God, I didn’t even think of that. It must be awful for your mother. Didn’t she help your father start the company?”
“Yeah… she did. Well it was mostly the Dearden’s money, but I think my grandfather made sure it was legally hers when he passed away.”

“When did he die?” Dig chimed in between a few mouthfuls of chips.

“Fifteen years ago. He lost my grandmother the year prior and never got over her death.”

Felicity was so distracted with her thoughts that she didn’t even notice the waitress arriving with their food until Oliver gently nudged her leg with his own, trying to get her attention.

“Mmhh?” she mumbled, her eyes still unfocused.

“Food,” Oliver mouthed, his eyes twinkling.

They ate mostly in silence, Felicity’s usual babbling being much quieter than usual. She would pause and ask Oliver a random question every now and then, her eyebrows frowning as if she was trying to solve a particularly difficult problem.

She had just finished her burger and was distractedly eating Oliver’s fries when she suddenly paused, a fry in mid-air between her and Oliver. He turned his head, intrigued, but didn’t have time to ask her what was wrong.

“Wait. So your grandfather founded the company with your father? Is that right? And by grandfather, I mean on your mother’s side,” she asked.

“Yes. I mean it was my paternal grand-father who started it all. But it was very small, then my dad came around and took over, making it much bigger with the help of my mother’s father,” he explained once more, wondering where this was all heading to.

“Oh. OK.” She shoved the fry into her mouth, not adding anything.

Dig and Oliver shared a confused look but decided not to push it, already knowing her well enough to know it was probably best to let her sort whatever was going through her head.

They didn’t stay at the restaurant any longer than necessary, Felicity even insisting on getting a milkshake to go so she could head home sooner.

“I’m tired. You’re tired. We’re all tired and we’re going to have some tough days ahead so we should go to bed. Separately, I mean. Cause that… that would be really awkward. Not that it never happened before. It did. Not with Dig, though.”

Dig looked at them, surprised. “I didn’t know about that?”

“It’s nothing. I mean nothing happened, we had to share a bed because that’s all that was left because of the corndog festival.” Felicity waved off dismissively while Oliver helped her put her coat on.

“Do I even want to know about that festival?” Dig smirked while Oliver shook his head.

“You already know way too much, anyway.”
Once Felicity was finally home, she wasted no time. Quickly firing up her laptop, she knew exactly what to look for. The big question was still where to find the information, but she was hopeful she would get enough of a trail to lead her to her target.

The fact that Moira’s father had made sure his shares would get back to his only daughter had sparked a bit of hope in her. If he had been that careful about his will, maybe he had been just as careful with his investment to begin with. Since he was one of the original founders of the company, who knew if there wasn’t a way to use that to their advantage?

Finding out who was Mr James Dearden’s original attorney was much easier than she thought. Retracing who had been in charge of his paperwork was a bit more complicated but nothing she couldn’t do.

As she was waiting for her searches to conclude, she laid down more comfortably on the sofa, deciding that resting her eyes for a minute wouldn’t hurt, especially since it was way past midnight.

“Just a few minutes” was her last conscious thought as she drifted asleep.

**

As she rushed out of the elevator, disheveled as she had barely taken the time to get ready when she saw how late it was, she stopped dead in her tracks when she saw Oliver leaning on her desk, his arms crossed and a deep frown on his face.

“Felicity. It’s almost noon,” he sternly said.

“I know. I know! I’m so sorry, I stayed up late and forgot to…” she trailed off as her eyes travelled down his arms. He was wearing a crisp white shirt with the sleeves rolled up, her own personal kryptonite.

“You forgot to…?”

“To… I forgot to set the…” she stuttered when she saw him ruffling his hair, sighing impatiently.

He straightened up from his position, slowly walking towards her.

“Miss Smoak… I thought we had an agreement about late arrivals. If I am late, you get a free pass at yelling at me… if you are late, on the other hand…” he murmured as he shoved his hands in his pockets.

“I’m sorry, Oliver. I have found some things though, and I think they could be useful for… Isabel. And QC,” she breathlessly said, her eyes captured by the way he was looking at her.

“But a deal is a deal, Miss Smoak. You know the price to pay, don’t you?” he whispered, making her heart beat so fast she was positive it was about to hammer its way out of her chest.

“I have to bring you coffee for the rest of the week?” she squeaked, trying not to think about how close he was.

Oliver smiled softly at her. “Coffee won’t cut it. Not this time.”

She gulped loudly, her eyes fluttering as he leaned in to whisper in her ear. “Go to my office. Bend
over my desk. And wait for me.”

Oh God, yes, please. Yes.

She suddenly woke with a gasp, reaching for her glasses, putting them back on her face with a trembling hand. Taking deep gulps of air, she tried to calm down the beating of her heart, very vivid images of her dream playing in front of her eyes.

Groaning, she hid her face between her hands, mortified at her own dream, desperately trying to get rid of the heat that had taken over her body.

Good thing I have a few hours before I have to face him at work.

**

Oliver didn’t really know what to expect that following morning. He had noticed Felicity’s strange behavior at the restaurant, but he knew she was desperately trying to come up with a solution for him. She was more closed-off than usual and it was ticking his over-protectiveness. He knew she was stressing herself out more than usual, and that she was doing it for him.

But that didn’t mean he was comfortable with the distance between them. Not at all.

As he was sitting at his desk, supposed to go through yet another report but unable to focus on anything but her - something that was happening more and more these days, no matter how good he was at hiding it -, he let his eyes travel to her. She was rummaging through some files in one of her file cabinets and offering him the most perfect view on her behind. The grey dress she was wearing was tight-fitting and showcased every curve, with a dark circle around the waist and orange rectangles on the side that were begging for his hands. Gulping, his eyes travelled down her devilish legs. Long, toned, they looked so smooth and silky that he knew it was just a matter of time until he would cave in and run his hand along the tender skin, first grazing the delicate ankle and slowly make its way on her calf and thigh, only to disappear underneath the fabric of her dress.

He was so focused on all the things he so desperately wanted to do to her that he didn’t even notice her turning around. The look on his face must have given him away though because the next thing he knew, she was walking towards his office, her steps strong and decided. She distractedly threw whatever file she was holding on the sofa, her eyes never leaving his as she made her way to his desk.

“Felicity…” he said as he stood up, his hands raised in apology for what was obviously a very inappropriate behavior.

“Don’t even think about it,” she said coldly. “This is not… it’s not what I signed up for, Oliver. I’m not like all of your other assistants.”

“I know. God I know that, Felicity. I’m sorry. And I know it’s no excuse but that dress is… those squares they… I mean they… I want to…” he stuttered, feeling the beginning of a blush growing on his cheeks.
“Are you blaming your behavior on the way I dress?” she asked, her tone low and menacing.

“No! No! Of course not!” he tried to defend himself but he kept being distracted by the fire in her eyes and the way she licked her lips. “That dress isn’t responsible.”

“So that dress does nothing to you?”

“No… nothing…” he mumbled, fully aware how unconvincing he sounded, especially as he couldn’t help but stare at those God damn rectangles on her hips once more.

It was suddenly as if his own body wasn’t responding to him as he saw his hands acting on their own and reaching for her waist, despite what his brain was screaming at them. Felicity froze as she felt his hands on her body, her breathing short and ragged. She reached out to push him away, but her hand caught his white shirt and instead of giving him a hard nudge, she lingered there, wrinkling the fabric in her fist.

“Mister Queen. This is highly… inappropriate,” she breathed out, her eyes wide.

“Tell me to stop, Felicity. Please tell me to stop,” he begged her, knowing only her words would be able to break the spell that had taken over him.

She gulped as she looked at his pleading eyes, visibly unable to say the words that would break the moment. The moment that had been weeks, months in the making.

“I can’t…” was all she whispered as she firmly grabbed his tie, pulling it so he was forced to lean his head, his nose brushing against her as their breath mingled for a brief second before he could finally taste her lips.

She turned her head away at the last moment, leaving him panting with longing and desire but he didn’t have time to say anything that she was shoving him on his chair, already straddling one of his legs, her lips finding his neck and gently biting the tender flesh, soothing it with her tongue. Oliver felt his breathing quickening, the simple gesture enough to raise his arousal to alarming levels as he put his hands on her ass, firmly gripping it. Her mewl of approval sent him spiraling in a world of fantasy, already imagining all the things he could do to her that would reward him with the same sound.

He turned his head, kissing her hair, moving his mouth down on her face, gently pushing her away from his neck so he could savor the taste of her skin.

“Felicity… Are you sure?” was all he could whisper as he was literally holding onto the last shreds of sanity.

Her breathing short, she raised her head high enough to meet his eyes just as she pressed herself even more closely to him, causing a small friction that left her whimpering in his arms. It was the only answer he needed as one of his hands cradled her face, angling it towards his mouth.

_Dancing Queen_

_Young and sweet_

_Only seventeen_
The hellish ringtone was like a bucket of ice cold water dropping on him. He woke up, his eyes wide and staring at the ceiling, only aware of how painfully hard he was. His hand was wrapped around his erection and he mentally scolded himself, not even remembering when was the last time he had had the kind of dream that had him waking up with his hand literally in his pants.

As the annoying ring tone wouldn’t stop, he groaned, picking it up. Once he saw that the reason for his predicament was also the person calling him, he dropped his head back on the pillow.

Gulping, hoping his voice wouldn’t betray him, he accepted the call. “Felicity… it’s not the right time…”

Her breathy voice reached him, bringing new mental pictures that clearly didn’t help. “Oliver. I think you should come.”

*Oh Felicity. You have no idea how much I want to.*

Chapter End Notes

OK... Before you say anything, I would like to politely point to the name of the chapter... so... you guys were warned, fair and square XD

Last chapter was more on the romantic, hearteyes side, now it's clearly sexual attraction that is taking over their subconscious...
What did you think of the chapter? Did you like it? :p

Find me on Twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi ;)

+ OMG you guys, we're 5 kudos away from the 2000 THIS IS INCREDIBLE!!! THANK YOU SOOOOO MUCH!!!
YES! You guys left almost 200 kudos with last chapter, I am blown away by the response and all the comments I got. I haven't been able to reply to every single one of you, but I'm getting there lol.

Thank you so, so much for your support, during this (long) journey. Special thanks to pidanka, fearless cheerleader, and mysticaldetectivepanda who beta'd this chapter.

Remember: We left Oliver waking up from a dream, in a very... compromising situation :p

Song: Girl On Fire - Alicia Keys

"Girl On Fire"

She's just a girl and she's on fire
Hotter than a fantasy, lonely like a highway
She's living in a world and it's on fire
Feeling the catastrophe, but she knows she can fly away

Ohhhh oh oh oh oh
She got both feet on the ground
And she's burning it down
Ohhhh oh oh oh oh
She got her head in the clouds
And she's not backing down

This girl is on fire...
This girl is on fire...
She's walking on fire...
This girl is on fire...

Looks like a girl, but she's a flame
So bright, she can burn your eyes
Better look the other way
You can try but you'll never forget her name
She's on top of the world
Hottest of the hottest girls say

Ohhhh oh oh oh
We got our feet on the ground
And we're burning it down
Ohhhh oh oh oh oh
Got our head in the clouds
And we're not coming down

This girl is on fire...
This girl is on fire...
She's walking on fire...
This girl is on fire...

Everybody stares, as she goes by
'Cause they can see the flame that's in her eyes
Watch her when she's lighting up the night
Nobody knows that she's a lonely girl
And it's a lonely world
But she gon' let it burn, baby, burn, baby

This girl is on fire...
This girl is on fire...
She's walking on fire...
This girl is on fire...

Saying he needed a cold shower was an understatement. Oliver barely understood what Felicity told him on the phone – something about papers, contracts, his father and his mother. She was speaking a mile a minute, using terms he was pretty sure he had never heard in his life. But her voice… oh her voice…

As his head rested on the wall in front of him, catching his breath with her name still on his lips, he tried to gather his thoughts. The hot water cascading down his back was numbing his muscles, only reminding him of the tension that had taken over his body merely a few minutes ago. It took him a couple of minutes to finally be able to turn down the water and step out of the shower. Quickly drying up with a towel, he wasted no time in getting dressed with an old pair of jeans and a white t-shirt, his hair still slightly damp.

After a quick stop at a coffee shop not far away from Felicity’s apartment, it was around 5:30 when he rang the bell. She didn’t even ask who it was and opened the main door for him right away. Taken aback and slightly worried by her lack of safety, he made his way to the first floor, shaking his head and mentally preparing a lecture about how a young woman living by herself should never let anyone in without checking the identity of her visitor.

He actually didn’t even have time to knock on her door before she was already opening it for him, rushing him inside.

“Felicity, it’s really not safe to let me in without…” he started to say but she cut him off right away.

“Oh please, Oliver. I knew it was you,” she waved him off dismissively as she grabbed his arm and dragged him to the table in the living room. She took one of the cups of coffee he was still holding, probably gulping half of the liquid.

“OK. May I know what exactly couldn’t wait until 9AM?” Oliver asked, as he took hold of her hand, gently forcing her to let go of the cup. Judging from her edgy tone and the giant empty mug on the table, she probably had had more than enough caffeine for the next several days.
She blinked several times. “I… I had to tell you. Because we don’t have that much time and… I was up. I had to tell you.”

Oliver sighed. “I’m here now. Maybe we should sit down and…”

Felicity interrupted him, frantically twitching her hands, “no. I tried to sit down but I haven’t been able to since 3 AM. But you! Go ahead, have a seat!”

Looking at her warily, he sat down on one of the chairs around the table, taking a sip of his own coffee.

Felicity started pacing, her hands unable to stay still as she started to explain why she had to call him in the middle of the night.

“Something has been nagging me for days. You always told me that your grandfather, Mr Dearden, can I call him James, by the way? It’s much easier for me.” Not waiting for an answer she continued, “so James, God bless his soul, passed away and made Moira his only heir, am I right?”

“Yes…” Oliver answered, still confused by her reasoning. “But what does it have to…”

“Getting there, Oliver! Getting there! Therefore, your mother ended up with shares that are solely hers, am I still right?”

“Yes,” he answered curtly, knowing there was no point in trying to ask more questions.

“You also told me that he, James, was very careful about this investment, wanting to make sure it would only benefit his descendants, am I still right?”

Oliver nodded, his attention now attracted towards her pajama bottoms. They were different than the ones she had worn during the business trip, but just as Felicity. They were dark blue, with small robots he seemed to recognize from Star Wars.

“What if he was just as careful in his will?” she asked him excitedly, forcing him to pay attention to her words.

“Hum… I’m not sure I’m following you…” Oliver trailed off.

“I’ve been doing some research ever since I got back home and I found out that it is not unusual, in similar circumstances, that someone can bequeath not only shares but also set the conditions in which those shares can be used.”

“Still… not following.”

“What I am saying is that maybe there is a chance that in the original contract of QC, when it was founded by Robert and dear old James, God bless his soul, there is a clause that protects your mother as well.”

“Like what?” he asked, genuinely confused.

“I don’t know. Maybe only a Queen or a Dearden can become officially CEO unless there is no living member of any of those families willing to take on the job? It’s not that uncommon, believe me I found many cases like that.”

Oliver frowned. “But then, wouldn’t our attorneys have found out about it?”

“Probably yes. But the thing is that Robert's death couldn't have been foreseen and the original
contracts have been transmitted from one attorney’s office to another. Not to mention, you said it yourself: your father’s wealth, and that includes the parts he solely owned and not the ones that belong to your mother, will have to be divided between his heirs. The question is now how many of those shares were just his and how many were actually your mother’s. You told me yourself this was on hold. I’m ready to bet a hand that whoever has those documents now is in no hurry whatsoever.”

Felicity took a deep breath, raising a shaky hand to her forehead. “I don’t mean to say that I am positive there is something in those original documents, the ones that were created when James invested in QC and became one of the biggest shareholders, and even if it is, there is nothing that can guarantee these shares were transmitted with the same conditions and clauses to your mother but… isn’t it worth a try?”

She finally stopped, observing him and chewing her thumbnail, obviously unnerved by his lack of reaction. “Am I scaring you off? Cause I might have been told that I can be scary…”

Oliver chuckled, passing a hand over his tired face. “No. You’re not scaring me… I’m trying to make sense of everything you just said.”

“Coffee helps,” she offered, handing him his mug.

“So you think we should try to find out if there is a way out in the original contracts, am I right?”

“Yup.”

“… but what exactly can we do now? It’s not even 6 AM.”

“I… I might have run out of coffee,” she mumbled sheepishly, fiddling with the hem of her shirt.

Oliver perked an eyebrow. “You woke me up in the middle of the night because you were craving coffee?”

“It’s not exactly a craving. More like a need. But no, of course not. I didn’t wake you up just for that. I ran some searches and… nothing was digitalized back then which means I’m…” she sighed, her arms falling limply. “I’m at a loss.”

“So you’re facing a dead-end, that’s what you’re saying,” Oliver summarized, amused by the pout on her face.

“I wouldn’t have exactly put it that way but… I have to admit I was kind of hoping you would either have a copy of those bloody documents or at least tell me where they are. I assume they’re at your attorney’s office but we can’t be sure he already has them all. So we need to get there first thing. We only have a bit more than 24 hours.” She resumed her pacing, taking off her glasses and rubbing her eyes.

“Have you even slept?” Oliver asked softly, worried by the dark circles under her eyes.

She stopped dead in her tracks, her entire face flaming up as she stuttered. “Sleep? Yes, yes, obviously we slept, I mean I slept. A bit. Then I woke up when… when… well. I woke up.”

He stood up, gently placing his hands on her shoulders. “I don’t think you’ll be able to sleep with amount of coffee you’ve been drinking, but I’d feel better if you at least laid down.”

“But-” she protested.

“No buts,” he interrupted her with a finger on her lips. “There is nothing you can do right now,
anyway. Is there?"

“… I guess not,” she grumbled.

“This is what I’m going to do. I’m going to head back home, ask my mother where I can find those papers. With a bit of luck, we do have a copy. If we don’t, we’re going to head to David’s office first thing. Once the sun is completely up, I mean. You are going to try to lay down a couple of hours.”

Felicity opened her mouth to protest but he cut her off right away.

“Shhhh. Now, what you need is my grandfather’s will, the original contracts that state him as major shareholder and founding member of QC, am I right?”

She glared at him, her eyes defying. “You mean I can talk, now?”

Oliver smiled, looking down at her, marveling once more at how much shorter she was, feeling an unexpected rush of tenderness for what she was willing to do for him.

“Felicity… I want you to know that I’m really thankful for everything you’re trying to do but…”

“No buts,” she cut him off. “This is not over, Oliver. It won’t be over until Isabel is officially CEO and her child legally gets a third of your father’s inheritance. We’re not done fighting.”

**

The thing with Felicity Smoak was that ‘laying down and resting’ was absolutely out of the picture as long as she felt like there was something, somewhere that could help her solve the problem she was facing.

“And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that,” she told herself out loud as she paced in her office, waiting for Oliver. “You are just as sane as the next person. Slightly more obsessive, maybe. But that’s about it.”

Glancing at the clock once more, she bit her lips. Oliver had promised to meet her at QC by 8:30, which was still almost half an hour away.

She tried sitting down at her desk and least go through her emails, but she was too fidgety for that. For what felt like the hundredth time, she went through the list of legal documents they needed to access. She had tackled it as soon as Oliver had left her apartment, thinking it would make things easier at the attorney’s office if they had a clear listing of what exactly they were looking for. Even though a small voice deep inside her was whispering that maybe she was chasing dead-ends, she also knew she had to try. A part of her just couldn’t fathom having Isabel Rochev as CEO of the company that employed her. An even bigger part of her just couldn’t stand the look on Oliver’s face every time her name was even mentioned.

As soon as she heard the ping of the elevator, she rushed there, hoping that for once Oliver would be early.

*Thank God.*

Oliver stepped out of the elevator, still dressed in his jeans and white t-shirt, causing a small moan to
catch in her throat. *So not the time, Smoak. So not the time.*

He stopped as soon as he saw her, shaking his head. “I told you 8:30”

Felicity twisted her hands. “You really didn’t expect me to stay put, did you?”

The shadow of a smile played on his lips. “… No, not really.”

As they both walked to his office, she asked, “so? I can see you’re empty handed, so I guess there was nothing at the Mansion?”

Oliver grimaced. “No. At least not that my mother knows of. We have an appointment at the attorney’s office by 10:30.”

“Wait, what? 10:30? As in… 2 freaking hours?!”

Oliver sighed. “Their archives are usually closed in the morning, most of the time. They do have my father’s will documents, though, so we’ll go through those first.”

“But we don’t have much time, every hour counts!”

“I know that, Felicity. Dig is going to come and help us, and I figured that in the meanwhile we could just list out everything we…”

“I’ve done that already,” she cut him off.

“Maybe be more specific? Because I’m probably sure neither Dig or I have ever gone through these kind of things. There will be someone there to help us but David warned me, it’s boxes and boxes of documents. And the ones we need might actually be at the attorney’s office that was in charge of my grandfather’s will but he said he’d make sure we get those as well.”

Felicity groaned. “Of course it is. Just to make things even more complicated. But you’re right. I’m going to print out similar documents so you know what to look for.”

She was just about to get back to her own office when she noticed the strange look he threw her. “What? What’s wrong?”

Oliver pinched his lips, hesitating. “It’s just that… well…”

“What?!”

“I’ve never seen your hair in such a mess,” he eventually said sheepishly. “Not that it’s bad, it’s just unusual!” He added defensively when he saw the glare she threw at him.

“Well, excuse me Mister-I-Just-Have-To-Put-On-A-Pair-Of-Jeans-And-A-White-Tshirt-To-Look-Like-A-Freaking-Adonis, but some of us don’t have the same luck. And it’s not even that messy!” she fumed, poking him on the chest as she caught her reflection in the window behind him. “Oh God. It is messy.”

Blushing, she quickly took off the tie that was holding what was still a ponytail when she had left her place. Combing her thick hair with her fingers as she sat down at her desk, she quickly twisted it in a simple bun at the base of her neck.

Searching for standard forms took her a bit longer than expected, and she was barely done printing
them out and organizing them into two neat piles when Dig arrived, ready to go to the Queen’s attorney offices. Luckily, the three of them were actually expected and as soon as they stepped inside the modern building, they were rushed to the basement, where they kept most of the documents that weren’t of use. It turned out that the employee who was supposed to help them was a 20-something intern whose eyes turned the size of saucers when she saw Oliver.

Felicity rolled her eyes, trying to get the poor girl’s attention as she handed her the list she had prepared. “So this is what we need to find. I know some documents might be at another firm, but we’ve been told we would get them during the day, is that right?”

“Yes. Of course, I’ll bring those to you myself,” the young woman giggled, her eyes still on Oliver who automatically replied with a gentle smile.

Exasperated, Felicity looked at her boss who shoved his hands in his pockets, having the decency to look embarrassed.

“Don’t encourage her,” she hissed.

“I was trying to be polite,” he murmured back as they followed the young woman down a flight of stairs.

“We’re on a mission, here, Oliver. Manners are going to have to take the back seat.”

The enamored intern led them through aisles and aisles of boxes until they reached the end of the room, where a few tables and chairs were pushed back against a wall.

“We already prepared all the legal documents concerning the shares. If you need anything else, just ask me. I’ll be upstairs.”

“Thank you, Miss,” Oliver said gently.

“Jessica. Call me Jessica,” she answered, smiling brightly. “If you want anything… coffee, tea… Don’t hesitate to drop by.”

“Thank you, but we’re all set,” Felicity answered shortly as she put the big tote bag she had been carrying on one of the tables.

“If you’re sure…” Jessica bit her lips, throwing one last longing look at Oliver as she finally left them alone.

“Alright,” Felicity said in a decided tone as she handed Oliver and Dig two neat files. “Here are examples of what we’re looking for. I suggest we first look at the oldest dates.”

Both men shared a look as she started to unpack her tote bag, starting with a box of tissues. “I have about everything and anything we might need. We’re not leaving until we either find what we are looking for or we know for sure it’s not here.”

A thermos, a bottle of water and three plastic cups followed, as well as what looked suspiciously like surgeon masks.

“Felicity… why do we need masks, exactly?” Dig asked, his tone wary.

“Dust. Which reminds me…” she explained shortly as she went through her purse this time and pulled out a small bottle of pills. “anti-histaminic. If one of you has an allergic reaction. I also have painkillers, by the way.”
“No food?” Oliver teased her.

She glared at him as she showed him the small cooler bag she had also brought along. “Do I look like an amateur or something?”

Oliver pinched his lips, obviously trying not to laugh. “My bad. To my defense, I had no idea you had such a long experience in this area.”

“I love scavenger hunts and… you have no idea the amount of time I spent in the library when I was younger.”

“Really?” Oliver asked surprised. “I always pictured you as constantly on your computer, not much studying in the library.”

“Well, I had to do a lot of research, and sometimes the internet just doesn’t cut it. Especially for that sociology class I took on my freshman year,” she answered as she took off her jacket, setting it on the back of a chair.

“Sociology? You never told me you studied social sciences as well,” Oliver mused.

“Well, I also never told you about my goth phase, so I guess it’s safe to say the major part of my college years is still a mystery to you.”

“… goth? With piercings and stuff?” Oliver asked, intrigued with a small dreamy smile.

“OK, you two,” Dig interrupted them, dropping a dusty box on the table and sliding it towards Felicity. “How about you get to work and leave that extremely interesting conversation for tonight, maybe?”

Felicity smiled, opening the box and pulling out the files. “Yes. With piercings and stuff.”

As the hours went by, and the boxes of documents as well, Felicity’s energy started to fade away. So far, they had been able to find original contracts tying Robert Queen and other investors, but none concerning the shares that eventually came to belong to Moira.

Groaning, she closed the latest box she had been through, letting her head fall on the lid.

“What kind, exactly?” Oliver asked nonchalantly.

“Huh?” she asked, raising her head, wondering if he was talking to her or Dig. Seeing that Dig was currently on the other side of the room, she assumed the question was indeed for her. “What kind of what, exactly?”

“Piercings,” Oliver answered, still rummaging through files. He raised his head, a cheeky smile on his lips.

She tilted her head, attempting to glare at him.

“What?” he chuckled. “You can’t exactly drop this kind of bomb and not expect me to get worked up about it.”

“Worked up about it?” she raised her eyebrows.

He shook his head, grinning as he put the files back in their box. “You know what I mean… I’m curious. So where did you use to have those piercings? Apart from the ear one, I mean.”
She smiled slyly as she picked up another stack of papers. “Who said I don’t have them anymore?”

Oliver stopped, his hands freezing as he slowly raised his head.

Felicity smiled sweetly, ignoring the question in his eyes. “Keep looking.”

Oliver’s narrowing eyes travelled down her body.

“Through the files!” she playfully hit him with a lid, laughing.

Smirking, he pointed a finger at her. “I haven’t said my last word.”

She lightly slapped his hand away. “You always say that but I never see anything coming…”

“Oh, believe me… once you least expect it… I’ll find a way to make you spill the beans.”

Felicity was about to reply when Dig loudly cleared his throat, causing them to turn around to face him. He had his arms crossed on his chest and was glaring at them, shaking his head. “I thought we were on a mission, here?”

Felicity and Oliver shared a sheepish look then went back to work, trying to hide the smiles on their faces.

“Stop distracting me,” she whispered.

“Stop mentioning your piercings,” he whispered back.

“Stop bickering or I’m going to separate you,” Dig exclaimed, exasperated.

They all went back to their searching, the sounds of papers being turned the only sound disturbing the silence. Jessica brought them a few boxes in the afternoon, asking once more if they needed her help. Felicity quickly declined, not trusting anyone else with the task.

“I mean, come on,” she said as soon as the intern had left them alone. “I know it’s their job to go through those legal docs, but I’m pretty sure she’d spend more time ogling you. Not to mention, no one thinks there is actually anything to find anyway…”

Sighing, she sat down on a chair. “And maybe they’re right. Maybe I’m Luna Lovegood.”

Both men shared a confused look.

“Luna…?” Oliver asked.

“Lovegood. Harry Potter. She believes in all these things that nobody believes in. People steal her shoes,” Felicity said, defeated, as she poured herself a cup of coffee. “Although no one stole my shoes. Yet. But watch out, soon enough I’m gonna be called Loony.”

Oliver walked to her, kneeling by her chair and gently pressing her hand. “Hey. First of all… we’re a team, remember? And second of all, I promise you that no one is ever going to call you Loony. Not on my watch. And they will have to get over my dead body to get to your shoes as well.”

She let out a small giggle, nodding her head and holding his gaze.

“I hate to interrupt you… again… but I think I found something.” Dig’s voice reached them but it
took them a few seconds to register his words and tear their eyes off each other.

Felicity was on her feet so fast, she almost knocked Oliver down. “What? What did you find?”

“I’m not sure but this looks like the original contract giving Mrs Queen her shares, officially after her father’s death.”

Felicity quickly grabbed the papers from his hands, Oliver leaning over her shoulder.

“Yes… that’s the one that officially states she is now the sole owner of Mister James Dearden’s former shares and that all clauses and conditions decided when Mister James Dearden was founding member of QC apply.”

“That’s good, right?” Oliver asked.

“Yes… But they don’t say what those conditions and clauses are. Is there anything else in that file?” Felicity asked, peeking in the box.

“No. That’s literally all there is, apart from a copy of Mr Dearden’s will,” Dig answered while Felicity rummaged through the papers.

“Damn it! It still doesn’t specify anything!” Felicity cursed as she quickly read the will.

“I’m going to see David,” Oliver announced, taking the documents. “At least now he will know exactly what we need.”

He jogged out of the room, the sound of his steps echoing through the empty space.

Dig reached out and squeezed her arm reassuringly. “Hey. At least we found something. Maybe that will be enough to postpone the vote, or something.”

“No. It won’t. It’s happening tomorrow morning, no matter what. The time to give any piece of evidence was when the candidates made their presentation. That paper is not enough by itself,” she said, defeated as her shoulders slumped.

“There are still two more boxes, come on,” he gently nudged her, trying to keep her spirits high. They went through them, mostly economic reports and values of shares. As Felicity closed the lid of the last box, she let out a sigh.

“There is still Mr Dearden’s attorney, but he passed away and his cases and clients were divided between the firm partners,” Felicity said as she started to pack her belongings. “It’s going to be impossible to find.”

Dig was about to answer when the sound of rushed steps caused them both to stand up from their chairs.

“David told me that everything should be in there. He had all these documents delivered from their archives storage building.”

“Then they forgot something!” Felicity shouted as frustration was starting to get the best of her nerves. “Where is that damn building? We’ll check ourselves!”

She put her jacket on, grabbing her bags. “Come on, it’s almost 7, we don’t have much time.”

Oliver pinched his lips, shaking his head. “The location is locked digitally, for safety reasons. You can’t access it past office hours.”
“What?!” she asked, dropping her bag in disbelief. “You’re one of their biggest clients and… the only thing they can tell you is ‘you can’t get there cause it’s past office hours’? Do they know how important this is?”

Shaking, she brought a hand to her forehead. “I can’t believe this…”

“Felicity… we did everything we could do. I will still present this document to the board and ask for a small delay. Maybe they will agree,” Oliver tried to placate her as he softly put his hands on her shoulders.

“Oliver, we both know they won’t accept it. They just want to get it over with.”

“Then we will find another way. Eventually.”

Felicity sighed, glancing at Dig who was sitting on the corner of a table.

He nodded. “Losing a battle doesn’t mean you’re going to lose the war.”

As the three of them were driving back to QC, in a very unusual silence mostly due to Felicity being uncharacteristically quiet, Oliver reached out a hand to lightly squeeze her own.

Turning her head, she saw his gentle smile trying to reassure her.

“I’m supposed to be the one comforting you. Not the other way around,” she said softly.

“You’re also supposed to be the one bringing me coffee. Not the other way around,” he teased her. “So let’s just admit that our whole relationship is unconventional, once and for all, OK?”

She grinned. “That it is. Although…” she sighed, “I really thought we were going to find something.”

“We did. We just ran out of time to get the confirmation. On the bright side, today made me learn a few interesting facts about my assistant, so… I say there were a few positive things.”

“You mean my very practical approach to archive searching, I assume?” she raised an eyebrow.

“… Of course.”

They shared an amused smile before falling back into a comforting silence as they sped through the city. The night was slowly falling, and the traffic was getting busy.

It was only when Dig parked the car in QC’s garage that she noticed their hands were still attached.

Once she got home, after having dinner with Dig and Oliver in a sushi restaurant, Felicity tried watching TV to soothe her nerves. She zapped from one channel to another, unable to focus on anything. Fidgeting, she started to glance at her laptop, an idea forming in her head.

“No. This is a very bad idea,” she said out loud in a firm voice, trying to convince herself. “Don’t even think about it, Smoak.”
She picked up a book, trying to think about something else. It took her about another two minutes to give up and throw the book across the room, grabbing her laptop instead, intending to find where that archive storage was located. She was far from ready to give up and even if she had to infiltrate the damn building herself, she would find that bloody document.

Once she had found the address, she got dressed into black clothes, mentally cursing her love for bright colors for making it hard to find something suitable. It was almost 11PM when she softly knocked on Dig’s door, praying he was home and didn’t have any plans.

He answered the door right away and looked her up from head to toes, surprised. “Felicity? What… what are you doing here?”

Taking a deep breath, she rambled. “I need you to drive me to the archive storage. You shouldn’t ask any more questions really because I might, or might not, do… slightly illegal things.”

Dig’s eyebrows almost reached his hairline. “Excuse me?”

“We need to get into that building. We both know that Isabel won’t hesitate to get rid of us at the first opportunity. I mean… fire us. Not hire the Russian mob to kill us. Well, I hope so at least,” she stopped, nervously biting her lips. “Do you think she would do that?”

“Hire professional killers? No, I don’t think so,” he rolled his eyes, “but Felicity what do you want us to do? The place is locked and probably highly secured as well.”

“It is **digitally** locked, Dig. If there is one thing I’m good at… it’s wires and computers and anything digital really.” She suddenly paused, “… what do you mean by ‘us’ exactly?”

“If you think, for one second, that I’m leaving you out there all alone, then you’re officially out of your mind,” he said as he picked up his jacket and a beanie from a closet. “And I know if I refuse to drive you there, you’re probably going to get a cab or something.”

“I don’t want you to…”

“If you’re going, I’m going. Believe me… if there is a chance to get rid of that woman, I’m in.”

“I thought you said that losing a battle didn’t mean losing the war?” Felicity asked as they walked down the stairs.

“Yeah but if we can win the war right away, it’s even better.”

Getting there only took them about thirty minutes. The building was just outside of Starling, in a very much deserted area. There were similar constructions around, probably used as storage space by different companies.

Dig first made a round, checking if there were no camera or guards despite Felicity’s amusement.

“It’s just papers… and old ones that is. I highly doubt they have guards, especially if it’s electronically locked at certain hours.”

“Better safe than sorry, Felicity.”

Once he finally gave her the green light, she quickly unscrewed the control panel near the main door, digitally getting through the firewalls and protections via her tablet. Dig was on the lookout, ready to
get back to the car if any alarm went off but after barely a minute, all they heard was the lock of the door clicking.

Felicity fist-pumped, putting her tablet back in her messenger back as she pushed the door opened.

“Remind me to never get on your bad side, Felicity Smoak,” Dig whispered in admiration as he closed the door behind them.

She smiled at him, handing him one of the flashlights she had brought along. Finding the right area took them very little time as Felicity hacked the system to get the information.

Fortunately, everything concerning QC was stored on the main floor, which at least made their task easier. Unfortunately… the amount of files was frightening. They both shared a look as they saw the multitude of rows and boxes before settling to work. An uneasy feeling settled at the bottom of her stomach, knowing the clock was more than ticking. The board meeting was set up for 8AM. Of course. It’s usually in the afternoon but just this time, they had to do it as early as possible.

Take a box, open it, take the files out, look through them, put them back on, close the lid, put the box back, take a box, open it, take the files out,… she repeated the mantra in her head, but as the hours went by, her body became more and more tired, making every move slower.

“Felicity… it’s dawn,” Dig told her, speaking for the first time since they had arrived.

“We still have until 7:30, which is when the first employees arrive,” she said, not raising her eyes.

“That’s in less than one hour.”

“That means we still have about sixty minutes so I suggest we use them well,” she answered shortly, the exhaustion causing her to snap. They worked again in silence for a little while, until she started to feel bad for talking like that to him.

She took a deep breath. “I’m sorry, Dig. I didn’t mean to snap.”

“It’s OK. Oliver better give you the day off, though,” Dig chuckled. “That’s two nights in a row, for you.”

She yawned. “Don’t remind me. I might probably end up snoring and drooling on my…”

“On your?” Dig asked, glancing at her. He did a double-take as he saw her holding a paper, her mouth slightly agape. “Felicity?”

“Oh my God, Dig… I found it!” she almost cried with relief as her eyes went through the sentences once more, making sure she had read correctly the first time.

Dig rushed to her side, directing his flashlight to what she was holding between her hands. The sentences were a pure legal jargon but he saw that the date was right and it was indeed a contract signed by Robert Queen and James Dearden regarding the creation of QC and their rights as original founders, even in the case where the company would become public.

“Does that mean…” he trailed off, showing a word that had somehow attracted his attention.

“Yes! Yes!” she whisper-yelled. “That’s exactly what it means. Come on we need to clean this up and go.”
The excitement helping, it only took them a minute to put everything back the way it was. Running to the door, Felicity unlocked it once more and let Dig out, taking her tablet out to erase her traces as he went to get the car.

The sudden rush of excitement caused by her discovery had washed out any tiredness and, as she waited the few seconds it took to confirm that there wouldn’t be any traces of someone unlocking the security, she quickly glanced at her messenger bag, patting the precious document she had found. *Dumbledore’s Army 1 – Deatheathers 0.*

She was just about to unplug the wire linking her tablet to the control panel when an unknown voice behind her chilled her.

“What are you doing?”

She carefully turned around, her eyes landing on a guard a few feet away from her. He was looking at her curiously, as if the presence of an unknown was so unexpected he didn’t really know how to react. Seeing he was working security for some 20 year old papers, it wasn’t surprising, she thought.

“I… my car broke down?” she said tentatively, hoping Dig would come soon enough. She noted with relief that at least the guard’s gun was still firmly attached on his hip, and not in his hand.

She walked down the few steps. “I called a friend, he’s going to be there any minute now, but I… I needed to pee so… I knocked to see if…”

The sound of a motor reached them and she closed her eyes with relief as she saw, from the corner of her eyes, Dig’s car approaching her.

“Oh, here he is!” she said cheerfully, as Dig stopped closed to her. “Have a great day!”

She jumped on the passenger seat, the guard still bewildered. “Oh my goodness. That was scary.”

“Did he see you do anything?”

“I don’t think so,” she answered as she turned on her seat, seeing the employee examining the door. “One minute sooner and the goose was cooked, though.”

She grinned brightly at him as she fastened her seatbelt. “Damn. I feel like I’m in 24!”

Dig chuckled as he kept his eyes on the road. He pulled them on a main road, leaving the slightly deserted area between them. Unfortunately, due to the hour, the traffic was extremely busy as most people were leaving for work.

“Now that is anticlimactic,” she stated as they were slowly progressing on the highway.

“Doesn’t fit your high speed chase fantasy?” Dig asked, smirking.

Felicity groaned, her foot impatiently tapping. “Not really, no.”

“We’ll be there on time, don’t worry. I called Oliver, asked him to stall things a bit.”

She didn’t bother to answer and just nodded, pinching her lips.
It was 8:15 when they finally arrived at QC. Dig didn’t bother stopping the car, barely slowing it down to let Felicity out.

“Go! I’ll catch up!”

She jumped out of the car, holding her messenger bag as if it was the Holy Grail itself and ran up the stairs leading to the main entrance, mentally cursing herself for being so out of shape. *If I’m there on time, I promise I’ll subscribe to a gym club.*

Chapter End Notes

This chapter, and the next one, really focus on QC, Isabel, and this whole arc.

Oliver/Felicity's relationship take the backseat -a bit- because we need to solve this first XD.

It might have come to my attention that some of you might be... frustrated with the slow pace and the slow burn. It is a long journey, I completely agree, but it's a necessary one for different reasons:
Oliver had to grow up. A lot. To finally get to a place where he is ready to fully commit to a relationship and place somebody else first.
Felicity had to grow up as well, become more confident.
Their relationship had to grow from professional, to friendship, to something more. It takes time to build this kind of relationship. I wanted a deep trust and understanding of each other before anything happens. We are there, now. There is no doubt their bond is deep.
There is still the "problem" that Felicity is his assistant. Oliver is holding back because of that, which only shows that he has grown indeed. He knows it would hurt Felicity's reputation and career. His? Not so much. He's not holding back for himself, but for her. Felicity has her own reasons, which you will find out in a future chapter, as to why a relationship with her boss is clearly not something she wants.
All of this leads to one thing: There are obstacles along the way and I need the tension to build up up to a point where they can't take it anymore. Where they aren't able to listen to reason anymore. So... lots of UST, lots of close calls, lots of almost kissing moments. Until the moment when it has to happen ;)
I feel like Oliver needed to stay celibate after his break up with Laurel (which happened about a month ago). To show that he's only interested in one woman.

Also, a more personal reason: this kind of UST, teasing moments, tension, nervousness has a unique taste when it's before a relationship starts. Once they're a couple, it becomes different. And I want to enjoy those moments XD

ANyway, feel free to tell me your thoughts, I'm always opened to constructive criticism :-(twitter @PimsiePim tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com don't be shy, come say hi ;))
Hi guys!
First of all, thank you so, so much for the incredible support. It means so much to me, you have no idea.
I also need to thank my beta, yellowpretendingtobered who once again did a terrific job editing this chapter, and to pidanka who supports me everyday (and sometimes... it really is a hard job since I can be like a 6 year-old who doesn’t want to clean their room).

Song: Killer Queen- Queen

Oh and remember: we left Felicity running up the stairs to QC.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Killer Queen"

She keeps Moët et Chandon
In her pretty cabinet
'Let them eat cake,' she says
Just like Marie Antoinette
A built-in remedy
For Kruschev and Kennedy
At anytime an invitation
You can't decline

Caviar and cigarettes
Well versed in etiquette
Extraordinarily nice

She's a Killer Queen
Gunpowder, gelatine
Dynamite with a laser beam
Guaranteed to blow your mind
Anytime

Recommended at the price
Insatiable an appetite
Wanna try?

To avoid complications
She never kept the same address
In conversation
She spoke just like a baroness
Met a man from China
Went down to Geisha Minah  
Then again incidentally  
If you’re that way inclined

Perfume came naturally from Paris  
For cars she couldn’t care less  
Fastidious and precise

She's a Killer Queen  
Gunpowder, gelatine  
Dynamite with a laser beam  
Guaranteed to blow your mind  
Anytime

Drop of a hat she's as willing as  
Playful as a pussy cat  
Then momentarily out of action  
Temporarily out of gas  
To absolutely drive you wild, wild..  
She's all out to get you

She's a Killer Queen  
Gunpowder, gelatine  
Dynamite with a laser beam  
Guaranteed to blow your mind  
Anytime

Recommended at the price  
Insatiable an appetite  
Wanna try?  
You wanna try...

“Yep. Alright. Thanks Dig.” Oliver hung up the phone, turning to his mother who was sitting next to him in the limo. “Felicity might have found something… we need to try and stall this as much as possible.”

They were on their way to QC when he had gotten the phone call from his bodyguard. To say that he had been surprised by the few words of explanation he had heard was an understatement – “Felicity and I were on a solo mission. Long story short, she found something. Stall the thing, we’re on our way” – but he knew by the edge in Dig’s voice that now wasn’t the time to ask questions.

“What do you mean exactly?” his mother asked him, surprised.

“It’s… I honestly don’t know myself,” he answered, shrugging. “but I know Felicity. If she says she found something, then she did.”

“Alright but… we can’t exactly ask the board to wait and give them no reason, can we?”

Oliver hummed. “We could always ask them to play a game of Backgammon?”

Moira glanced at him, the ghost of a smile playing on her lips. “Oh, dear... I'm afraid they’re Bridge
The rest of the trip was mostly silent, the tension in the car still lingering. Oliver’s mind was torn between hope and the need to keep his expectations low. All he could do was wonder where the hell Felicity and Dig had dug up whatever they had found and also if it would be enough to tip the scale.

It was only when their driver pulled into QC’s parking lot that his mother turned to him, patting his hand reassuringly.

“You know, Oliver… whatever happens today… it’s only a battle. CEOs are voted into office but can also be voted out of it. We’ll figure it out, eventually,” she said, offering him a comforting smile.

Walter was waiting for them in the main hall and the three of them made small chat while waiting for the elevator. He seemed his usual British self: cool, calm, collected. It was only then that Oliver realized he had never seen him lose his temper. Even when he had been the one in charge of supervising him, which was saying something.

Oliver quickly glanced at his watch once they stepped inside the conference room, which was already full.

7:56 – come on guys.

He sat down at the table, next to another board member who proceeded to tell him about the Golf Tournament he was going to attend later that day. Nodding every now and then non-committedly was more than enough to keep the man going, which was fortunate considering the famous lack of interest Oliver had for the sport. Unless it involved a certain charming blonde, obviously.

He discreetly checked his phone, considering giving them a call when his mother’s voice, from next to him, caught his attention.

“Alfred… I was wondering if, before we get to topic, I could say a word?”

Oliver frowned, taken aback. He had been ready to ask a gazillion questions concerning the voting process to gain some time but never thought his mother would step in as well. He trusted Dig and Felicity above everything, and had very little doubts that if they actually asked him to stall, it was for a very good reason. But his mother didn’t know them like he did. Yet, she was apparently putting her trust in them.

“Well… of course, Moira,” Alfred answered, probably just as surprised as Oliver judging from his tone.

Moira calmly put a hand on his arm, offering him a small smile as she whispered, “Let’s try to gain a few minutes.”

He felt his lips stretch into a smile, feeling for the first time in a long time a sense of partnership between him and his mother. As if they were once more part of the same team.

As she took the stand, he quickly typed a text, hoping he would at least get an indication of where his friends were, tuning down the voices around him.

“… This is why I want to assure each and every single one of you that no matter what happens with
this vote, Queen Consolidated will always be a part of my family and so will you. I will still be
involved, and probably more than before, trying to fill in my late husband’s shoes. I have no doubts
my family will also be able to count on you and that the best interest of our company will be your
priority as well” he heard his mother say.

“Thank you, Moira. I am sure that everyone feels reassured of your… unconditional support,” Isabel
said slowly from the opposite side of the table. “I do feel like it’s more than time to get on with the
results of the vote, don’t you all agree?”

Oliver cleared his throat. “About that. I was wondering if we will be able to access legal documents
proving who voted for who?”

Isabel frowned at him, her mouth forming a hard line on her face. “As it has been said in the memo
our legal department sent us, they have made sure everything is legally-binding. Although I am
positive that, if you feel inclined, you could always ask for direct access to that information. Once the
meeting is over, obviously.”

Oliver clenched his jaw. “Obviously. I am merely trying to make sure everything is as transparent as
can be, Isabel.”

“I am confident you already checked that more than once over the last few weeks, Oliver,” she
answered coldly, raising an eyebrow. Turning to Alfred, she added, “I think we’ve waited long
enough.”

Alfred looked at Oliver apologetically, lightly shrugging his shoulders. “Let us begin, then.”

Oliver passed a nervous hand over his face, resting his elbow on the table.

The whole process was actually rather fast. All the shareholders had already cast their votes
themselves or through legal representatives. All that was left to do was simple math, adding the votes
of each candidate and hoping that this time, there would be a majority.

It was a very close fight, which surprised no one. With the insight they have had thanks to Alfred,
they knew Isabel would gain the vote.

As the president of the board was going through the remaining vote, confirming what they all knew,
Isabel’s face turned into one of triumph and satisfaction.

“Well… there is a majority of votes towards Miss…” Alfred interrupted himself as the sound of a
small commotion outside the room could be heard.

Muffled voices could be heard through the door and Oliver had to bite back a smile when he
recognized Felicity’s furious voice.

“You get the fuck out of my way or I swear to God I’m going to strangle you with your bowtie then
shove it down your throat until you choke on it!”

The door opened just then, a clearly disheveled Felicity falling through it more than anything else,
while Mark, Isabel’s assistant was hopping on one leg behind her.

“She kicked me! I’m sorry, Isabel, I tried to stop her…”
Felicity slammed the door on his face, out of breath and trying to get her hair out of her face.

“Miss, I’m sorry but this is a private meeting,” Alfred told her, caught off guard by her appearance.

“I know,” Felicity breathed as she walked up to Oliver who was just standing up to meet her halfway. “It will only take a second.”

“Alfred, this is completely inappropriate! Can we get on with the meeting and officiate the vote?” Isabel snapped.

“Yes. Of course, Miss, I’m going to have to ask you to leave,” Alfred asked once more, this time his voice more assured.

Felicity ignored him as she handed Oliver the documents she had with her.

“… Well. Alright, then. Let’s just get on with it. This Board officially names Isabel Rochev CEO of Queen Consolidated. If anyone has…”

“Mrs Queen does,” Felicity chirped.

Moira looked at her, taken aback. “I do what?”

“You were going to say that if anyone wishes to say something they have to speak now or forever hold their peace… right? Or is that just for weddings?” Felicity asked, frowning. “I’m Jewish, so I’m not even sure that phrase is still used in weddings, though.”

She turned to Oliver with questioning eyes. “Is it still used in weddings?”

“Felicity, to the point.”

“This is unacceptable, call security!” Isabel shouted, raising her arms as people around her were starting to talk to their neighbors, wondering why Oliver Queen’s assistant had interrupted their meeting to talk about weddings.

“Veto!” Felicity blurted out, causing everyone to pause and stare at her. “Mrs Queen has the right to veto any decision made by this board. Like Mister Queen,” she stopped, glancing at Oliver. “Well… the old one. I mean the one who’s dead. Oh my God, I’m so sorry. Mr Robert Queen is what I mean,” she said through gritted teeth, her eyes closed in obvious frustration.

“Miss… The right to veto was solely reserved to Robert because he was the founding member of this company.”

“He wasn’t,” Moira said softly, realization dawning on her. “He wasn’t **the** founding member. He was one of them. My father was the other one.”

“Yes!” Felicity exclaimed, fist pumping. “You were the sole heir to James Dearden’s shares and, in the original contracts as well as in his will, he made sure that all the clauses and conditions linked to his position as founding member would be passed to you as well.”

“Including the right to veto,” Oliver added, in wonder.

“Where does that even come from? We never heard of anything like this,” one of the members
asked, confused. “I mean, surely Moira would have known!”

“Here are the original contracts that state James Dearden as co-founding member of the company.” Felicity presented a document to Alfred, pointing to the specific clause. “And here it is very specifically written that all his privileges will automatically be transmitted to his daughter if he was to pass away, or his daughter’s children if she… well if she passed away as well.”

“I never knew…” Moira whispered, the emotion causing her voice to tremble slightly.

“I think Mr Queen probably never thought you would need it… and your father probably thought that the attorney in charge of his inheritance would make sure you were informed of everything in detail. But this attorney died, and then those documents were passed from one lawyer to another and… well. The rest is history, I guess.”

“It… it all seems legitimate,” Alfred’s voice interrupted them.

“What?!” Isabel stood up. “This is a set up. Obviously it is a set up!”

“Isabel. This right to veto has always existed, you know that. I suggest we get our legal department to check everything, but in the meanwhile… Moira if you have something to say about the board promoting Miss Rochev…” Alfred trailed off, unable to hide his smirk.

Moira crossed her hands on the table, leaning forward on her chair, her eyes never leaving Isabel as a small smile stretched her lips. “I veto.”

As soon as his mother finished her sentence, Oliver saw Felicity slowly walking backwards towards the door. He instinctively tried to stand up, not sure if it was to stop her or follow her, but his mother’s hand stopped him, forcing him to sit back. He looked at Felicity, wordlessly asking her to stay but she awkwardly waved her hand towards her hair, shaking her head. Only then did he fully realize how tired she looked, and how her whole appearance was the opposite of her usual neat self. She had some smears of dark dust on her forehead, her clothes were wrinkly and her face make-up free.

Despite every cell in his body screaming for him to follow her, he stayed put, watching her closing the door as quietly as possible – a striking contrast to how she had entered the room a few minutes ago.

He barely paid attention to what happened next, his mind trying to focus on anything but the vibrant need he felt to walk through that door and… hug her, or kiss her, or a little bit of everything, probably. He didn’t know what touched him the most: that she kept looking, for him, or that she never stopped thinking they would find a way. All he knew was that the day he had stumbled upon her in the entrance hall of Queen Consolidated had changed his life, in so many different ways. Where would he be right now if she hadn’t turned his world upside down?

“Oliver? Oliver!” His mother’s voice snapped him out of his thoughts. Turning his head, he noticed several board members were already leaving the room.

“Sorry, mom, I was…”

“Day-dreaming,” she finished for him with a scolding voice. Yet, there was a gentleness in her eyes
as she looked at her son.

Oliver cleared his throat and stood up from his seat. “If we’re all done, here…”

Moira smiled. “We are not, actually. We need to talk with Walter.”

He nodded nervously, shifting on his feet and unable to stop glancing at the door.

She pinched her lips, trying to keep her amusement at bay. “You know, Oliver, the last time I saw you acting like this, you were 8 and had that silly crush on your new teacher.”

Oliver shut his eyes, grimacing with embarrassment. Once he opened them, it suddenly dawned on him that Walter was nowhere to be seen. “Wait… where is Walter?”

“He went to get Miss Smoak, since you were so busy day-dreaming,” his mother answered teasingly.

He glared at her “so this whole holding me back was because…?”

Grinning, she answered, tapping his cheek. “Because your mother felt like teasing you a bit.”

Just then, Felicity walked inside the room, followed by Walter. She was talking animatedly, her hands twisting and moving in every direction. A clear sign that she was nervous and probably had way too much coffee, thought Oliver.

She had her hair back in a neat ponytail, her face was clean but there was nothing she could have done to mask the dark circles under her eyes. Her lips seemed almost raw, probably from biting them too much.

And he couldn’t keep his eyes off of her. He wasn’t aware his feet were moving when he was already walking to her, his eyes hard and blazing, not caring about Walter, his mother and whoever else was in the room. At this moment, she was all that mattered to him.

Unfortunately, it seems like she wasn’t in the same mind state as she took a step back, getting closer to Walter and glancing nervously at his mother. Seeing her uncomfortable was enough to slow him down and, as he arrived in front of her, he gulped, resisting the urge to kiss her there in front of everyone. Because at that moment, he couldn’t care less about consequences. They stayed like that for a couple of seconds, a few inches away from each other, their breathing already in sync, until he couldn’t take it anymore. He had to touch her, to make sure she was real, to make sure she was by his side, like she had been from the beginning and like he hoped she would always be. He gently cradled her face between his hands and let his lips draw a soft, chaste kiss on her forehead. He lingered probably a bit longer than necessary, letting himself at least savor that, letting her familiar smell sooth his nerves and set them on fire at the same time. Once he finally found the strength to move away from her, just enough so he could still hold her face, he noticed how red her skin was, her lips slightly agape and her eyes fixing his like she could see right through them and into his soul.

“Thank you,” he whispered, just loud enough for her to hear. He knew the words were not enough, but he also knew that, wherever she was concerned, words would never be enough.

She drew in a shaky smile, lightly nodding her head as she understood, once again, what he wasn’t saying out loud.

“I told you I’d find something,” she laughed slightly, keeping her voice quiet.
He couldn’t help but grin widely. “You did.”

Walter clearing his throat loudly finally broke them apart and they turned to face him and his mother, the two of them wearing the same blush on their faces once they finally remembered that they had company.

“Miss Smoak,” Moira said with a gentle smile as she took one of her hands between hers. “I have no idea how I can possibly thank you for what you did for my family.”

Felicity coughed awkwardly. “Oh. It was nothing, really. I mean, it was something, obviously, and I would kill for a shower right now, and something to eat, not necessarily in that order, mind you…”

Oliver bowed his head, trying to hide his smile as he gently put a hand on the small of her back, knowing the gesture would help her get back on track. He felt a weird sense of pride when she took a deep breath, gathering herself.

“I mean… I was doing my job and I’m glad I was able to help,” Felicity finished.

“I feel like we should take the time to celebrate before getting back to work. We have a lot of things to talk about, Oliver,” Walter said quietly. “But since Miss Smoak here is more than understandably tired, maybe it could wait for tonight?”

“Great idea. Miss Smoak, I would be delighted if you could join us for dinner, tonight.”

Felicity hesitated, glancing at Oliver. “I’m not sure it’s… I wouldn’t want to intrude.”

“Please. I would love to get to know you better and I’m sure we could use your insights as well concerning the future of the company. You have proved yourself to be a valuable and extremely resourceful asset, after all,” Moira gently reassured her. “But I have to admit, I’m genuinely curious as to where you found those documents.”

Felicity laughed nervously, glancing at Oliver who smiled reassuringly. “Well, you see, it was indeed in…”

She was interrupted by Mark who knocked on the open door to get their attention. “I’m sorry to interrupt but there are a few police officers looking for you, Felicity.”

He was sporting a gleeful look on his face as he saw her gulping anxiously.

“Police officers? In this building?” Moira asked in disbelief. “Surely it must be a mistake.”

Two men in police uniforms entered the room, showing off their badges and introducing themselves. Oliver protectively stood in front of Felicity as if it was enough to make her disappear.

“Miss Smoak?” The younger man asked her, peeking behind Oliver’s shoulder. “Are you Miss Felicity Smoak?”

“Yes,” she squeaked.

“Gentlemen, I have no idea why you are here but I’m sure that this can wait a few hours. We were in the middle of a very important meeting, here,” Walter said in his most intimidating voice.
“I’m afraid not, Mister Steel. Miss Smoak, you are under arrest for breaking and entering a private building as well as suspected espionage,” the older officer answered, grabbing her arm.

“What?!” Oliver shouted. “This is ridiculous!”

“She was identified by a witness this morning, sir. He testified that he caught her leaving a building belonging to a law firm. They are pressing charges.”

Felicity closed her eyes, breathing loudly. “It’s OK. No need to handcuff me, I’m not going anywhere.”

“It’s the procedure, Miss Smoak.”

“I am extremely close to Captain Shatner, which I’m sure you’re aware of, detective,” Moira said calmly in a menacing tone. “I am positive that he would side by me when I say I do not wish to see one of our most trusted employees being escorted with handcuffs.”

Both officers shared a glance, nodding slightly. “If you are willing to act as guardian and take full responsibility, Mrs Queen…”

“I am. Now, I believe you are taking her to the police station?” Moira asked, her phone already in hand.

“Yes,” they both answered, while escorting Felicity out of the room.

Oliver stood there, helpless, his hands rolled into fists. “It’s going to be OK, Felicity. We’re going to get you out of there by the end of the morning.”

She tried to smile back but she was shaking too much. She cleared her throat. “Could you please tell my neighbor to look after my cat? He might worry if he doesn’t see me.”

Oliver looked at her confused, wondering what the hell she was talking about. She doesn’t have a cat… and which neighbor?

She was already being walked down to the elevator when he finally understood. Dig. He had to make sure Dig didn’t get in trouble as well.

“Mom, we need to…”

His mother held up her hand, already busy on the phone. “I see… Alright then. Thank you, David.”

She hung up, shaking her head. “Apparently, Miss Smoak found these documents in a building belonging to David’s law firm. She had no authorized access and they are pressing charges.”

“They can’t be serious, right? She only took papers that belong to us, anyway!” Oliver yelled, throwing his hands in the air. How could this be happening?!

“Well. There are many other documents there. Confidential documents and they say they can’t let that happen, it would harm their reputation greatly.”

“Don’t tell me you’re siding with them!”
Moira took a step back. “Of course not! I am explaining their point of view. Don’t worry, Walter is going to find her a very good attorney, we will take a deal if we have to.”

“No way. She is not getting in trouble because of us, mom. That’s not right.”

Moira sighed. “I know. We are going to do everything we can, don’t worry…”

Oliver didn’t let her finish and grabbed his jacket, furiously walking to the elevator.

“Oliver! Where are you going?”

“To talk to David!” he answered angrily, pressing on the button repeatedly as if it would make it come sooner.

“Now that is not a good idea, we can’t afford to…”

Oliver cut her off with a hard look. “I don’t care what we can’t afford. He’s going to drop the charges.”

“But how exactly do you think you can do that? He told me it’s not up to him anymore!”

“He’s a fucking lawyer, isn’t he? He’ll have to find a way!” Oliver roared as he stepped inside the elevator.

Driving to the law firm didn’t take long at all, especially not in the state Oliver was in. He parked the car, jumping out of it as soon as he arrived in the garage level. Slamming the door with more force than necessary, he ran up the steps leading to the main entrance of the building, not even stopping at the receptionist desk, knowing exactly where David’s office was situated.

As the elevator’s doors slid shut, he heard the receptionist calling security in a high pitched voice which only brought a smirk on his face. A part of him was even wishing he could start a brawl to deal with all the anger and frustration he was feeling. Knowing he had more important things to do, he pushed back the thought. To say he was pissed was an understatement and seeing Felicity’s scared face dancing in front of his eyes wasn’t helping. In that moment, all he had wanted to do was protect her, make sure no one would cause her any harm. Being forced to stand there, useless, while they were taking her away from him had woken a part of him he wasn’t even aware existed. An urge of protectiveness had taken over him and the inability to act on that had caused his outburst of pure, unaltered anger.

Stepping in the hallway leading to David’s office, he didn’t stop until he reached the door, ignoring his secretary the same way he had ignored the receptionist. The poor woman didn’t even have time to gather her bearings when he was already bursting through the door and entering the room.

David was sitting at his desk, deep in talk with another man. Obviously interrupting an appointment, Oliver stood on the threshold, arms crossed over his chest.

Both men jumped at the commotion, swearing.

“Oliver. This is not the right time…” David started, frowning.
“It’s the perfect time. You are going to drop the charges against my assistant right now.”

“Mister Queen,” the other man stood up, with a fake polite smile on his face as he stretched out a hand. “Roger Smith. I am one of the Partners.”

Oliver reluctantly shook his hand, his jaw still locked.

“I am aware of the situation. Unfortunately, I am sure you understand we cannot let this go so easily. For all we know, Miss Stoke could have stolen confidential and sensitive documents from other clients.”

“Her name is Felicity Smoak,” Oliver gritted through his teeth.

“Yes. Miss Smoak. As I was saying, I am sure you understand…”

Oliver cut him off coldly. “What I understand is that David, here, is supposed to be our attorney. My family’s attorney. We were in a difficult situation that could have cost us the leadership of our company and he told us there was no legal way to prevent it. Yet… my assistant found, in the documents you had in your possession, a way out.”

“As you know, we were running out of time,” David tried to placate him. “And we weren’t in charge of Mr Dearden’s legal documents, we were just supposed to archive them. There was no way we could have known…”

“There was a way. It was to find and read those bloody documents!” Oliver took a deep breath, willing himself to stay calm. “Here is what we are going to do. You are going to drop all charges. You are going to tell everyone Miss Smoak had the right to access that building yesterday.”

“Now, son, I understand, I used to have a charming assistant…” Mr Smith tried to intervene.

Oliver glared at him, feeling a vein beating on his forehead. “Be really careful what you are going to say, Mr Smith. And I am not your son.”

“Oliver, why don’t we sit down and talk about it calmly…” David offered.

“No. Your firm is going to make the statement to the Police officers, the DA, the Governor, the President even, I don’t fucking care.” Oliver approached him menacingly, noting with satisfaction that his height was giving him a physical advantage. “But you are going to make sure Miss Smoak is coming out of this cleared and fully innocent. If you don’t… I am going to make a public statement about the gigantic mess you could have caused if it wasn’t for her.”

“Are you threatening us?” Mr Smith asked, the tone of his voice sounding offended.

“No. Just presenting you with the consequences if Miss Smoak is not cleared of full charges by noon. Believe me… You don’t want to make an enemy out of me… or my family. We have a lot of friends, and I can guarantee you that every single one of them will know, by the end of the day, exactly how incompetent your firm is when it comes to protecting assets. If you want to still have clients by the end of the day, I suggest you reconsider your position,” Oliver explained calmly, his voice low and cold as he made his way to the desk. He picked up the phone, handing it to the attorney. “Sort it out. I am going to pick up my assistant at the Police Station right now. It’s about twenty minutes away. If, by the time I make it there, the situation is not resolved, I am calling the
press and making a public statement.”

He shoved the phone in David’s hands and left the room, leaving both men in a stunned silence.

As soon as he was out of the building, he called Dig to ask him to keep a low profile until everything was sorted out. The older man understood right away, but was more worried about Felicity. Oliver quickly reassured him he was taking care of it and that, hopefully, she would be back home within the hour. He was just parking his car on the curb, next to the Police Station, when he saw a stunned Felicity walking out, fishing for her phone in her purse. Closing the door, he ran to her, yelling her name to get her attention.

She was so surprised to see him running to her that she dropped her bag on the floor.

“How did you know they were dropping the…” she asked as soon as he was close enough but she didn’t have time to finish her sentence when he engulfed her in his arms.

A little voice inside his head was telling him that showing his affection so publicly was probably a bad idea, but at this moment he was absolutely unable to keep her at arm’s length. She was wearing flats, which meant the top of her head barely reached his shoulder and he unconsciously rubbed his chin on her hair, breathing in the unique scent that was her. Holding her against him helped calm down the beating of his heart and after a few seconds of shocked surprise, he felt her relax in the embrace as well. Her arms lightly circled his waist as if she was afraid to read too much in his gesture. He hummed quietly, his hands rubbing reassuring circles on her back. He felt her take a deep breath and snuggle into his chest, her hands gripping the material of his shirt.

He honestly had no idea how long they stayed there but, eventually, the background noise burst their bubble and he reluctantly pulled away, only allowing himself to press a soft kiss on her head, a part of him hoping she wouldn’t notice.

Putting his hands on her shoulders, he finally took a step back, his eyes searching hers. “Are you OK?”

She smiled. “Oliver. I literally stayed there for like... five minutes. I survived.”

He chuckled then leaned to pick up her bag, that was still on the ground. Handing it to her, he put a hand on the small of her back. “Come on. I’m driving you home.”

“Wait. How did you know they were dropping charges? And what do you mean, home? I thought we were supposed to…”

Oliver interrupted her. “I had a talk with David… we all agree it’s just a misunderstanding. Don’t worry about it. And you are going home, so you can take a nap and let your body get rid of all that caffeine you’ve been injecting yourself with lately.”

As soon as they were in his car, she explained how she and Dig had gone to the archive building in the middle of the night, going through boxes and boxes of documents until they found what they were looking for. She also mentioned her small encounter with the guard, the same one who probably ratted her out, and how it felt like being on a TV show. He listened to her patiently, driving as slowly as possible, unwilling to stop her as he couldn’t get rid of the smile on his face.

“So you just dragged Dig along and broke into a high security building in the middle of the night and did not once think about calling me?” he finally asked, laughing.
As she didn’t answer, he turned his head to look at her. She was asleep, her head leaning on the window, her ponytail hanging miserably on the side of her face and glasses slightly askew. He smiled softly, turning his eyes back on the road. He was in front of her building a few minutes later and considered waking her up. Seeing how deep in sleep she was, he didn’t have the heart to.

Quickly picking up her bag, he looked for her keys, knowing she usually put them in the front pocket. He got out of the car and went to her side, opening the door, slipping the keychain around the index of his right hand. He picked her up as delicately as he could and froze when she stirred against him, only to snuggle in his arms, moaning softly. He kicked the car door closed and hurriedly made his way up the stairs to the main entrance. Thankfully someone was coming out at that moment, so he only had to slip through the open door and walk the flight of stairs to her apartment. Unlocking her door was a bit more complicated as he held her protectively against him while the arm that was underneath her legs reached for the lock. After a few attempts, he managed to get the key inside and sighed with relief when the door finally opened.

He went straight to her bedroom, putting her down on her bed. She didn’t wake up but rolled onto her side and grabbed a pillow, hiding her face in it. He chuckled quietly as he took off her glasses and shoes, setting her purse aside, and grabbed the comforter to tuck her in. He closed the door as quietly as he could and went to check if she had enough food in her fridge.

Shaking his head, he stood in her kitchen staring at the container with leftover Asian food and the two yogurts she had. A quick glance in the freezer confirmed his doubts: apart from ice-cream and frozen pizza, there was nothing remotely healthy for her to eat.

A quick stop at the grocery store down the street fixed that and, as he placed eggs, milk and cheese in her fridge along with baby carrots and cherry tomatoes, he realized it was probably the first time in his life he was stocking up a fridge for someone else. He almost never even did it for himself, apart from when he was renting a house with Tommy for one of their numerous vacations. Even then, they often had a maid who took care of that for them.

A fresh loaf of bread was standing on her counter, along with a small selection of fruits. He grinned mischievously as he placed a pineapple in the center of her dining table.

After quickly scribbling down a note asking her to let him know when she was awake and if she could make it to dinner at the Mansion later tonight, he walked out of her apartment, locking the door behind him with the spare key she always kept in her living room.

His mother was waiting for him when he made it back to his office around noon. He had quickly grabbed a sandwich on the way and was munching at it when he stopped dead in his track, taken aback by the vision of his mother patiently waiting on the small sofa.

“Mom?”

“Oliver. How nice of you to finally come back,” she greeted him sarcastically.

“I’m sorry, I was…”

“Threatening our long-time attorney?” she asked calmly, perking an eyebrow.
Opening and closing his mouth like a fish out of water, Oliver shifted on his feet. “That’s not exactly…”

Moira interrupted him. “Oliver, please. Sit down.”

He automatically sat beside her. “Listen, I did what I had to do. There was no way I could let her…”

Moira smiled. “You did right, Oliver.”

“I did?” he asked, surprised, as he set down the rest of his sandwich on the small table.

“Of course, you did. I wouldn’t have been able to sleep if that poor girl had ended up in trouble trying to fix the mess I helped create. And you were absolutely right about what you told David. That’s why I informed him we wouldn’t be continuing our partnership from now on.”

Oliver cleared his throat. “I didn’t say anything about that, you know…”

“I can’t trust him anymore. But we came to an agreement. He won’t mention what Miss Smoak did, and I won’t say anything about his lack of… thoroughness concerning our business. I think he was actually relieved. I’m afraid I must have been rather soft, especially after what you told him in his office,” she gently teased him.

He groaned. “They had it coming. I’m not gonna lie though, I’m glad he won’t be our attorney anymore.”

“That makes two of us,” she sighed, lightly patting his hand. “I assume Miss Smoak is safely home?”

“Yes. She is resting. I’m not sure if she’s going to wake up in time for dinner, though,” he winced.

“Then she’ll come tomorrow night. I would really like to talk to her. Get to know her a bit more. She seems like a very interesting young woman.”

Oliver chuckled. “Mom… you have no idea.”

Chapter End Notes

See? No cliffhanger!

As you can see, not everything is solved yet concerning Isabel. But it’s a f*** good start lol. It completely changes the dynamic because now she doesn’t have the upper hand anymore.

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim and tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Happy Valentine's Day everyone! I worked really hard to get this chapter ready for it, because it's a pretty romantic one...

I want to thank Pidanka who put so much thoughts into this chapter, especially in the dressing department... :p and Mysticaldetectivepanda who edited it for me, understanding how important it was to me :) 

Thanks to all of you who keep reaching out, this feels amazing, the kudos and comments, and twitter/tumblr as well. I really hope you will like it ;)

Song: Can't Help Falling In Love - Elvis Prestley (But I have to say I also have a soft spot for the version by Twenty One Pilots, Michael Bublé or Haley Heinhart (gorgeous piano version that one))

PS: This is a very long chapter...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Can't Help Falling In Love"

Wise men say
Only fools rush in
But I can't help falling in love with you
    Shall I stay
    Would it be a sin
If I can't help falling in love with you

    Like a river flows
    Surely to the sea
    Darling so it goes
Some things are meant to be
    Take my hand,
    Take my whole life too
For I can't help falling in love with you

    Like a river flows
    Surely to the sea
    Darling so it goes
Some things are meant to be
    Take my hand,
    Take my whole life too
For I can't help falling in love with you
For I can't help falling in love with you
“So, Miss Smoak, I have to admit I was a bit surprised when Oliver told us how you managed to get your hands on those contracts,” Moira said as they were taking their seats around the big table at the Queen Mansion.

When Felicity had woken up after her nap, the day before, she had called Oliver right away, having slept way past 6PM. He had assured her there was no problem in postponing the dinner, his mother confirming that she was more than welcome to join them the next day.

To say that she had been nervous about the invitation was an understatement. Last time she had been in the Mansion, she had inadvertently caused Oliver to break off his engagement… and the time before that was for Robert Queen’s funeral. Suffice it to say, the place was giving her the jitters. After a cry for help, Sara had helped her pick an appropriate outfit, stating that feeling confident in her clothes was already a good start. A brand new dress, with a grey skirt and a sleeveless black and red floral pattern top had been approved by her friend, along with a pair of black high heeled sandals. Sara had straightened her thick hair and given her the thumbs up before providing her a ride to the Queen Mansion.

Probably sensing how nervous she was, Oliver had given her a tour of the house instead of joining his mother and Walter for a drink. But now that they were all taking place in the dining room, she couldn’t help but wish she had had the chance to get a drink to soothe her nerves.

She cleared her throat. “Well… There was a lot of luck involved, to be fair.”

“And resilience. An admirable quality,” Walter said gently as Raisa was pouring the wine.

Moira was sitting at the end of the table, Walter on her right and Felicity on her left. Oliver had taken place next to Felicity after pulling out a chair for her.

He offered her a small reassuring smile, his hand lingering on her back probably a bit longer than necessary.

“Once Felicity has her mind set on something, there is literally nothing that can stop her. I might have learned that the hard way,” Oliver laughed lightly.

“All in all, my son is very lucky to have you. So are we, actually,” Moira smiled gently at her.

Felicity smiled back, her hands fidgeting with the cutlery, mentally trying to remember which fork to use for which course. Moira, noticing her nervousness, tried to change topic.

“I do know you first tried for a position in our IT Department. I can see that you are doing a fantastic job as Oliver’s assistant, but don’t you miss it sometimes?”

“Oh. Well. I do miss it sometimes, but I’ve had to face so many challenges since I started working with Oliver that I barely have time to miss anything…” she giggled. “Not to mention being an IT girl is usually more about cleaning up porn spam than anything else.” Felicity’s eyes grew the size of saucers once she realized her verbal faux-pas. Moira pinched her lips while Walter did his best to hide his smile. She turned to face Oliver for support but he was too busy trying to muffle his laugh.

“Oh God. I didn’t mean… I obviously have no idea what employees of QC do on their computers. Apart from Oliver, because it’s my job,” she rambled, her face flaming up while she twisted her napkin. “Although he doesn’t! Watch this… kind of… things. At work, I mean. I don’t… I obviously
don’t know about what he does in his personal time… and…”

Oliver cleared his throat. “Felicity, would you like a glass of water?”

“Oh yes, please,” she said, grabbing the glass he had just filled and gulping it down, feeling the cold liquid calming her nerves.

This is a nightmare. It’s even worse than that time when I rambled to the Rabbi’s wife about the multiple uses of a cucumber.

Raisa serving their first course saved her from embarrassment and Walter, being the gentleman he was, carefully reoriented the conversation over to the new direction he was willing to take at QC. As he and Moira started talking about new potential investments, she felt Oliver leaning towards her.

“Relax. You’re doing fine,” he whispered in her ear.

She glared at him, keeping her voice just as low. “Easy for you to say. You’re not the one who talked about porn in the middle of dinner!”

“Technically, it was before dinner,” he winked, taking a bite of his Maine lobster.

Smiling, she grabbed her fork and followed his lead.

After a glass of wine, she felt more at ease, which Moira probably noticed as well.

“Oliver told me you are from Boston?” she asked her just as their plates were being taken away.

“I lived there for a few years while I was studying. And afterwards, until I started working for QC. I am originally from Las Vegas, though,” Felicity replied, having regained a bit of confidence.

Moira raised her eyebrows. “Oh, that must have been quite a change. What is your parents’ occupation?”

“My mother has been working at Caesar’s Palace for years as a waitress. I haven’t seen my father since I was a little girl.”

“Oh. I’m sorry to hear that. Your mother obviously did an admirable job raising you by herself though. It must have been tough for her,” Moira said, her eyes softening.

“Well… it was. But it’s not like we had any choice, so… we just found a way to make it work”, Felicity shrugged, tearing off a piece of her bun.

“Felicity got a full scholarship to MIT,” Oliver chimed in.

“That is very impressive,” Walter nodded approvingly. “And you graduated at such a young age as well. Didn’t you just turn 21?”

“Yes. A few weeks ago, actually,” Felicity smiled, then sobered up when she remembered that it was the day Robert had died. Oliver must have had the same thought because he quickly changed topic.

“So mom… have you thought about Walter’s proposition?” he asked, popping a piece of bread in his mouth.

Moira sighed, shaking her head but her eyes lighting up betrayed her. She turned to Felicity,
explaining, “Walter would like me to be co-CEO.”

Felicity raised her eyebrows, taken aback. “Oh wow. I mean that in a good way! Having a Queen in a leading position is actually a great idea.”

“See? It makes sense to everyone but you, mom,” Oliver chuckled. “You would do great. You know this company, you know our partners… you’re just a bit rusty but nothing Walter can’t help you with. Look what he’s managed to do with me” he added, smirking.

Moira smiled at him warmly. “Anyway… I told you I would consider it. I feel like these last few weeks have been quite the roller coaster and with everything that has been going on, I wouldn’t want Thea to feel left out.”

Oliver rolled his eyes. “Mom. Thea would be thrilled and to be fair, if she feels OK enough to go on a last-minute trip with her friends to New York, she should be fine with you going back to work.”

“We’ll see,” Moira said non-committally, efficiently ending the conversation as Raisa was bringing their main course.

As the housekeeper set down a plate before Felicity, her eyes lit up once she saw her favorite vegetable with what looked like seared salmon and fried polenta.

“Broccoli, just as you asked, Mister Oliver,” Raisa said with a charming Russian accent.

“Since when do you even like broccoli, Oliver?” Moira laughed slightly as Walter was pouring a glass of water for her.

Oliver coughed awkwardly, avoiding her eyes. “It’s… it’s Felicity’s favorite vegetable.”

Moira and Felicity both raised their eyebrows, glancing at him.

“I never told you it was my favorite vegetable…” Felicity wondered out loud. “Oh. Oooh,” she added, blushing, realizing he must have remembered their little escapade in the kitchen back in Ivy Town. She looked at Oliver who smiled sheepishly, shrugging. She pinched her lips, trying to keep her smile at bay. “Yes, he’s right. It’s my favorite vegetable. Although, in my defense… I didn’t know you were so observant, Oliver.”

“Well… that makes two of us, Miss Smoak,” Moira stated, seemingly intrigued by their interaction.

This was enough to get her son’s attention. Oliver cleared his throat, suddenly very focused on his salmon.

As they all started to eat, the silence grew to an alarmingly awkward level, making Felicity desperate for anything that could cut the uneasy feeling.

“We still need to find a way to get rid of Isabel, though,” she finally blurted out, unable to stand the silence any longer.

Her three dinner companions looked at her with various expressions. Moira was slightly frowning, Walter seemed taken aback and Oliver was probably trying to figure out how her brain had jumped from broccoli to Isabel.

“I don’t mean… rid of like…” she mimicked a slicing movement across her throat. “More like… she is still vice-president and, well… probably hates me too now that I think of it. Which is not why we should get… rid of her… but well… I would sleep better at night because she freaks me out to be
honest,” she rambled helplessly, unconsciously massacring her polenta with her fork.

“‘You mean we can’t trust her at such a high position?” Moira asked gently.

“Yes,” Felicity breathed out, relieved that someone managed to understand what she meant. “That is exactly what I meant. Not that it’s any of my business, though.”

“Well, like you said… she probably doesn’t like you very much at the moment,” Walter chuckled.

Oliver took a sip of wine and, putting his glass down, added, “don’t worry. We’re going to handle that as well. Besides, she is on sick leave right now.”

“Let me take care of Isabel. I plan to talk to her, but I need a few… backers first,” Moira cryptically said. “Although I do agree with you, Miss Smoak. We do need to find a way to get her out of our lives.”

“Mom…” Oliver sighed.

“I know, Oliver. I know. If the child really is Robert’s, I will not hold it responsible. Whenever he or she is old enough, they will be welcome here if they want to know you and Thea. But that doesn’t mean I’m willing to compromise with the mother.”

The rest of the dinner was an interesting mix of awkwardness - mostly because of her, something she was fully aware of - and animated conversations about QC. Interestingly enough, Moira had very modern opinions over the new direction Walter was willing to take. Felicity could see they would make a good team and really lead the company and its employees in a very dynamic way.

“We need better daycare facilities. Last time I was there, I noticed how small the place is,” Moira explained. “It was perfect when we first moved into the building, but times have changed and more and more women are working.”

“Absolutely. There isn’t enough room and the capacity is so limited,” Felicity approved.

Oliver shook his head. “I understand that, but the budget for this year doesn’t allow for this kind of expenses.”

“Then we’ll make it a priority for next year,” his mother answered, taking a sip of tea. She had declined dessert, which was composed of a home-made ice cream and a berry crumble.

Felicity nodded, taking her last spoon of ice cream and moving to the crumble. “If you really want to present Queen Consolidated as a family company, it is vital to show that all families matter, not just the one that has its name on top of the building.”

She paused just as she was about to dig into the warm fruity dessert, wincing at her own words. “I meant that… respectfully.”

“Miss Smoak is completely right,” Moira approved. “If you want to present that front, you have to do it fully, not just for appearances’ sake.”

“I can see we’re overmatched,” Walter told Oliver, perking an eyebrow.

Oliver smiled. “Somehow… I knew that was how this dinner would end.”
Once they were done with their after dinner drinks, Walter offered to drive Felicity home. She quickly declined, knowing they both lived in completely different directions.

“I was planning on calling a cab, anyway. But thank you,” she smiled as she shook his hand when he was departing. Taking this as her own cue to leave, she excused herself and went to the bathroom, stopping on her way back to give a quick call to a taxi company. She was back in the sitting room a few minutes later, surprised to see Moira standing there.

“Miss Smoak, it was a pleasure to finally get to know you better,” she said as she took one of Felicity’s hand between hers. “I do hope we’ll have the opportunity to interact more in the future.”

“Likewise, Mrs Queen,” she answered, slightly surprised by how much of a rush Moira seemed to be in.

“Oliver, why don’t you show Felicity the gardens? It’s not as pretty as it is in daylight, but it’s still lovely,” Moira offered. “I would offer to show you myself but I have to admit I am feeling a bit tired. I hope you don’t mind if I abandon you for the evening?”

“Of… of course not,” Felicity replied, glancing at Oliver who was shoving his hands in his pockets.

“Good night and thank you very much for this dinner. It was lovely.”

“Anytime dear. Good night to you as well,” Moira said as she left the room.

“Well… would you like to see the gardens?” Oliver offered. “I mean… while we wait for your cab? By the way, I could have driven you back, you know.”

Felicity grinned while bumping her shoulder against his arm. “I know. Take it as me being an independent woman.”

Grabbing her purse, she followed him outside. The night had already fallen, but the air was still warm, which she was thankful for since she didn’t bring a jacket with her.

There were lights everywhere, casting a dim, quiet halo that was only disturbed by the sounds of their steps on the gravels.

“I’m afraid your mother thinks I’m a bit… weird.” Felicity said quietly after a couple of minutes of mindless strolling. The silence between them was comfortable, something they were used to but there was something in the air that made her slightly nervous. The whole scene was a bit too… romantic for her sanity, she decided.

“No, she doesn’t. I think she is mostly intrigued by you.”

“Oliver… I talked about NSFW websites,” she glared at him.

He laughed. “OK… I have to admit that must be a first for her, having this kind of conversation at her dining table. But the rest of the night went pretty smoothly… knowing you, it could have been way worse.”

“Knowing me?” she gasped, playfully punching him on the arm.

“Hey!” he protested, holding his hands in defense. “You’re the one who talked about porn to my mother!”

She groaned. “Did you really have to say the word?
“Why, you’re the only one who can?” he teased her.

She huffed, crossing her arms over her chest. Deliberately changing the topic, she asked, “what did your mother mean by needing backers?”

Oliver frowned. “I’m not sure, actually. I know she intends to offer Isabel a deal to resign from her position, though.”

“Last time you tried to make a deal with Isabel, she turned it down.”

“That was before she was aware of the fact that my mother would always get the last word.”

“True,” Felicity nodded.

“And it’s thanks to you,” he smiled softly as they stopped by a fountain, the sound of splashing water surrounding them. They both sat down on a small bench, facing the entrance of the property.

The silence between them stretched for a while, until Felicity said thoughtfully. “I always wanted a garden when I was a kid. Although this is more like a park.”

He smiled. “did you live in an apartment?”

“Yup. Well at first we lived in a house but we moved into an apartment when my father left us. I barely remember what it was like when he was living with us, but we didn’t have a garden like… a green garden. Vegas being in the middle of the desert, we had a… sandy, rocky backyard.”

“Tommy is hell bent on going to Vegas with you, you know.”

“No way.”

“You know how he is… he won’t give up. And don’t tell me the fact that you’re finally old enough to gamble or play poker isn’t itching you.”

She stayed silent, a tale-tell blush growing on her cheeks.

Oliver paused, watching her shifting uncomfortably. “… Felicity?”

She coughed, asking innocently. “yes?”

“Did you actually trick your way into a casino?”

“Maybe?” she winced, her eyes firmly on the main alley leading to the Mansion.

Oliver chuckled. “Why am I even surprised… and I used to believe you were… just a good girl.”

Felicity side-eyed him. “Really?”

“Really,” he grinned widely. “I know better now. There’s so much more to you than meets the eye.”

She didn’t have the opportunity to ask more. Oliver stood up suddenly, holding out a hand to help her up as well. “Your cab is here.”

As he opened the door for her, he leaned in and pressed a small kiss on her cheek. “Thank you for coming tonight.”

Surprised by the gesture, she didn’t respond and sat down on the backseat. She observed him as he
took a step back, shoving his hands in his pockets. The driver had to ask twice to know her destination, forcing her to tear her eyes off of Oliver.

As she was giving her address, she noticed from the corner of her eyes Oliver walking back to the Mansion and turning once more to catch a last glimpse of the car as it was leaving the property.

Sighing, she rested her head against the seat, closing her eyes. Tonight had been… different. Not quite what she had expected. Obviously the whole dinner had been formal, which was to expect when you were invited to the Queen Mansion. But there had been a quiet intimacy, despite the awkwardness. It wasn’t the first time she had had dinner with Oliver… and it also wasn’t the first time she had interacted with Moira Queen or even Walter Steel. Yet, something had shifted. Like some pieces of the puzzle finally falling back in the right place. It didn’t feel like a work dinner, it didn’t feel forced. It almost felt like something she could get used to. And the thought terrified her.

**

The week following the dinner went by in a blur. The news of Walter being promoted against all odds, and also the rumors that Moira Queen herself was about to step up, had put the company in a frenzy. Oliver and Felicity had barely had time to talk to each other as he was constantly in Walter’s office, trusting her to handle things for him. That was something she couldn’t be more thankful for as she was desperately trying to put some distance between them. They had grown really close in the past few months and she was confident that this was the only cause of her burgeoning – and totally inappropriate- feelings. Spending so much time with a man as charming as Oliver Queen and not starting to feel a little something was almost impossible. Especially when the man seemingly enjoyed torturing her with lingering touches, small winks and soft smiles that he appeared to only have for her. Not to mention that low, quiet voice and the way he always said her name as if he was savoring it rolling from his lips. Lips that were full and so soft-looking she was struggling to keep her eyes off them. There were a number of times she had wondered how exactly they would feel pressed against hers and if he was as good a kisser as he seemed to be. For probably the hundredth time that week, she shook her head, forcing herself to focus on what she was doing as she put a dress back on the rack.

“This one?” Sara asked, holding out a blue dress. The fabric was silky, with a flowy skirt and a corset-like top.

Felicity frowned. “I don’t want it to be strapless. I hate that, I always have to check if… nothing is popping out. Not that there is a lot that could pop out… but still.”

Saturday morning and early afternoon had Felicity and Sara going on a shopping spree. Both were invited to Tommy’s birthday party and Felicity didn’t have any kind of dress that could fit the occasion. She had called Sara in panic as she had realized the party was tonight. The theme being Christmas in July, she was looking for something a bit out of the ordinary… something with a little bit of a wow factor. And her wardrobe, while it had improved in the dress department, clearly still lacked that kind of clothes.

“By the way… you didn’t tell me, how did that dinner go?” Sara asked, as they were walking down rows and rows of party dresses.
“Good. I think,” Felicity answered as she took a closer look at a purple dress, before putting it back, shaking her head. “It was a bit… weird.”

“Did you have to go through the famous Moira Queen interrogation?”

Felicity glanced at her friend, confused. “No… I don’t think so at least? She did ask me about my parents and where I grew up, but… those questions are pretty common.”

Sara looked up, surprised. “Really? That’s… weird.”

“Why? Also… what would she feel the need to interrogate me? It’s not like I’m applying for a position or something.”

“Well, usually she asks about your job, where do you see yourself in 5 years, democrat or republican, which kind of religious background you have,…” Sara explained as she held out a dress in front of Felicity.

“That’s the kind of questions you ask your son’s girlfriend, not his assistant,” Felicity snorted, grimacing at the dress.

“Mmhmhh…” Sara replied non-committedly. “Ha! That’s the one!” she exclaimed, holding out a short dress, with only one strap covering a shoulder.

“Are you sure? I mean… it’s sparkly. I don’t think…” Felicity hesitated.

“It’s a Christmas theme, of course sparkles are good! And you are going to look amazing in that.” Sara shoved her towards the dressing rooms, not listening to her protests. “Trust me on that one.”

After a few hesitations, Felicity caved in, knowing it would be quicker to do as Sara said rather than argue pointlessly about it. As she was soothing the fabric over her stomach, she turned around, catching a look at the mirror.

“Oh,” she murmured, surprised.

“So? How does it look?” Sara’s cheerful voice reached through the thick curtain.

“I… I kinda like it,” Felicity admitted, trying to see if the dress was as flattering in the back as it was in the front.

“Show me!”

Taking a deep breath, Felicity pulled off the curtain.

“Oh wow. That’s it,” Sara said, grinning. “Stop looking. That’s the one.”

“It’s not too much? I mean there's a cut out in the back…”

“Are you kidding me? His jaw is going to hit the floor!”

Felicity looked at her, confused. “You know that Barry and I aren’t together anymore, right? You even said we were clearly better off as friends.”

“Barry? Oh right… he’s your plus-one,” Sara answered distractingly, too busy circling around her friend. “I knew that dress would show off your ass.”

“Then who are you talking about?”
“Mmmh? You know what, you need to wear your hair up with that dress so we can see the details. I know this fantastic hairdresser near your place, he’ll do an amazing job in no time,” Sara said, not-so subtly changing topics.

Felicity looked at her suspiciously but didn’t have time to press the subject.

“And I have the perfect shoes for that dress! Skin-toned sandals, high heels of course. Lucky we have the exact same shoe size.”

Once she was back home, with her new dress and also new lingerie, thanks to Sara insisting that such a dress needed appropriate underwear, she sat on her couch, sighing. Her friend was about as exhausting as her mother when it came to shopping, something she hadn’t been aware of. Sara wasn’t exactly a girly-girly per say but apparently playing dolls with her friend was some kind of a guilty pleasure for her. As she automatically checked her phone, she saw that Oliver had sent her a text. Smiling, she opened it up, surprised to see a photo attached.

A giggle escaped her mouth when she realized he had taken a selfie of him reading the first Harry Potter.

Biting her lips, she quickly texted him back.

**Well. About time!**

Barely a few seconds later, her phone pinged again.

**Don’t get your hopes too high. It’s more out of frustration than anything else. You quote this thing at least once a day.**

Kicking off her shoes, she made herself more comfortable on the sofa, stretching her legs and resting her head against the armrest.

*My pride in knowing you actually pay attention to what I say is somehow diminished by the fact that you don’t seem able to do so when I explain you how to work the fax machine.*

I told you. Repeatedly. That thing hates me. By the way, I’m positive it’s not Snape. It’s too obvious… right?

Sure… *Keep saying that. And I’m not telling you.*

I’ll give you Monday morning off?

*You could make it Monday and Tuesday and I still wouldn’t tell you. It’s always sweeter when you have to work for it.*

Don’t I know it, miss Smoak…

Felicity nervously bit her lower lip, furrowing her brows. It almost sounded as if Oliver was flirting with her. Their little banter was one thing at the office, but… through texting it made things… so real. Tangible.
Gulping, she shook her head, unwilling to stop their little game, despite the little voice in the back of her head telling her this was a bad idea.

_Really? You always seemed to me like the kind who appreciates immediate gratification._

_I used to._

She was about to reply when he sent her another text right away.

_And then I met you._

She stared at her phone for God knows how long, her brain unable to think about anything else other than his last line. He must have sensed it somehow, because after a few minutes, he sent her another text.

_Anyway… I have a mystery to unfold._

Clearing her throat, she forced herself to send a reply.

_It should be worth it in the end ;) _

As soon as she pressed send, she cursed herself. _What the heck am I doing…_

_I don’t doubt it for one second._

Groaning, she threw her phone on the other side of her couch, not trusting herself. Or her fingers, actually. The last thing she needed at this point in her life was to get into a relationship with her boss. Repeating history wasn’t something she was looking forward to. Having travelled all the way across the country to escape her mistake, she would not let herself fall back into the same kind of pattern.

_But you know Oliver is not like Cooper… _

Screwing her eyes shut, she folded her legs against her chest, resting her forehead against her knees. Fighting off her own feelings was one thing, but fighting off a charming Oliver was a whole other battle.

She let herself savor his words a little longer, then put them in a little box, closed the lid and forced herself to push that box back in a corner of her mind. _It’s just a stupid crush. Just a stupid crush._

**

Oliver mentally cursed himself as soon as he wrote the words. But something deep inside of him made him press send nonetheless. Her lack of reaction did not surprise him. The two of them had been dancing around each other for a while, their eyes telling everything there was to say, but still avoiding voicing the words out loud. He snorted, knowing how ironic the whole situation was. For a guy who had mostly lied about feelings and emotions his entire life, he suddenly was completely unable to keep the truth to himself. It’s as if all he had been feeling for months was suddenly becoming too big to conceal. He was also getting tired of pretending there was nothing between them. He had lost that battle long ago, probably the night of his short-lived engagement. When he
had seen her and Laurel parting ways, he hadn’t even hesitated one second. His body had automatically followed Felicity, knowing his place was next to her.

Yet, there was still the fact that she was his assistant and no matter how much he wanted to take the next step with her, he couldn’t bring himself to risk anything happening to her. A man sleeping with his employee was something most people had no problem with. A woman sleeping with her boss, on the other hand… Not to mention that the whole Isabel debacle was still fresh in everyone’s memory. Having Robert Queen’s son following in his father’s footsteps would only harm her career. Not his.

Despite everything, Oliver couldn’t see how he could come to work every day, knowing she wouldn’t be by his side. He relied so much on her that he actually forgot what it was like when she wasn’t his assistant.

“So… are you liking it, so far?” His sister’s voice reached through him. Raising his head, he saw her peeking an eye from the doorway.

He smiled, carefully placing his bookmark before putting the book down. He was in his favorite sitting room, the one with a big, comfy couch instead of those stiff Louis-something chairs.

“I have to say it’s rather intriguing. I’m almost positive it’s not Snape, though.”

Thea walked into the room, sitting down next to him. “I’m not telling you. It’s better when you have to figure it out yourself.”

Oliver grinned. “So I’ve been told…”

“Tommy said I could help with the decorations. He doesn’t want me to stay though,” she pouted. “Could you drive me?”

“Doesn’t he have a planner or something?”

“Yeah but… I might have nagged him a bit,” she answered cheekily. “You know how much I love Christmas!”

Oliver laughed, standing up. “Alright. Might as well stay and help you. Let me just grab my clothes, I’ll change at his place.”

As he walked past her, he gently rubbed her hair, earning a groan.

“You have to stop doing this, I’m not 12 anymore, you know.”

“I’d rather not think about it, if you don’t mind,” he threw over his shoulder, laughing at her indignant huff.

The Merlyn’s property was in full preparation mode when they pulled in their alley. Cars and mini-vans filled the area, with half a dozen people unloading their contents. Tommy was deep in talk with a woman in her mid forties that Oliver seemed to remember was his usual planner.

“So you’ll have both ice-sculptures in the main reception room, one beside the champagne fountain and the other one near one of the balcony entrance,” the woman was explaining him.

“OK, but did you find enough mistletoe?” Tommy asked, chewing on his thumbnail.

“Well, as you know, it’s pretty hard to find in July but I did manage to get about twice as much as we usually have.”
“Amazing,” Tommy answered, beaming. As soon as he saw Oliver and Thea, he waved at them. “Thea? This is Rose. She is my planner. Rose, this is Thea, the girl I told you about. She’ll be in charge of the mistletoe.”

The planner smiled warmly at Thea, shaking her hand. “I will show you where it is stocked, then.”

“Be smart, Thea! I have high expectations!” Tommy yelled as they quickly made their way inside the house.

“So you really were serious about that mistletoe,” Oliver said.

“I am always serious when it comes to ladies and kisses, you know that,” Tommy smirked. “You came to help as well, I see?”

“Well… since I had to drop Thea, I figured I might stay. What can I do?”

Oliver helped Tommy hide objects of value that could be broken, locking certain rooms, emptying others so guests could still wander around the house as freely as possible. He was soon drafted into the mistletoe task with his sister who had come to ask for his help, not being comfortable with the ladder.

Following her instructions, he strategically placed mistletoe in what seemed to be every corner of the house, some in plain view, others more discreetly, per Tommy’s request.

As the three of them were taking a small break, enjoying a light supper in the kitchen, Thea asked innocently, “why did you need more mistletoe, this year?”

Tommy glanced at Oliver who just raised his eyebrows at him.

“Well… I am on a mission, tonight. There is this girl… I’d very much like a kiss.”

Thea giggled. “You mean that’s the only way she’d kiss you?”

Tommy pinched his lips. “She is quite stubborn… not unlike your brother, shall I add.”

Oliver laughed lightly, nodding.

Thea frowned, looking at both men. “You know her too, Ollie?”

Coughing, Oliver scratched his head. “She… she works at QC.”

Narrowing her eyes once she saw her brother being uncomfortable, she was about to ask another question when Rose interrupted them.

“Thea? Your driver is here.”

Thea turned to Tommy with pleading eyes, joining her hands.

“No. No way. There is going to be alcohol and… your brother would kill me if I said yes.”

“Ollie, please!” Thea asked her brother who remained as firm as his best friend.
“Nope. My baby sister is not going to be attending a Tommy Merlyn's party. Ever,” he said as he quickly kissed her forehead.

Grumping, she stood up, following Rose.

“You do know that she would probably safer in a party where the both of us can look after her, right?” Tommy asked swiftly, popping a grape in his mouth.

Oliver glared at him, not bothering to answer.

Tommy smiled knowingly as he got up from his seat. “Anyway. Time to get ready. Guests should be here in less than an hour. You’re taking your usual room, I guess?”

“If it’s no bother, yeah,” Oliver nodded, following him.

Oliver took quite some time to get ready, even watching a re-run of Two and a half men. Judging by the sound of cars and the background music, the first guests had already arrived when he finally got out of the shower. By the time he was dressed, the front of the house was full of cars and people could be seen walking in and out constantly. Tommy Merlyn had a reputation for parties and people always showed up in numbers, especially for his legendary Christmas in July.

As he lazily walked down the stairs leading to the main hall, he wasn’t surprised to see the room was pretty crowded, with a few people already getting caught under the mistletoe. He nonetheless spotted his best friend right away as he was standing at the entrance, welcoming his guests.

“About time!” Tommy told him when he saw him approach. “I swear to God my grandmother takes less time to get ready!”

“Your grandmother is dead,” Oliver deadpanned as he let his eyes travel through the crowd.

“My point, exactly,” Tommy smirked. Noticing his friend’s distraction, he added discreetly. “I haven’t seen her yet.”

“Tommy. I wasn’t looking for Felicity,” Oliver said, shaking his head.

“Yet you knew I was talking about her.”

Oliver glanced at him but before he could answer, Tommy slapped him on the shoulder. “If you’ll excuse me… I see this lovely redhead over there. She’ll make a perfect first kiss for tonight.”

As Oliver made his way to the main reception room, which was superbly decorated with the ice sculptures and flower arrangements as well as the typical Christmas Tree, he made small talk with a few people he knew. Grabbing a glass of champagne, he forced himself to stop trying to find Felicity in the crowd and focus on the conversation he was having with a young couple that had been to high school with Tommy and him. They were planning to get married the next year and Oliver found himself nodding politely every now and then, his attention wandering off despite his best efforts. He was putting down his second glass of champagne, trying to come up with an excuse to escape all the usual wedding chit-chat when his eyes caught something sparkling near one of the ice sculptures, about 15 feet away. He could only see her back, and her hair was swept off her neck into one those messy yet structured buns. A few strands were escaping and grazing her neck, but he would recognize her silhouette anywhere. He felt his breath catching in his throat as his eyes roamed over her body. She was wearing a short sparkling dress, one shoulder naked, and only two straps were holding the dress diagonally on her back. The urge he felt at that moment to graze his lips across the naked shoulder, tenderly biting the soft skin of her neck, was enough for him to unceremoniously drop his companions and make his way to her.
She turned around at that moment, accepting a glass of champagne from a waiter and the view of her perfect figure encased in the form-fitting dress, the sparkles on her shoulders bringing stars to her eyes was enough to take his breath away. She wasn’t wearing her glasses, which didn’t surprise him as he knew she preferred contacts for this kind of occasion. Her lips were a deep red and seeing her taking a sip of champagne, dropping her head back and exposing her throat made him moan with longing and desire.

Seeing Barry Allen handing her a petit-four was a cold shower. He stopped just a few feet from them, secretly thankful she hadn’t seen him, and turned around, not willing to witness any of it.

He came face to face with a smiling Sara Lance.

“Sara!” he grinned, genuinely happy to see her. Despite his break-up with Laurel, he was still good friends with her.

“Ollie,” she grinned back, just as warmly. “What’s the rush? You seem like you’ve seen a ghost.”

“I just… I remember I forgot… something,” he mumbled.

“Really? Did you see Felicity? She’s right over there,” she pointed above his shoulder.

“She’s… she’s with Barry,” he forced the words out of his mouth, feeling foolish for the bitterness he felt at the moment.

Sara observed him quietly for a moment. “You do know they broke up… right?”

“Who?” he asked, his heart beating wildly, fearing that everyone could see right through him whenever she was concerned.

“You know who,” she smiled indulgently. “He’s just here as her plus one because he’s leaving tomorrow.”

“I… I didn’t know. Is that why…” he cleared his throat. “Is that why they broke up?”

Sara chuckled. “No. It happened almost a month ago.”

Oliver frowned. “I didn’t even notice.”

“It wasn’t a sad break-up. More like two people realizing they are with the wrong person,” she cryptically said.

Oliver looked at her, puzzled. Sara groaned. “Damn it, Oliver, just go talk to her instead of standing there, looking like a kicked puppy!”

He sighed, avoiding her eyes. “I’m not sure it’s the right time, Sara.”

“It’s never the right time, Oliver. And if you wait too long… it might be too late,” she smiled gently, pressing his arm. “The girl is so full of denial, she is probably going to eventually convince herself you are secretly gay.”

“I can’t let that happen, can I?” Oliver laughed lightly.

“It wouldn’t be fair to give false hopes to gays,” she winked at him, shoving him in Felicity’s direction.

She was still talking with Barry, her hands moving as frantically as usual.
“Oliver!” Barry welcomed him with his usual bright smile.

“Barry,” Oliver nodded, his eyes on Felicity.

She turned her head, smiling shyly. “Hi.”

“Hi,” he answered softly, locking gazes with her.

Barry cleared his throat, noticing that his companions were not really paying attention to him. “I’m going to… I’m going to go over there.”

“You look stunning,” he told her as soon as Barry left.

She blushed, her grin growing wider. “Thank you. You’re not bad yourself.”

She was about to add something when Tommy put his hand on Oliver’s shoulder. “Dude… you need to move your car, you’re blocking someone.”

Oliver sighed, looking at her apologetically. “I’m sorry. I’ll be right back.”

“Don’t worry. I’m going to look after Miss Felicity,” Tommy grinned.

As Oliver hurried out of the room, swiftly making his way through the guests, Tommy turned to face Felicity.

“I have to say… you are absolutely breathtaking, Miss Felicity. You almost look like an angel.”

She glared at him. “I swear to God if you ask me if I hurt myself when I fell from the sky…”

Tommy snorted. “Please. I only use that line on special occasions.”

“Implied I’m not special enough?” she teased him.

“Implied I know it wouldn’t work on you,” he corrected.

“I am pleased to know you have learned a few things since we met.”

Tommy chuckled. “Ouch.” As he drank the last of his glass and put it down on a waiter’s platter, he grabbed Felicity’s and did the same.

“Would you do me the honor of the first dance? And before you object, remember, it’s my birthday. You can’t say no to the birthday boy.”

Felicity grinned, handing out her hand. “I wouldn’t dream of it. Lead the way, Mister Merlyn.”

As they made their way to the dance floor in the middle of the room, she noticed that the music was somehow classic. A ballad was being played, one that she recognized to be from Bruce Springsteen.

She rested a hand on Tommy’s shoulder while he gripped the other one, his arm circling her waist, safely resting on the fabric of her dress and, in a very gentlemanly move, avoiding the naked skin of her back.

“I have to say I am quite surprised. This whole party seems rather… classy. For you, I mean.”

“Well, by all means… don’t hold back,” he snorted.

Giggling, she added, “you know what I mean. Everyone told me about those decadent parties and
“It always starts nice. And proper. That’s the key to my success. If you give people free booze, things are going to spice up eventually. Especially with the mistletoe, forcing people to get… closer. Speaking of which…” he added, his eyes glancing above their heads.

Felicity frowned, raising her head. Her mouth popped open when she realized he had swiftly moved them underneath a mistletoe that was literally hanging from the middle of the ceiling.

“That is sneaky!” she exclaimed.

“All is fair in love and war, Miss Smoak,” he cheekily said with a lopsided grin. Letting go of her waist, he gently twirled her around. Once she was back facing him, he lightly tapped his cheek, bending his knees so the height difference wouldn’t be too big.

She laughed lightly, playfully pecking him on the cheek. “Oh… you are indeed a gentleman.”

“Don’t tell anyone. Also, fair warning… I won’t be such a gentleman next time,” he winked at her.

“Fair enough,” she nodded, grinning.

The night was actually more pleasant than she had first thought. As the hours went by, people were becoming more and more comfortable, and a little bit wilder, but all in all, it was still a pleasant atmosphere. She hadn’t talked to Oliver again, which she couldn’t help but feel disappointed about. She kept glancing around, hoping to see him but everytime he was in her line of sight he was either deep in talk with someone or she was busy herself.

Their eyes kept meeting, though, as if they were both seeking the other. Several times he had tried to come to her, only to be stopped by someone. Generally, that someone had long legs and a deep cleavage, something she had noticed with a twinge. He didn’t seem interested in any of those women but she couldn’t help but feel slightly jealous that they had enough courage to actually approach him and demand his attention. And if seeing them putting their hands on him like they knew him intimately was causing her to grit her teeth, feeling the sudden need to gouge out their eyes, it was probably because of that third glass of champagne she had… right?

She couldn’t help but smirk when she saw him smoothly get away from a brunette who seemed particularly clingy. He gently took her hand off his chest and directed her towards Tommy. He then searched the crowd, his eyes stopping once he spotted her and was already walking towards her when another woman approached him. Felicity hid her giggle behind her hand as she saw him close his eyes in frustration, locking his jaw. Once he opened his eyes, he saw her right away and smiled apologetically, mouthing “wait.”

She nodded, her eyes twinkling as she witnessed him doing the same dance he had done with at least half a dozen women that night. Feeling the beginning of a headache, she looked after a waiter, hoping to be able to get a glass of water.

“Looking for someone?” Oliver’s teasing voice brought a smile on her face.

Turning her head, she replied, “a waiter. It’s almost impossible to get a glass of water, here.”

Oliver laughed lightly. “It’s Tommy Merlyn’s party… tell me you’re not surprised?”
“Not really. But I’ve had three glasses of champagne and I’m getting a headache,” she pouted.

Oliver grabbed her hand. “Come with me.”

He lead her across the room, into the main hallway and through a few other rooms until they made it to the kitchen. The area was deserted, which surprised her.

“How is everyone? Waiters, caterers,…?”

“In the main kitchen,” he explained.

She paused in the doorway. “Excuse me?”

“There are two kitchens. The big one, used for formal diners and events like tonight. Then the small one, which is used everyday.”

Felicity raised her eyebrows. “Small? It’s as big as my living room!”

Oliver looked sheepishly around him. “Well… it is small compared to the other one.”

He opened up the fridge, grabbing a small bottle of water. He handed it to her, asking, “do you need something for your headache? Painkiller, maybe?”

“That’d be great but I had three glasses of champagne, so it might not be wise. Water should be enough.”

“Let’s go get some air, it will help.”

There was a backdoor, that she hadn’t seen when they had walked into the room, leading directly to a small patio. The weather was warm, but still fresher than it had been inside the house, and it was much quieter as well. Felicity took a deep breath, already feeling better.

“Where are we?” she asked curiously.

“Back of the house,” Oliver answered. “The reception room is on the left side of the house” he added pointing to a direction ahead of them.

They quietly made their way over there, meeting a few people who were apparently taking romantic strolls, judging by the hushing and giggling sounds.

They eventually stopped in front of a fountain, just around the corner of the reception room where they could hear the music through the open windows. There were a few more people, but the place was still much quieter than the house. A small group of men were talking animatedly not far away from them and a few couples were seated on benches.

“You like fountains,” Oliver noted quietly.

“What?” she asked, surprised.

“Fountains. You stopped by a fountain at my house as well.”

“Oh.” She looked at him pensively. “Yes. I do. You know I never really liked Vegas?”

“I remember you mentioning it,” he answered, shoving his hands in his pockets, the movement grazing both their arms. She shivered at the unintentional touch, the feel of his bare skin against hers causing goosebumps. He was wearing a white shirt and dark grey slacks. He had rolled up his
sleeves earlier, and she had barely been able to keep her eyes off of him.

Shaking her head to clear her thoughts, she explained, “well, there were a few things I really loved in Vegas. The Bellagio fountains were one. I could spend hours standing there, waiting for each show. I know it’s bad, that it’s a huge waste of water in the middle of the desert but… I always loved them.”

“I’d really like to take you there, one day,” he murmured, his eyes fixing the water works.

“To Vegas?” she asked, surprised.

“Yes. It’s where you’re from. I’d love to see Vegas through your eyes.”

She winced “I’m not sure you’d like it. I told you, I didn’t want to go back.”

“But that’s where you grew up. Whatever you lived there… it shaped you. It helped make the person you are today.”

She stayed silent for a moment, then said, “You’re saying that but deep down you just want to meet my mom.”

He grinned, gazing at her. “Touché.”

Felicity rolled her eyes.

“Hey, can you blame me?” Oliver added, “I don’t know her, obviously, but… well… I feel like I do in a way. I know she cares a lot about your well-being…”

She groaned. “And here I was, hoping you would have miraculously forgotten about that damn package.”

“I’ll never be able to forget that, Felicity,” he laughed, his arm grazing over hers once more. This time, he seemed to somehow notice the goosebumps and sobered up, his voice sounding concerned. “Are you cold?”

“No,” she quickly denied. “No, no. I’m fine. We’re fine. Good. All good.”

He let his fingers travel down her arm, frowning. “You have goosebumps, Felicity.”

Moaning, she closed her eyes for a second. And whose fault is that, Oliver?

“She asked again, with the soft voice he seemed to reserve just for her. The voice that made her knees weak and seem like a gazillion of butterflies were dancing the samba in her stomach.

She was taking a deep breath, forcing her eyes to open when one of the men who was near them shouted, "Mistletoe!"

She looked at him, silently thankful for the disturbance that forced Oliver’s eyes off of hers.

It was only when she realized that he was pointing to somewhere above their heads that she realized he was talking to them.

Gulping, she raised her eyes, seeing the damn plant dangling above their heads, attached to the bottom of the first floor balcony.

“Come on guys, it’s the tradition!” One of the men cheerfully added.
Summoning her inner Gryffindor, she turned to face Oliver, knowing her face was visibly red despite the dim light. The heat in his eyes caught her by surprise. She felt that nothing would be able to make her look away at that moment, as if she was prisoner of his eyes. The longing, the desire that she had thought she had seen in there so many times were there full force, leaving no room for doubt.

Oliver took a step closer to her, his hand reaching out, gently caressing her arm, causing yet another shiver down her spine. Her breathing sped up, matching the beatings of her heart.

He slowly leaned in until their faces were merely inches apart, giving her the time to turn away if she wanted to and at that moment, she felt such a deep urge of love for this man who had always treated her with the most utmost respect. The smile she gave him was trembling, not out of fear, but full of trust because she knew he would never do anything without her consent. He smiled back at her, his eyes softening. They were so lost in each other that they didn’t even see the group of men going back inside the house. At that moment, it was just him and her and she knew there was nothing in the world that could stop what was months in the making. Closing her eyes, she closed the small gap between them, pressing her lips against his. He slowly tilted her head, pressing his lips on hers more firmly. Their breaths mingling, their lips started to move as if they had been doing it forever. Oliver lightly kissed her lower lip, causing her to reach on tiptoes to get more leverage.

He whispered her name, the sound almost muffled as they both didn’t seem able to move away. She kept her eyes closed as their lips kept on brushing each other, Oliver dropping one last kiss before lightly rubbing his nose against her. The gesture snapped something inside of her and she gulped, forcing her eyes open. He was looking at her, merely inches away from her face, his eyes bright and reassuring, full of promises and dreams and she knew, without a doubt, that they were only mirroring hers.

“Oliver,” she murmured, her hand reaching out, lightly scratching his scruff. A small moan caught in his throat as his face automatically leaned into her hand. Her finger delicately traced the outlines of his mouth, lingering on the small mole, that small mole that had tempted her so many times. She moved to the back of his neck, gently forcing him to lower his face again as her mouth sought his once more. She felt his arm circling her waist, supporting her and lessening the pressure on her calves.

She opened her mouth, her tongue timidly asking for entrance, stroking his upper lip. He let her in, letting his own tongue playing with hers. He tasted like red wine, cinnamon… and something uniquely Oliver, something that she was beginning to think could quickly become addictive. She moaned as she felt him lightly sucking on her tongue, the noise resonating in the night. She let her fingernails lightly scratch the back of his skull, smiling into the kiss when he let out a groan, the arm around her waist holding her tighter.

He must have felt her lips stretching because a low chuckle escaped him, and she felt him smile as well. Both started to laugh quietly, opening their eyes, their lips still brushing. Oliver kissed her softly one, two, three more times, causing her to giggle.

“Hey,” he whispered as they were both catching their breath. Which, Felicity noted, should not have been that short for just a kiss…

“Hey,” she said back, biting her lower lip.

“Wow, there… Looks like some of us had too much to drink!” Tommy’s booming voice caused their smiles to drop off their faces.
They both took a step back, only noticing now that they weren’t as alone as they had thought. When she noticed the looks people were throwing at her, jealousy for some and also something like pity for others, it was like a cold shower ruining what had been a perfect moment. It dawned on her that she had just kissed her boss. And it wasn’t just any kiss, no. It was one of those earth-shattering kisses that you only read about in novels. The kind of kiss that makes you go weak at the knees, makes you forget where you are. It was the kind of kiss every girl dreams to have. But the moment was over. Reality was back in the game.

A relationship with Oliver was out of the question, despite the undeniable attraction, despite the connection, despite how perfect that kiss had been, despite how much she wanted to have more than that one moment. The longing was like a hole burning through her chest and there was nothing she wanted more than to go back into his arms, feel his heart beating underneath her hand, hear his breathing quickening, see the tenderness in his eyes.

“I… I’m gonna go find Sara,” she said quietly as she walked away from him.

“Felicity, wait!” Oliver tried to hold her back, but she brushed him off.

She wanted to go home. She wanted to go home and try to forget how perfect it had been.

“Dude… let her go,” Tommy said quietly. Raising his voice, he added for the people who were still outside. “The party’s going to go wild inside!”

As soon as everyone had stepped inside, he turned to Oliver. “Well… I honestly thought I’d never see the day. Glad you finally took a step forward.”

Oliver frowned. “Then.. why did you stop us?”

“Ollie… I know you. You’re my best friend and I want you to be happy above anything else. But I also know that you’ll never forgive yourself if you mess up with her.”

“I… I would never hurt her…”

“Oliver. There were at least two employees of QC outside who saw you kiss Felicity senseless,” Tommy explained. “We both know how gossips work… especially with what happened to all your former assistants.”

Oliver’s shoulders slumbered as he sat down on a bench, defeated.

“Hey, man. You’re different now. I know it, you know it… she knows it. But you have to tread carefully there. Take things slow. Be more discreet. I don’t know. Just… be careful.”

Oliver stayed silent for several minutes, Tommy staying by his side, munching on a blade of grass.

"Are you sure you're OK?" his best friend finally asked.

"Yeah... It's just... I thought it would end. This whole... constant attraction I feel towards her. I was almost hoping that once we'd have kissed... it would be easier. Caving in to the temptation and get back to our lives, you know..."

"You thought it would end?! Oh my goodness, I can't believe I'm going to have to spell it out for you," Tommy snorted, frustratingly passing both hands over his face. Sitting down on the bench as well, he took a deep breath.

"Dude. It's not going to end. Not anytime soon. You're head over heels in love with the girl. And
Oliver turned his head, huffing out a laugh, "what are you talking about? I'm not in..." he trailed off, not finishing his sentence as the last few months flashed back in his head. Bumping into Felicity that first day, and then when she had helped him at that press conference. Her constant inability to eat with chopsticks, the way she always munched on a pen when she was focused on something particularly difficult. How he loved it when she smiled, how he sought her when his father died. The way her laugh could soothe him better than anything else, how stunningly beautiful she always was to him. How he was completely unable to look at anyone else but her whenever they were in the same room. And finally, how his thoughts were always of her when she wasn't with him.

He cleared his throat, feeling like someone had lifted the thick veil that had been blurring his mind for weeks now.

"Tommy..." he finally said in calm acceptance, a grin growing on his lips. "I'm in love with Felicity."

Tommy smiled proudly, tapping him vigorously on the back as he stood up. "That's my boy! Now, if you don't mind, there are still a few ladies I'd like to kiss..."

Oliver stayed outside, watching his best friend walking in the reception room, his mind still buzzing.

*I'm in love with her.*

***

Chapter End Notes

... So that happened. I can already hear the cries of "Finally!" and "OMG took them long enough!"
I hope I delivered and you were as touched by reading the scene as I was writing it :)

Here is the link to the dress Felicity wears for dinner:
https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/34/9a/f4/349af47e9a76d0dcbb8f181dd73439ab.jpg

And here is the one for the party:

OK Now onto the not so good news... I don't know when I'll be updating the next chapter. I might be taking a break because it's been very intense these last weeks and I might be having some case of writer's block... Don't worry it won't be months, but don't expect next update as soon as usual. I'm also reaching slowly but surely the end of the story and I need time to finish plotting that part, make sure I don't forget anything. HGW is about 600 pages on my word document... that means I wrote a 600 pages novel in a language that is not my mother tongue and it has been a blast, but also exhausting. I'm...
SO not giving up on it, I know exactly what is supposed to happen and I'm enthusiast at the idea of sharing it with you. But I feel like I'm lacking a bit of enthusiasm at the moment and I wouldn't want to drag the story. So, taking a bit of time to maybe write a few ficlets, as well as plot the rest of the story is probably wise.

Anyway, you can always find me on twitter @PimsiePim or Tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com Don't be shy, come say hi ;)

Welcome back, everyone!
I know most of you will probably skip this and jump straight to the chapter (tsk, tsk) but
for those of you who read this:
Thank you very much for your patience. I finally managed to get back to writing, and
have one chapter ahead. I solved some of my computer issues, even if it's not perfect.

I hope you'll like this chapter...

Special thank you to Pidanka, my delta and mysticaldetectivepanda, my new beta.

Song: You're beautiful - James Blunt

Remember: we left the two lovebirds after a kiss at Tommy's party and Oliver finally
admitted out loud that he was in love with Felicity.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"You're Beautiful"

My life is brilliant.

My life is brilliant.
My love is pure.
I saw an angel.
Of that I'm sure.
She smiled at me on the subway.
She was with another man.
But I won't lose no sleep on that,
'Cause I've got a plan.

You're beautiful. You're beautiful.
You're beautiful, it's true.
I saw your face in a crowded place,
And I don't know what to do,
'Cause I'll never be with you.

Yes, she caught my eye,
As we walked on by.
She could see from my face that I was,
Fucking high.
And I don't think that I'll see her again,
But we shared a moment that will last 'til the end.

You're beautiful. You're beautiful.
Felicity quickly walked back inside the reception room, avoiding Tommy's eyes as much as possible. Her heart was beating wildly and she knew her face was still showing the signs of what had happened between Oliver and her. She could feel her skin tingling, the sure result of the blush she had felt on her cheeks.

How could she let things escalate like that? She knew it was a bad idea, she knew that acting upon her burgeoning feelings would only end one way. Yet, she had been completely unable to stop herself when she had seen him leaning towards her, the heat and longing so clear in his eyes. A part of her wanted to know for sure, was dying to find out how it would feel to finally kiss him for real. And now that she had found out… she couldn’t think about anything else. She wanted to do it again. Over, and over again to be more specific.

I am so screwed.

All she wanted to do was go home, get into pajamas and eat a pint of ice-cream. Or two. Probably with a bottle of red wine. Biting her lips, she nervously glanced across the crowded room, desperate to find Sara. A hand on her shoulder startled her and she winced, fearing it might be Oliver.

A quick glance reassured her. The hand definitely belonged to a man but didn’t have the quiet strength of Oliver’s.

Turning around, she faced Barry who was smiling at her.

“I was looking for you! We got separated and then I met this girl. She’s studying chemistry and…” he stopped himself once he got a good look at his friend and lowered his voice, his eyes showing genuine concern. “Is everything alright?”

Placing a bright smile on her lips, or at least the brightest she could achieve at the moment, she nodded vigorously. “Yup. Peachy. Just… too much punch.”

Barry frowned. “I didn’t see any punch…”

“Really?” she asked, faking surprise. “I told you I had too much of it!”

Clearing her throat, she added, wincing. “Have you seen Sara? I have a little bit of a headache and I’d like to head home. I’m sorry, I don’t want to be a party pooper, though… would you be OK if I left?”

“Of course, don’t worry. I’m actually having a good time, surprisingly,” Barry reassured her. “But…
are you sure it’s just a headache?”

She smiled at him. “Yes. Don’t worry, I’ll be fine.”

Lightly patting his arm, she walked away, considering calling a cab. She had left Oliver outside a good 5 minutes ago and the last thing she wanted was to face him right now. She needed time to collect herself, and she had strong suspicions that she’d have a hard time not jumping back into his arms and resuming what had been interrupted.

Fighting her way through the crowd, she finally reached the much more quiet hallway. She had left her purse in Sara’s car and was about to search for a land phone when her friend’s voice reached her.

“Felicity!” Sara waved at her from the bottom of the stairs, jogging to her. “Barry told me you were looking for me?”

“Yeah… would you mind giving me a lift back home?” Felicity asked as neutrally as possible.

Sara observed her quietly. “What’s wrong?”

Felicity huffed a laugh. “Nothing, I swear… just… tired, I guess.”

Pinching her lips, Sara grabbed her arm and led her to a quiet room at the far end of the hallway.

“You and Oliver finally got your act together so why aren’t you with him gazing dreamily at the stars or whatever romantic thing straight people do?”

“We… wait, what? How can you possibly know that? It happened a few minutes ago!” Felicity said, her brain buzzing as she felt a wave of pure panic taking over her chest, making her breathing shallow and fast.

“I… I… I saw you, OK?” Sara replied, mildly embarrassed. “I wasn’t spying on you, guys, I just walked by the window and…”

Felicity took a step back from her friend, her hand shakily reaching for her forehead. “Oh God, no. How many people saw us?!”

Sara frowned. “I don’t know but… it’s not a big deal, you guys are both grown ups and…”

Felicity cut her off. “Of course it matters! He’s my boss, Sara! Do you know what that makes me look like?”

“He doesn’t see you that way…”

“It doesn’t matter! It’s not about him, it’s about me!” Felicity cried out.

“Listen, don’t panic over this. It’s a party, people are drinking, there is mistletoe everywhere… it’s not like you guys were caught going at it on his desk,” Sara paused seeing the blush on her friend’s cheeks. “You guys never went at it on his desk, right?”

“Of course not!” Felicity raised her hands in defense. “I might have had… a dream or two about it but…”

Sara raised an eyebrow. “I never thought you were the kind of girl who had fantasies about secretaries and office sex…”

“I never was,” Felicity answered automatically, then pinched her lips in shame. Groaning, she
decided that it was pointless to pretend in front of her friend. “Oh, come on, you know the guy! He wears those white shirts and he rolls up his sleeves and I’m just a woman for God’s sake!”

“Oh yeah… rolled up sleeves. That’s a very sneaky move on his part.”

Felicity glared at her. “This is not funny, Sara.”

“Alright, alright…” Sara tried to placate her. “If it makes you feel better, I’ll go kiss him under the mistletoe as well. I’ll make a real show out of it, probably take off my bra as well, so the rumors will focus on me.”

“That’s… that’s weirdly nice, actually,” Felicity giggled. “Twisted, but kinda thoughtful.”

“The things I would do for friends…” Sara sighed dramatically while circling Felicity’s shoulders with her arm. “Come on. Cheer up. He finally grew a pair, that’s something to celebrate.”

Felicity smiled poorly. “But where does that leave us? I mean… I’m his assistant. He’s still my boss.”

“Just… be discreet? Or maybe it’s time for you to apply for another position at QC?”

“What if he doesn’t want to? I mean… we make a pretty good team. What if… that’s what he sees in me?” Felicity murmured, voicing out loud some of her deepest insecurities. What if it was that unique partnership they had created over months that Oliver was attracted to? She knew their relationship was different from the ones he had had in his life so… once that aspect was over, where did that leave them?

“Oliver being attracted to a girl because of her brains is certainly uncharted territory… but I don’t think it’s just that. I mean… have you seen the way he looks at you? I’ve never seen him look at anyone like that. And that includes my step-sister. I think the real question is… are you willing to act up on that?”

Felicity chewed on her lips, considering Sara’s words while they made their way to her car. Was she willing to take the risk? To jump into the possibility of a relationship with Oliver, not knowing where that could lead them? Knowing she could actually lose everything if things didn’t work out. Him, her job, her reputation. It seemed like a pretty foolish thing to do for someone who had been so willing to make a new start in life and focus on her career. So unlike everything she had promised herself on the plane that had taken to Starling City, several months before.

The drive back to her place was mostly silent, Sara respecting her need to process and think things through. It was only when she pulled up to the curb near Felicity’s apartment that she turned around to face her friend.

“Take the rest of the weekend to think about what you want. Talk to Oliver. Get drunk. Not necessarily in that order.”

Felicity let out a small, trembling laugh. “Thank you. For the advice, the ride home and… the talk.”

“Anytime,” Sara answered, her smile turning into a small grimace. “Well… when I say anytime… there are a few things I won’t be able to do in the future, though. I had the news this afternoon: my resignation was accepted. Next week will be my last week working at QC.”

“What?!” Felicity gasped. “Why didn’t you tell me?!”

“Well first of all, we were at a party, then you had your thing with Oliver and… it honestly slipped
my mind.”

“But what… what are you going to do?”

“I’m moving out of town. Nyssa has apparently accepted a long-term job and she’s going to be able to settle down. I’ll just rejoin her.”

“Where?”

“Hong Kong.”

Felicity felt her jaw drop. “Hong Kong? But that’s… across the world!”

Sara shrugged. “Yeah, I know… it’s just… I feel like I’m going nowhere here and… I don’t have anything to lose, right? I mean if things don’t work out, I’ll come back. If they do… then it will be worth it.”


“You’re taking it better than my dad, that’s for sure,” Sara laughed.

“When are you leaving?”

“Probably in two weeks. I’ll have a farewell party, don’t worry. Speaking of which… I should get going. Barry might worry, I’m his cab driver as well.”

Felicity opened her door. “Oh, right. Sorry about that. Tell him good night for me, will you?”

“Yup,” Sara waved lightly as she started the car once more. Felicity stood on the pavement, watching her friend leaving, feeling more lonely than ever. Barry was supposed to leave in a few days, and now Sara as well. She was happy for her, obviously, and couldn’t help but envy that side of her, the one willing to take risks, to act upon her feelings. But she also knew that Sara and she were very different people, with different backstories. She would miss her a lot, having been her first friend in Starling. Yet, all she was hoping was for her to find what she was looking for, whether it was in Hong Kong or somewhere else. Not Australia, though. Kangaroos.

Shuddering, she quickly walked up the steps leading to the entrance door of her building. She had a lot of thinking to do on her side, but tonight, she would probably open a good bottle of wine and a pint of ice-cream.

It was with a very unusual bounce in his step that Oliver went down for breakfast that following Monday. Tommy’s party had been, as usual, quite memorable. He had considered calling Felicity on Sunday but thought it was probably best to give her some space. Not to mention, he had some thinking to do as well. If life as a Queen had taught him anything, it was that usually his name was enough to let him get away with about everything. It was usually the other people involved that suffered the most from the consequences. This time, he was hell bent on making sure to do things right, in a honorable way. That kiss had not only revealed the depth of his feelings for her, but also how much he wanted to act upon them. That being said, Felicity was still his assistant and they needed to have a serious conversation about everything. He had little to no doubts she shared the same feelings. The intensity of that moment had been everything but one-sided and he was looking forward to the possibility of reassuring her on that front. He knew his reputation was more than enough to make her wary and if he was honest with himself, he couldn’t wait to prove to her how much he had changed. Or woo her, as Tommy had suggested. He didn’t know how they would
logistically deal with a burgeoning relationship but he couldn’t wait to find a solution with her. The last thing he wanted was for her to quit, because he just couldn’t imagine himself working without her by his side. But he also knew that she deserved much more and maybe that kiss had also been the incentive they needed to part ways professionally, only to get closer… non-professionally.

“Well… what a change it is from a few months ago. I have to admit I’ve never seen my son so impatient to go to work,” Moira welcomed him with a teasing smile. She was sitting at the main table, finishing her breakfast while reading the newspaper. She had spent the weekend at a spa with a few of her friends and he hadn’t seen her since Saturday morning.

Oliver didn’t even bother to sit down and poured himself a glass of orange juice, gulping the whole thing down.

“What can I say? I woke up in a good mood.”

“How was Tommy’s party? Thea told me the whole place looked like a fairytale.”

Oliver smiled dreamily while leaning on a chair. “Yeah… it was.”

Moira observed him quietly for a few seconds, expecting more explanation. Seeing he was apparently lost in thoughts, she changed topics.

“Do you remember Francis? Your father’s financial advisor?”

Shaking his head, Oliver frowned. “I do remember him but… please tell me he didn’t uncover something fishy.”

Moira laughed lightly. “Don’t worry, nothing that bad. Robert was considering selling the Gambit, I don’t know if you knew.”

“Yes. Dad mentioned it once after New Year’s Eve, I think. Someone wants to buy it?”

“Someone already did. Your father signed the papers shortly before he passed away. I honestly completely forgot he was about to do it and I even thought he didn’t have the time to seal the deal but apparently… he did.”

“Oh,” Oliver breathed, unsure about how to react. On the one hand, it was just a boat, that his father had wanted to sell off anyway. On the other hand… it was the family boat and they had a few happy memories there. “How do you… how do you feel about it?”

Moira sighed deeply, her eyes slightly unfocused. “I… I’m not sure to be honest. Maybe it’s better that way. The sea was really your father’s passion, not ours. Why keep a perfectly fine boat when we both know we’ll probably never use it again?”

“Yeah… I guess, so...” Oliver cleared his throat. “So it’s sold? Is it gone?”

“No. The Gambit is only supposed to be delivered in about a month. I just wanted to let you know. If you or Thea want to take it for a small trip, there’s still time.”

“You know Thea hates boats. I’m not particularly fond of them either, to be honest.”

“I can’t exactly blame you. The thing is… a member of the family will have to deliver it. I don’t… I don’t think I could do it. It’s where we celebrated our 20th anniversary, you know,” his mother explained, her voice wavering.
“I’ll do it, mom,” Oliver offered right away. “You won’t have to.”

Moira smiled. “Thank you. I’ll let Francis know he can get in touch with you for the details.”

Grinning, Oliver picked an apple and leaned down to press a quick peck on his mother’s cheek. “Gotta go, I’ll see you for dinner.”

“Say hi to Miss Smoak for me, will you?” she asked innocently, picking up her cup of tea.

Oliver felt his cheeks reddening under his mother’s knowing eyes. “Hum… yes, I will.”

The sun was bright when he stepped outside and it was more than warm enough for him to lower the car roof. Putting his sunglasses on, he sped up down the alley, enjoying the feel of the wind on his face. The only thing missing was music, he noticed with a smile. Not that I will ever let her know.

Twenty minutes later, he was stepping out of the elevator, the same grin still plastered on his face and two cups of coffee in his hands. He stopped in his tracks when he noticed his assistant sitting at her desk but with her chair facing his own office. She was munching on something and he could hear some light cursing as she seemed to be autopsying what looked like, to him at least, a random piece of technology.

His smile softened as he took her in, the sun playing in her hair. She was wearing her usual neat and high ponytail, the same one she’d started to wear a few months ago. She had a red blouse on, with a small cleavage that showed a thin golden necklace. A few strands of hair were teasing the back of neck, where her skin was so silky - something he had learned a couple of days before. Tilting his head, he sighed softly, feeling the now usual longing growing in his chest. It was with a decided step that he closed the distance between them, noting that she was so focused on her task she didn’t even hear him.

“One latte, caramel syrup, no sugar,” he said gently as he put the cup down on her desk, amused to see her startling at the sound of his voice.

“Oliver!” she yelped, a hand reaching to cover her chest.

Grinning, he looked at her innocently. “Just trying to be a good boss.”

She pinched her lips, a flicker of uncertainty in her eyes making him suddenly wary.

“Thank you,” she said with a small smile as she grabbed the cup of coffee.

Come on, man. Time to grow a pair.

Oliver cleared his throat. “Felicity, I was wondering if maybe we could… talk about Saturday and -”

She cut him off. “Yes. That’s a good idea. I… It was a wonderful party, we probably had too many drinks… it’s OK.”

He felt something heavy falling on his chest at her words. She was avoiding his eyes, which barely helped comfort him.

“You mean you think we should just… forget about it?” he asked, trying to keep his voice as neutral as possible.

Felicity bit her lower lip, fidgeting with her latte. “Isn’t it the best for everyone?”
The small tremble in her voice reassured him in a way: she was just as affected as he was by what
had happened between them and was probably merely trying to give him an out if he wanted one.
*Oh, Felicity. I don’t want an out.*

“I don’t know… I…” he interrupted himself, his hand scratching the back of his neck
embarrassingly. “I was kinda hoping we could talk about it… over a good meal, maybe?”

“I don’t really know what is there to say. You’re my boss. Unless you don’t want to work with me
anymore, that is,” she breathed, her eyes fixated on his tie.

“No, I still want to,” he huffed out a laugh. “I can’t really see myself in this office without you by my
side but… maybe you want to give it a try in another department? That was your goal when we
started, I could ask if there’s an opening somewhere.”

She observed him quietly for a moment. “I already looked into it. There are no positions that could
suit my qualifications right now. With the shift in the leadership, HR are being tighter than usual. So
I think that point is moot for the moment.”

Despite her calm tone, Oliver felt a flicker of hope at her words. She had looked into it. She was on
the same page.

He was about to speak when she added, “I just think it’s pointless to discuss anything that could
happen between us. I refuse to join the long list of your former assistants.”

He felt his breath catch in his throat, pain stabbing through his heart faster than he thought was
possible. He gulped, nodding slightly as his eyes settled on the window behind her. He only had
himself to blame, after all. He had never seen what his past behavior could possibly cost him. As
long as it was all fun and games and everyone was consenting and agreeing to the unspoken terms,
where was the harm in a little fun at the office? How stupid his young self had been. He had been
unable to see down the road, blinded by immediate pleasure and casual sex, not once imagining that
one day, he could meet someone like her.

She must have seen the shift on his face, because her voice softened when she added, “I’m sorry.
That was harsh and uncalled. It’s just that I don’t want to be seen as… as that kind of girl.”

Clearing his throat, he looked at her. “Of course. I understand. You’re right. It’s pointless to talk
about this now.”

Taking a deep breath, he changed topics. “Are there any messages?”

“Nothing really important. Isabel is back, though.”

“Oh. Well, that was quick. I’ll let my mother know, thank you.” He walked away, the bounce in his
steps now long gone. He had just reached the door separating their offices when he turned around to
face her. She quickly gathered her bearings, but he still had the time to spy the look of regret on her
face. It was enough for him to man up.

“Felicity,” he said, his hand on the handle.

“Yes?”

“Just so you know… I’ve never seen you as ‘that kind of girl’.”

The shade of a smile played on her lips as she nodded. He hesitated on the threshold but, for the first
time in what seemed forever, he closed the door between their offices.
Burying himself in his work wasn’t something the old Ollie was used to. Or even ever did, to be honest. But after 30 minutes of brooding and staring at her across the glass wall, it had seemed like a good idea. Truth be told, he understood. He understood her, and he shared the same fears and doubts. Yet, having her shutting him out right away had hurt deeply. He had seen the regret in her eyes, and a part of him knew there was probably something more going on in her behavior. Unfortunately, he didn’t know how to make her open up to him. Maybe it was his fault, maybe he didn’t give the appearance of someone who could be trusted. Maybe whatever he felt between them wasn’t something she thought was worth fighting for. What he thought was special and unique could be something common for Felicity. He had never felt that way about someone before, but to be fair he just had never been mature enough to have this kind of deep feelings. Felicity was way ahead of him on that point. What if what he thought was extraordinary was only ordinary to her?

He was distracted by a phone call from Tommy, who eagerly asked how his conversation with Felicity had gone. Sighing, Oliver explained to him that his plans of wooing had been crushed right from the start.

“And so, that’s it?” Tommy asked. “You’re just gonna brood and be mopey?”

“What exactly can I do? If she doesn’t feel the same way, I can’t exactly force her!”

“Oh, you dumbass… of course she feels the same way! A girl doesn’t do all the things she’s done for you if there are no deep feelings! Except maybe Mother Teresa. And I’m pretty sure Miss Felicity hasn’t moved to India recently.”

Oliver rolled his eyes, chuckling.

“I can’t believe I’m going to say this but communication is the key to a successful, healthy relationship.”

“I thought it was sex.”

“Yeah, that too but it seems like, despite my best efforts, you won’t be getting laid any time soon. So communication it is, then. What is holding her back?”

“Well she doesn’t want to be the girl who dates her boss. And since there is no short-term possibility of her not being my direct employee, I kinda feel like we’re hitting a dead-end.”

“Maybe she could apply for a position in another company?”

Oliver paused, his heart beating faster. Having Felicity working in another department was something, but in another building? For a different company? After everything she had done for QC? It felt terribly wrong.

“No. No. Just… no.”

“Dude. I know you’re just discovering heart and flowers right now but maybe you should just ask her.”

“No way. Tommy, after everything that she has done for Queen Consolidated, everything she has given and risked… It wouldn’t be fair. She deserves to stay and see the result of what she helped create.”

“You could still be discreet until…”
“Yeah, nope, she shut that one down even before I could mention it. Although to be fair, I wouldn’t want to hide either.”

“Then… you’re back to heart eyes until she either changes her mind or gets another position. But honestly can’t you ask for a favor? Swap assistants or something? What about Sara?”

“Sara resigned and I don’t want Felicity to be some low key assistant sorting paper and bringing coffee. She’d… she’d wither.”

“… Did you just compare her to a flower?”

Oliver felt himself blushing. “It’s just… she needs to keep her brain busy, she needs a challenge, Tommy. I want her to be happy in what she does.”

A small knock on the door interrupted him. Raising his head, he saw Felicity looking at him expectantly.

“Tommy? I’ll call you back,” he said, hanging up as he waved Felicity in.

“Oliver, HR called, they’re asking you to get there ASAP.”

“Is there a problem?”

“Apparently your mother tried to call you. Not a problem per say, but they are trying to make a deal to have Isabel resign from what I understood.”

Standing up, he grabbed his jacket and his phone.

“Should I come with you?” she asked nervously.

He smiled at her reassuringly. “No. I’ll call you if necessary, but I’d rather you stay as far away from her as possible.”

“Oh good. That makes two of us,” she answered her eyes wide as she followed him out of his office.

He didn’t waste any time as he rushed to the HR floor. He was directly shown to the office of the head of the department where he wasn’t surprised to see his mother. As he walked into the room, he noticed right away that she wasn’t alone. Isabel was also there, even though both women were obviously trying very hard to ignore each other. Denis Lewis, in charge of public relations and Macy Grey, who had taken over after Isabel’s promotion, were sitting between them around a big table in the far corner of the room.

“Sorry, I came as soon as possible,” he quickly apologized, sitting down next to his mother.

Isabel glared at him, her face cold and her hands folded on the table, mirroring the stance she had had during the board meeting.

“Not a problem, Oliver,” Ms Grey quickly reassured him. “Let us not waste any more time. Isabel, I am sure you understand how difficult the situation is for the company at the moment.”

“Which is exactly why QC needs all hands on deck, Macy,” she replied curtly.

Moira pinched her lips. “I believe the deal we present you is more than honorable. You get a full year of salary and we are also willing to pay you a bonus if you resign voluntarily.”
“Which would be fine if I, indeed, wanted to resign. I can guarantee you that this is not the case, Moira.”

“Alright…” Denis intervened. “Let’s get straight to the point. Isabel, what would it take for you to resign without any drama?”

“I will not quit my job, Denis. I was promoted, it was accepted by the board. I am not leaving. And don’t even think about trying to fire me. I will sue you and drag this company to the ground. I have nothing more to lose,” Isabel explained coldly, her eyes fixed on Moira and Oliver.

Moira held her stare for a few moments then calmly asked. “Could you leave us the room, Denis? And Macy?”

Both shared a look, taken aback by the unexpected demand.

“Moira, I’m not sure…”

“Denis. Please,” Moira answered with a reassuring smile.

“Alright, then…” Denis sighed as he stood up, quickly followed by Ms Grey despite some clear hesitation on her part.

Oliver was as confused as them and leaned in to whisper in his mother’s ear. “What is going on?”

Moira quickly glanced at him, slightly shaking her head and putting a reassuring hand on his arm. As soon as the door was closed, she turned to face Isabel again.

“Alright, then. What do you want?”

“I just want to do my job. The one I was hired for,” Isabel answered, crossing her arms on her chest, looking confident and collected as ever.

“I can ask the board to downgrade you and remove you from that position, you know.”

Isabel huffed out a bitter laugh. “Oh, really? The same board who actually voted me as CEO until that silly girl found a loophole in some 30-year-old papers? In case you didn’t realize it in the first place… they back me up.”

Oliver gritted his teeth as he leaned on his chair, pointing his finger at her. “Don’t you dare talk about…”

“Oliver,” Moira interrupted him. “This is not the point of this discussion.”

He quickly glanced at his mother who gave him a curt look in return. He knew that look very well. It was one he had gotten used to as he grew up. One that said “behave” when they were in company and he was acting like a spoiled brat. Locking his jaw in frustration, he sat back, knowing there was no point in arguing when his mother was in charge.

“You know, Isabel… it’s interesting you’re bringing this up. I really wondered how come so many of our own backers and partners would suddenly seem to trust you more than the judgement of my family,” Moira explained calmly. “So, of course… I investigated. I talked with several of them. Like Mrs Keiffer, for instance. She was extremely interested to find out how you actually slept your way to the top.”

Isabel paled visibly at her words but before she had time to say a word, Moira continued.
“It’s funny because she actually got divorced a few years ago and almost lost most of her company in the process. All due to the fact that her husband was cheating on her. With one of his assistants.”

Isabel breathed deeply, gulping but remained silent.

“She was quite surprised to find how much she and I had in common. I believe you never mentioned it to her, did you?”

Moira stood up, picking up her bag. She grabbed a file, opened it and slid it across the table. “This is a non-disclosure agreement about the termination of your contract. I am willing to give you until tonight to sign it. It gives you plenty of time to consult your attorney who will confirm that, not only is everything on it legit, but it’s also a real bargain. You should sign it. Take the money, leave the city and start a new life with your child.”

“This is blackmail,” Isabel hissed, her hands gripping the edge of the table.

“Yes, it is,” Moira answered calmly. “Something you are used to, I believe.”

“I could sign this and destroy your entire reputation afterwards. Let everyone know you are sending me away just to get rid of Robert’s child. From a woman who publically places family above everything…” Isabel trailed off.

“You won’t do that. If you do, you will be breaking the non-disclosure agreement and I can guarantee you there isn’t a single court in this country that would side with you. You would lose everything. Take this deal, start a new life. As far away from Starling City and my family as possible.”

“And if I don’t?” Isabel asked defiantly, raising her chin.

“Then, I will personally let every single one of my relatives, friends, and business contacts know how untrustworthy you are. You might have underestimated the Queen family… but it’s nothing compared to what a Dearden can do. My family has connections everywhere. You would never find another job in a top company. Not in this country. Not even on this continent.”

“I want shares. For my child,” Isabel finally asked, her voice strong.

“No. They will get nothing more and nothing less than what is in Robert’s will.”

“I have rights as their mother and I will fight for them,” Isabel threatened, her hands shaking lightly.

“No you won’t,” Oliver finally said before his mother could speak. “You are going to sign those papers, and walk out of our lives without ever mentioning this company or my family’s name. Ever again. Our attorneys will manage the rest and whenever your child is old enough, they will be welcome to contact us.”

“You think you can win in every aspect, don’t you?” she spat. “I am not going down without a fight.”

“Do you remember that restaurant… the bourguignon beef?” Oliver asked casually, a wolfish smile growing on his lips when he saw her blush. “The night my assistant had that allergic reaction that could have cost her life?”

As Isabel stayed stubbornly silent, Oliver smirked. “See, I never really believed it was an accident. So… I asked someone to dig into it. It took a while but… It turns out one of the employees of the restaurant cashed in a very nice amount of money a few days later. Unfortunately for you, they got
really scared when they realized what could have possibly happened if Felicity hadn’t carried an antihistaminic around. I was told they sang like a canary when they realized they could be charged with attempted murder.”

Isabel took a deep breath, her jaws locked and her entire body rigid.

“Sign those papers right now, Isabel.”

“You’re bluffing.”

“I am not.”

“If it was true, you would have called the police as soon as possible.”

“And waste such perfect leverage?” Oliver asked smoothly, sitting back on his chair and linking his hands across his stomach. “That’s not what my father taught me. In business, you have to wait for the right moment to nock your arrow. Surely… he taught you that too?”

Five minutes later, Isabel was walking out of the room, a stack of signed papers on the table. As Denis and Macy came back, Moira handed them the documents. “I believe you will find that everything in there is legit. Walter is going to call for a board meeting to approve of my appointment as the new Vice-President.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows. “Vice-President? I thought you were going for co-CEO?”

Moira smiled. “I know. But I don’t feel like it’s the right choice. Walter does a wonderful job as CEO and I believe it makes much more sense for me to take Isabel’s place instead of hiring a new VP. That is, until you feel ready to step in.”

Oliver grinned. “I think it’s actually a fantastic idea. I can’t believe you’re really going to be my boss, though.”

“How… How did you convince her?” Macy interrupted them as she was going through the documents Isabel had signed.

“It doesn’t matter. This woman is out of our lives for good and if you don’t mind, I would like to celebrate this with my son,” Moira answered.

“Hum… sure. Of course. I’ll just release a statement informing our shareholders of the change in our leadership,” Denis replied, already walking to the door. Macy followed, still shaking her head, confused.

Oliver looked as the woman was retreating out of the room and with a sudden breath, told his mother. “Mom… can you wait for me? I need a word with Macy.”

He barely had the time to hear his mother approving before he was already trotting to catch up with the head of HR. He found her when she was just about to step inside the elevator.

“Macy? Could I speak to you?” Oliver asked, eyeing Denis. “Privately, I mean.”

She looked at him, surprised. “Yes. Of course, yes. Denis, can you bring this to the legal department?”

Denis grabbed the file, nodding as he pushed the elevator button.

Macy walked towards an empty office a few doors down the hall. As soon as she closed the door,
Oliver asked her, “I was wondering if there was any open position in the Applied Sciences Department or IT?”

Ms Grey tilted her head, observing him quietly. “I believe you’re not asking for yourself?”

Oliver shoved his hands in his pockets. “No… no of course not. It’s for my assistant. Felicity Smoak.”

She nodded, pinching her lips. “Ah… the famous Miss Smoak…”

“As you might know, her qualifications clearly match IT or Applied Sciences and I believe that maybe it is time for her to…”

“Oliver,” she cut him off gently as she leaned on the small empty desk. “There are currently no open positions, and no recruitment is planned for the near future. Our company went through some difficult times, as I’m sure you’re aware, and we are trying to reinforce what is already in place. Not hire new people.”

“I know that. But maybe you could make an exception? Or maybe even ask if someone would be interested in working in Marketing for example?” Oliver pleaded.

“Listen, Oliver. I am going to be brutally honest with you. I appreciate the fact that you apparently learned from your father’s mistake and are trying to at least be discreet about your… close relationship with your employee but…”

“That’s not what it’s like,” Oliver cut her off, shaking his head. “Not at all.”

“Oliver, people saw you at some party this weekend. From what I’ve heard there are little to no doubts as to what exactly is going on between the two of you. People notice things. You don’t go out as often as before, you haven’t been seen with the woman who is supposed to be your fiancée in weeks… Rumors always spread like a wildfire in QC.”

“I’m not engaged to Laurel anymore, actually,” Oliver explained, grimacing. “But that’s not the point.”

“The point is that you have a… very close relationship with your assistant and now want her to be transferred to another service. Two days after people saw you in a compromising situation. It doesn’t take a genius to figure that one out, Oliver. Especially after the whole Isabel debacle with your father.”

“The situations are completely different! Felicity was never even supposed to work in Marketing, or as an assistant! She is more than qualified for a job in IT or Applied Sciences. Hell! She is the one who came up with our newest project, something even the best engineers we have didn’t even think about!”

Ms Grey sighed deeply, a gentle smile on her lips. “I understand, Oliver. But… the rumors are there. Felicity being transferred to a position created just for her would only make things worse. You know how recruitment works here. When a new position opens, anyone can apply. What would it look like if suddenly she ends up in a better position… like Isabel did a few months ago?”

Oliver gritted his teeth. “She is not another Isabel.”

“I know. But is she ready to be seen as one nonetheless?”

As Oliver stayed silent, she continued, “As soon as something comes up, I’ll let you know, though. I
can give you a few days ahead so she can prepare for the position. That’s all I can do.”

He nodded, muttering a thank you as he opened the door, letting her through.

His mother insisted on the two of them having lunch together and he forced himself to make casual conversation throughout the meal. As he was making his way back to his office, his mood much darker than when he had arrived in the morning, he pondered on his talk with Macy. Hearing her confirm the rumors concerning him and Felicity had caused a pinch in his heart. He knew what office gossip looked like and it was never pretty. The idea that his behavior was causing this to happen to Felicity was making his stomach churn with regrets and shame. How could he let that happen to her?

The sight of her as he stepped out of the elevator was enough to bring a smile back on his lips. She was typing on her keyboard, humming distractedly. She barely raised her head to greet him with a grin.

“So… how did it go?” she asked, suddenly pushing the keyboard away and focusing on him.

He sat on the corner of her desk, next to her, picking up her pen and fiddling with it. “Good, actually. She resigned, accepted the deal.”

Felicity nodded. “I gathered as much. I mean you know how it’s like here… Sara told me she had been seen packing her things. I’m quite surprised though, I never thought she’d go down without a fight.”

Oliver winced. “Yeah… well…”

Perking an eyebrow, Felicity asked, “There was a fight?”

“I might have had to use your allergic reaction as leverage…”

“Hum… what?”

“I told her we found an employee who admitted they put peanuts in the meal that night.”

Felicity gasped. “What?! You never told me you looked into this and…”

She narrowed her eyes suspiciously. “Did you really look into this?”

Oliver shrugged sheepishly. “I could have. You didn’t want me to, though.”

“Oliver Queen… did you actually bluff and fooled her into resigning?”

“Why… Yes. I believe I did,” he said, smiling.

He then quickly sobered up. “Although the fact that she accepted proves she was behind it, like I told you. Maybe I should have told the police instead and…”

Felicity interrupted him, putting a hand on his thigh. “And lose your leverage? I am pretty sure she covered her tracks. It would have been a dead end. At least… you used that wisely.”

“I’ll still ask Dig to look into it because someone did it,” he stated, his hand automatically reaching to cover hers on his leg.
“Maybe it was just a kid who thought he could get a bit of money, having no idea what her endgame was.”

“But what if it’s not?”

“But what if it is?”

Oliver stared at her. She stared back at him innocently.

“Compromise?” he finally asked with a lopsided smirk.

“Depends what kind?” she said teasingly.

“If the person is someone who looks remorseful and never did anything else wrong, we’ll just have Dig scaring them with his big arms. If they’re not, we’ll just have Dig scaring them with his big arms and threaten them.”

She pondered his words, tapping her index over her lips. “That seems fair.”

The movement of her hand made him realize he was still holding the other one over his leg and quickly released her. Judging by the sudden blush on her cheeks, she hadn’t realized it either and she glided back on her chair, putting a foot between them.

“I… I still have some work to do. The report you asked for will be done by the end of the day,” she said, her voice throaty as she went back to her typing.

He nodded, aware that she could see him from the corner of his eyes. As he stood up, he took a deep breath.

“Felicity…”

“Yes?” she answered, her fingers freezing but her eyes remaining stubbornly on the screen.

“I did ask HR… for the possibility for you to be moved to a department that more suits your abilities. They confirmed there are no opening, yet. But they’ll let me know as soon as something comes up. If… if you still want to, I mean.”

She visibly gulped. “Do you?”

“I…” he huffed out an embarrassed laugh. “I want you to be happy and I know that this beautiful brain of yours is going to need more challenges eventually.”

She finally looked at him, a small smile playing on her lips. He gazed down at her, restraining himself from reaching out a hand and lightly stroke her cheek. He saw her eyes glancing at his lips and he knew at that moment that she was remembering their kiss as vividly as he was. He saw in those few seconds the same desire, the same longing he was feeling deep down in his heart.

He finally cleared his throat. “Just so you know… when that happens, I plan on inviting you out for dinner. To celebrate.”

A wide grin appeared on her face. “Just so you know… I plan on saying yes.”

Chapter End Notes
Sooo... what do you think?

You can find me on Twitter @Pimsiepim or Tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Hi guys! *waves*

Thank you so very much for your support, I'm glad to see you didn't forget about HGW ;)

This chapter was edited by mysticaldetectivepanda and as usual, Pidanka helped me stay focus on the archive room (this will make sense once you've read it): thank you so very much to the two of you!

Song: I want you - Savage Garden

Oh, btw... this chapter... heats things up. A little bit ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I Want You"

Anytime I need to see your face,
I just close my eyes
And I am taken to a place where
your crystal mind and
Magenta feelings take up shelter
in the base of my spine
Sweet like a chic-a-cherry cola
I don't need to try and explain;
I just hold on tight
And if it happens again, I might move
so slightly
To the arms and the lips and the face
of the human cannonball
That I need to, I want to

Come stand a little bit closer
Breath in and get a bit higher
You'll never know what hit you
When I get to you

Ooh, I want you
I don't know if I need you
But, ooh, I'd die to find out
Ooh, I want you
I don't know if I need you
But, ooh, I'd die to find out

I'm the kind of person who endorses
a deep commitment
Getting comfy getting perfect
is what I live for
But a look, then a smell of perfume
It's like I'm down on the floor
And I don't know what I'm in for

Conversation has a time and place
In the interaction of a lover and
a mate,
But the time of talking,
using symbols, using words
Can be likened to a deep sea diver
who is swimming with a raincoat

Come stand a little bit closer
Breathe in and get a bit higher
You'll never know what hit you
When I get to you

Anytime I need to see your face,
I just close my eyes
And I am taken to a place where
your crystal mind and
Magenta feelings take up shelter
in the base of my spine
Sweet like a chic-a-cherry cola

I don't need to try and explain;
I just hold on tight
And if it happens again, I might move
so slightly
To the arms and the lips and the face
of the human cannonball
That I need to, I want to

So can we find out?

“I can not believe you tricked me into this!” Felicity shouted as soon as Oliver stepped out of the elevator.

She had been waiting for him - or pacing actually -, her furious steps clicking on the marble floor.

Oliver shook his head, passing by her. “I didn’t trick you, Felicity.”

“Oh really?! And what do you call ‘since it’s Sara’s last weekend before she leaves for Hong Kong, why don’t you take Friday and Monday off so you can spend a few days together?’” she snorted,
following him with her hands on her hips.

“Me being a considerate boss?” he asked, a teasing smile on his lips.

“Ugh!” she groaned, throwing her hands in the air in frustration. “Fine. What about the part where Tommy Merlyn, aka your best friend, aka your partner in crime, aka the second biggest pain in the ass in Starling City, makes plans for the four of us to head to Vegas?”

“Me being a generous friend?” Oliver winked, unphased by her outburst. Truth be told, seeing her so worked up, her eyes flashing daggers and her breathing heavy was actually worth being shouted at in his own office.

She glared at him, her nostrils trembling and her mouth set into a firm line.

He couldn’t help but smile, bending slightly his knees as his arms reached out. “Oh, come on Felicity. It will be fun. And Tommy has been nagging me for months. I just couldn’t take it anymore.”

“Let me tell you something. A nagging Tommy Merlyn is nothing compared to a pissed-off Felicity Smoak,” she gritted through her teeth, poking his chest with her index finger.

“Don’t I know it, Miss Smoak,” he leaned to whisper in her ear, knowing full well this would only fuel her rage. He heard her gulp, his own breathing quickening as he took in her natural scent. That tantalizing green apple fragrance with a mix of something uniquely hers, the soft skin of her neck begging for his kiss… Groaning, he forced himself to take a step back, noticing, by the blush on her cheeks, that he was far from being the only one affected by their banter.

Her darkening eyes staring at his mouth, she licked her lips, apparently oblivious to the effect it had on him. Not trusting himself any longer, he locked his jaw and turned around, heading to his desk.

That seemed enough to shake her off her trance as she joined him right away, obviously not ready to drop the subject.

“Tell him I’m not going.”

“Why would I do that?” he asked, sitting down.

“Oliver…”

“Felicity…” he mimicked.

She crossed her arms on her chest, a stubborn expression on her face. “You’re not meeting my mom.”

“I believe Tommy already made plans for dinner.”

She gasped. “What?! He doesn’t even know her!”

“It’s Tommy Merlyn we’re talking about. I told him she was working at Caesar’s Palace and…”

“Oh. So you told him.”

Damn. You, idiot.

He was literally saved by the bell when the sound of the elevator reached them. He looked at her. “I believe we have a visitor.”
“This is so not over, Queen,” she hissed as she hurried out of his office, the furious pace accenting the natural swing of her hips. She was wearing a dark purple dress with a few cutouts on the upper back. It was literally clinging to her curves and sinful as hell despite the length and the shape being more than office appropriate. Not to mention, the small zipper running down her back wasn’t helping at all.

He was imagining himself lowering that zipper, her hair down and thrown over a shoulder, his lips grasing the skin of her neck when a knock on the door startled him. He raised his eyebrows in surprise when he saw Malcolm Merlyn on the threshold of his door, a still fuming Felicity sitting back on her desk and glaring at him. A small smile tugged his lips as he realized she was probably directing her anger from one Merlyn to another.

Shaking his head, he stood up to welcome his friend’s father. As he closed the door separating their offices, he gestured to the small sofa, inviting his guest to sit down.

“What can I do for you, Malcolm?”

To Oliver’s surprise, Malcolm’s visit was apparently to ask about Oliver and the company’s well-being. Both men spent the next half-hour discussing Robert Queen’s legacy. Oliver was touched by Malcolm’s concern about the future of QC, as well as his proposition to help in any way he could. Robert and Malcolm had been friends as long as he could remember, as well as business partners for most of their lives. To know that Oliver could still count on him for guidance was reassuring.

“I know how hard it must be for you. Robert died in such an abrupt way. It’s just too bad he didn’t leave any guidance as to where he wanted to take the company next.”

“Well… it’s not like he could have foreseen his death. We’ll just keep going the way we were before he passed away. I have complete faith in Walter and my mother.”

“Anyway. As I said, if you have any questions… I knew your father really well, Oliver. I’d be happy to help. Whether it’s something QC related or if you have any doubt concerning your father’s will. I know he wanted to have a talk with you concerning the future of the company but your mother told me he didn’t have the chance to.”

“No. We had some kind of a… fight shortly before he died and we didn’t have the time to have this kind of discussion. I guess we’ll all have to do the best we can and hope for the best. But thank you. I won’t hesitate to reach to you. Walter will be mostly busy mentoring my mother for the next couple of months. It’s good to know I have someone else I can trust on my side.”

Malcolm smiled warmly. “Good. That’s settled, then. I have to admit this wasn’t the sole reason for my visit, though.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows. “Is there something I can help you with?”

“Yes and no. I know that you are planning on a weekend in Vegas.”

“Yep. I feel like we’ve earned a bit of fun after everything that happened.”

Malcolm nodded. “I won’t deny it. Your mother has been telling me how hard you’ve been working these last few months. I wish my own son was as dedicated as you.”
Oliver folded his lips over his teeth, uncomfortable with the way Malcolm was talking about his best friend. He knew very well how light-hearted Tommy could be but having to grow up with a father like Malcolm Merlyn, without a loving mother to balance things out, had been tough on him. All in all, Tommy’s behavior could have been way worse.

“Maybe he just needs to find a purpose and the right motivation?” Oliver dryly said nonetheless, unable to stop himself.

Malcolm looked at him thoughtfully. “You might be right, actually. Maybe it’s just a matter of time.”

Suddenly uncomfortable, Oliver stood up. “I’m sorry but my assistant scheduled a video call and…”

“Of course. I’m sorry, I stopped by unannounced,” Malcolm said immediately, raising up as well. “Thank you for your time, Oliver.”

He stayed at the threshold of the door while Malcolm walked back to the elevator, deep in thoughts. He knew his own relationship with his father had been more than difficult, but he was now slowly starting to see what Robert had tried to do with him. Malcolm and Tommy, on the other hand… ever since Rebecca Merlyn had passed away, father and son had grown distant, not understanding each other anymore. Robert Queen had many flaws but he would have never abandoned his children the way Malcolm had after his wife’s funeral.

“What’s with the mopey face?” Felicity’s voice reached through him.

Turning his head, he saw she was typing, throwing quick glances at him.

Smiling, he shoved his hands in his pockets. “Nothing. Just… despite all the problems I had with my father, I never doubted he loved me. Some… can’t exactly say the same.”

That caused her to pause and shift her full attention on him. “You mean Tommy?”

“Well… Malcolm has always been nice to me. Not so nice to his own son.”

“Oh.”

“Especially after his mother died,” Oliver explained. “He came to live with us for a couple of years afterwards. He’s a part of the family, really. Like the overenthusiastic puppy.”

Felicity giggled. “That suits him.”

“Yeah. And everyone loves dogs, right?” he asked innocently.

She nodded, then stopped abruptly, eyeing him suspiciously. “Are you trying to manipulate me so I’ll go with you this weekend?”

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “Of course not.”

“Good, because that wouldn’t…”

He cut her off. “You’re already coming, what would be the point?”

She pinched her lips. “Oliver. Jonas. Queen.”


“Why do you want me to go so bad?” she asked, sighing.
“Why don’t you want to go so bad?”

“Because…”

He waited expectantly, sitting on the corner of her desk. *I probably spend more time on her desk than on mine.*

“It’s just… it’s weird.”

“Felicity. We went on a road trip together. In the same car. We slept in the same room. Hell! We even shared a bed. I know your feet get cold during the night and you have that weird craving for raw broccoli when you’re drunk. How much weirder can be a trip to Vegas, with two other friends?” he asked, grinning.

She glared at him. “First of all… it’s not a weird craving. A lot of people love broccoli, you know. It’s not like there is this general consensus against that poor vegetable and we are all willing to write it off our lives.”

“Fair point. I apologize to all the poor broccolis I rejected when I was younger,” he deadpanned.

“You’re gonna meet my mom,” she finally mumbled.

“You met mine. And we’re both still alive.”

“It’s different! Yours is practically my boss!”

“Which should have made it even more awkward. Now, come on. Tell me. What makes you so uncomfortable?” he asked gently, his eyes softening as he saw her shifting on her chair.

“I hated Vegas,” she finally admitted in a breath. “It represented everything I never wanted to be.”

“What do you mean?” he encouraged her, resting his hands on the desk behind him.

“There is nothing in a city like Las Vegas for a girl like me, Oliver. Growing up there was a daily reminder of how I could never fit in anywhere whether it was high school or girl scouts or anything else really. I barely had friends because I was always several classes ahead, my mother was working double shifts just so she could make ends meet. I never had anyone who remotely understood me, not ever since… not since I was 7.”

“But you’re not that girl anymore, Felicity. You are a strong, incredibly bright, fun and caring person. If you really don’t want to go, then we won’t. But please, tell me the truth: Have you never wished you could get into the casinos on the strip - legally that is - and show them what a real Vegas girl can do with that bright brain of yours?” he asked gently, lightly bopping her forehead.

She smiled, biting her lower lip. “… yeah.”

“So, why don’t we show them? I promise we’ll go see the fountains as many times as you want. We’ll even get those weird foldable chairs old people carry around if you want to.”

She giggled. “I think Tommy would never forgive you.”

“Nothing a few bottles of tequila wouldn’t fix.”

“So, it’s all good? Can I tell Tommy he won’t need that bullet-proof vest after all?”

“OK,” she nodded. “I’ll go. But I want to see the fountains! And go to a buffet!”
“A buffet?” he asked, grimacing. “Really?”

Smiling innocently, she rested her head on her hands. “Tell me the truth; have you never wished you could go to these all-you-can-eat buffets when you were younger? With all those desserts and ice-cream?”

He glared at her while she looked at him expectantly, her eyebrows raised.

“Fine. You win,” he grinned, unable to keep a straight face any longer. “But I pick the place!”

“No! You’re going to choose one of those posh restaurants like the Bacchanal!”

“Felicity, I honestly do not think an all you can eat buffet can be described as ‘posh,’” he deadpanned.

She pinched her lips, obviously holding back a laugh. She nodded, getting back to work on her keyboard and muttered under her breath, “and here I was thinking Tommy was the pampered one…”

Oliver narrowed his eyes. “Did you just call me pampered?”

Felicity hummed non-committedly, still focusing on her work. Which could have worked if the clear ghost of a smile wasn’t playing on her lips. Oliver grinned, shaking his head. There was something so right in the way they were acting right now. That banter and bickering had always been a part of their relationship he was particularly fond of, but this teasing Felicity was something he clearly couldn’t resist.

“You’re trying reverse psychology on me, aren’t you?”

“Is it working?” she asked, looking at him with hopeful eyes.

He put one hand on one of the handles of her chair, forcing it to face him and leant in closer to her. He noticed she froze instantly, her breathing quickening. Once they were only inches apart, he murmured, “No.”

He could see her pupils grow wider as she unconsciously licked her lips. The sudden feel of victory wasn’t enough to dull the aching desire he was feeling. Being so close to her, yet not allowing himself to go those last few inches was one of the worst kind of tortures he had ever inflicted on himself. He felt her hands reach out and grip his wrists and during one split second, he thought she was going to push him away. Locking his jaws, he readied himself, resigned to see her put some space between them. His heart fluttered when she just left her hands where they were, holding him so tight he could feel her nails digging into the material of his shirt and into his skin. Her face bowed down, her eyes closing as if she was trying to force herself to move away but was unable to do so. He breathed her in as her forehead grazed his chin. In that moment, there was nothing in the world that could prevent him from tasting her skin and he let his lips brush the softest kiss on her head, knowing this was the only thing he would allow himself to do.

His lips still on her skin, he murmured, “Felicity…”

That seemed to shake her out of her trance as she straightened herself, using the leverage she had on his wrist to push her chair away from him.

She visibly gulped, her eyes wide. “Oliver… we can’t.”

“I know,” he assured her, regrets and remorses making his voice lower than it usually was. “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have done that. It was -”
She cut him off. “It was not your fault. I should have pulled away.”

He gazed at her in wonder, asking himself how could she know him so well that she could actually voice what he was feeling.

Clearing her throat, she added, “Anyway. I should finish these letters.”

He reluctantly rose up from her desk, understanding that she was back in business mode. A part of him wished it could be that easy for him to swallow back his longing and bottle up his feelings.

“Allright, then. I’ll leave you to work.”

He walked up to his office, closing the door between them as if it somehow could keep her far away from his thoughts. He rolled his eyes at himself, knowing full well it was way too late for that.

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Felicity took a deep breath as the sound of the door closing reached her. She briefly closed her eyes, pushing back the keyboard. Her hands were shaking so hard, she was surprised he hadn’t noticed. Truth be told, she had barely been able to keep up pretenses of work, her typing being so hectic she had had to re-write the same word three times in a row.

Restraining herself from reaching over and kissing him senseless had taken a toll on her. The way his strong hands felt underneath her palms, the warmth of his skin, the softness of his smile,... There was only so much a girl could take and she knew she was fast approaching her limits.

If only he was still douchey Oliver, I would have no problem resisting. But no… I have to resist charming, sweet, kind Oliver.

Knowing it was pointless to try to get any work done, she got up from her chair, figuring he could do without her for a few minutes. Grabbing her wallet, she quickly made her way to the vending machines on the other side of the floor. The small walk there helped her clear her head and, as she sat back on her chair with a few chocolate bars and a Doctor Pepper, she was proud of herself that she didn’t even glance through the glass once. Well, OK. Maybe I glanced once. But still. He’s standing with his shirt rolled up on his arms and I didn’t even moan. At least… not out loud. I count that as a win.

Felicity wasn’t exactly a prude. She wasn’t extremely experienced but she had had boyfriends in the past. Well… one at least. A few flings, but one serious relationship. She had even considered moving in with Cooper before all hell broke loose. So, love wasn’t something new to her. But the feelings she had for Oliver were quite scary in their intensity and she was surprised by how quickly they had developed. Sure, their relationship had been growing over months but once their friendship took a more personal turn… things had escalated.

That kiss they had shared had been like a dam breaking. There was no point in denying anymore, it was so much more than just a stupid attraction. It was a longing, something that was constantly pulling her towards him. The ache of not being able to touch him the way she wanted to had been digging a hole in her chest more and more. Yet, the masochistic part of herself was looking forward every morning when she knew she was going to see him.

She had a taste of how things could be between them and had barely been able to think of anything else ever since then. Her nights were filled with heated moments, her body craving him in a way that
barely made sense to her. How could he have such a strong hold on her while all they did was share a kiss? The days weren’t helping, not when he was constantly smiling at her or gazing at her like she was the moon, the stars, and the Hailey comet all rolled into one.

Yet, despite the attraction, despite the lust, what she was yearning the most was him. Just him. The Oliver who brought her coffee or her favorite pastry. The Oliver who always paid attention to her, always sensing when something was wrong. The Oliver who looked at her with such tenderness and respect, yet with heated eyes that were begging for the right to worship her. Oh, sure, the man had a body to die for and she would be a hypocrite to pretend her dreams had been strictly PG13. But that was nothing compared to how much she craved simple intimacy with him. Share a night at her place, watching some random TV-show and finally have the right to snuggle against him, feel his heart beating underneath her ear. Feel him stroke through her hair. Have breakfast together - probably outside because her fridge was constantly empty and she mostly survived on take-out anyway. Go to a movie and hide in the back row, kissing like teenagers.

What Felicity wanted with Oliver wasn’t sex. She wanted a relationship.

Who am I kidding? I want sex. I want loads of sex as well. Sex in the bed, sex against a wall, sex in the bathtub, sex on his desk... Oh yeah... sex on his desk.

She felt her cheeks heating up as her favorite fantasy played in front of her eyes. Vividly. She gulped, glancing as discreetly as possible in his direction. He was currently busy on the phone, his chair turned towards the window. A ray of sunshine was playing on his face, accenting the scruff on his cheeks. Oh to be able to stroke the rough skin, feel the scratching on her fingertips... such a deep contrast compared to the softness of his lips. He laughed at what his interlocutor, throwing his head back and exposing his neck. She felt such a deep need to run her tongue over his throat and nibble on the tender skin that she almost jumped out of chair and rushed into his office.

How does he do that?! He doesn’t even have to look at me to get me all hot and bothered!

Groaning, she squeezed her eyes shut, trying to come up with something - anything, really - to distract her from her thoughts. There was no way she was going to be able to make it to a whole weekend with Oliver if she couldn’t stop drooling over him. A small mischievous smile grew on her lips as she remembered who exactly had come up with the idea for that trip.

Tommy Merlyn. The one and only. The guy who had thought it was a good idea to drunk dial her in the middle of the night.

Oh yeah... I say it's time for payback.

Surprisingly, Felicity made it through the day - and the next one - without breaking down and climbing Oliver like a tree. A personal achievement that she was extremely proud of, as her boss seemed hell-bent on tempting her. On Tuesday, he had worn a three pieces dark grey suit. With a freaking vest that showcased his shoulders and gave him that classy look that made her weak at the knees. To be totally honest, she still wasn’t completely over it. It was with great relief that she had gone back home, had a hot bath and ordered Chinese take-out.

So when she walked into her office on Wednesday, it was fair to say that she was more than wary, not trusting herself to have the same kind of restraint two days in a row.

And boy was she right to doubt herself...
“Felicity?” Oliver asked through the intercom.

“Yup?” she answered distractedly, trying to make sense of the latest budget Oliver was supposed to approve.

“Tommy wants to meet for lunch, you OK for that?”

“... What? When?”

“Today. Wants to finalize our plans for this weekend.”

Felicity turned her head, looking at Oliver through the glass wall. He smiled at her sheepishly, his phone pressed down on a shoulder.

“Is this really necessary? I mean we’re going to Vegas for a weekend, not a retreat in Tibet.”

“Please?” he looked at her with pleading eyes and a lopsided grin.

*That damn man with that damn smile and those damn dimples.*

“Alright,” she found herself answering while rolling her eyes, wondering what Tommy Merlyn had in mind.

Noon came fast enough and she wasn’t surprised when the place Tommy had picked was a nice, elegant French restaurant known for its selection of wines. He was already waiting for them, sitting in a small booth in one of the quietest corners. They were far away from any window and the light was so dim that it was practically impossible to know it was the middle of the day and not night time.

“Miss Felicity,” Tommy welcomed her with his usual charming smile, standing up.

“Mister Merlyn,” she answered curtly as she slid in the booth, Oliver following her. They were both facing Tommy and sitting so close to each other that her leg kept brushing his. She moved as close to the wall as she could without it being too obvious. Last thing she wanted was Oliver to think she couldn’t bear having him near her and Tommy remarking on it.

“Now, come on. We are going on a vacation together... I think it’s more than time you start calling me Tommy.”

Felicity smiled. “... you’re right, actually. Thank you for the invitation, Tommy.”

A flicker of surprise shown on his face, obviously not expecting her to finally cave in, and certainly not so easily. Their waiter approached their table, handing them the menus. The three of them ordered rapidly, the men setting in for a T-Bone steak and Felicity for a chicken cordon bleu.

“So... what was it you wanted to talk about, Tommy?” she asked innocently as soon as their waiter filled their glasses of water.

“Well, I mostly wanted to give you our flight information,” he answered, handing her a sheet of paper.

“Which you couldn’t have emailed me, right?”

“I’m not that good with technology, as you know.”
“I seem to remember that.”

“As for the hotel, I don’t know if you have a preference…” Tommy continued, unfazed.

Oliver cut him off. “I’ll take care of the hotel accommodation. And also… our first dinner.”

Felicity glanced at him curiously, knowing their first dinner was probably the buffet but still surprised he would be so protective about their hotel.

“Alright, then…” Tommy trailed off, looking as taken aback as she was. The two of them actually shared a confused look but Oliver didn’t linger on the topic.

“We’re taking the jet, by the way,” he told her, as he took a sip of water.

“QC jet?” Her eyebrows shot up in surprise. “Is that really professional?”

“Probably not… My mother suggested it actually.”

“When you say your mother… you mean Moira Queen? The Moira Queen?” Felicity asked in disbelief. The idea of Moira Queen encouraging her son to go on a Vegas trip with the company jet was mind-boggling to her.

“Well, last time I checked, she is the only mother I have, so yes… the Moira Queen,” Oliver deadpanned.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean it… it’s just that… I mean… it’s a weekend in Vegas,” Felicity rambled.

Oliver smiled at her reassuringly. “I know. She said no one was using it and…” he coughed, shifting on his chair.

“And?” Tommy chimed in smugly.

Oliver glared at him before answering, “She said I needed to celebrate my birthday properly. I didn’t get the chance because we were on that trip and then…”

And then Robert had passed away, Felicity realized.

“Oh. So it’s actually a belated birthday celebration trip?”

“Kind of?” he asked, wincing. “I’m sorry, it’s not really a birthday weekend, I mean, it actually is but it’s not the only reason why we are going, I mean you know Tommy wanted…”

“Is this babbling thing contagious or something?” Tommy asked, perking an eyebrow. “Cause I might have to call this weekend off, if it is. I have the reputation of a smooth talker, you know.”

Felicity snorted, gripping her glass of water.

“What?” Tommy asked, offended. “I do!”

“Sure you do,” she singsonged, sharing an amused look with Oliver.

All in all, the meal was actually quite pleasant. Tommy was his usual charming and funny self, asking her questions about herself and her hometown. She found herself opening up more and more and had a few laughs at some of the tales the boys told her about their own adventures in Vegas.

When it was time for dessert, she was surprisingly relaxed, leaning on the booth as she told her
dining companion about how she actually used a fake-ID to get into a downtown casino.

Tommy was chuckling as she explained how she cashed in her chips while sweating buckets, afraid to be caught by a security member.

Oliver was sitting back on the booth as well, his arm stretched on the back right behind her shoulders. The restaurant was much more quiet, most of the white-collar clients already back to work and the one glass of wine she had had was making her feel awfully comfortable in the poorly lit atmosphere. She felt her eyes closing when Oliver’s fingers grazed the back of her neck, and instead of pushing away like she would normally do, she leaned into the touch.

Glancing discreetly at him, she noted with relief that he was deep in talk with Tommy about some random Vegas show he wanted to see. He probably wasn’t even aware of what his hand was doing, but his fingers slowly stroked her neck as her head pressed harder against his arm. Goosebumps started to erupt down her spine as he played with the hair in her ponytail, his knuckles grazing repeatedly against the top of her shoulder.

A moan caught in her throat when his thumbnail lightly scratched her ear and she pinched her lips, her cheeks flaming up. Fortunately, none of them noticed but it was enough of a wake-up call to actually straighten her shoulders and put some space between them again.

As if the lack of contact had somehow registered with his brain, Oliver turned to her briefly, a question in his eyes. She smiled shakily, thankful that their waitress was arriving with their desserts.

“Do you need anything else?” the 20-something brunette asked as she set a plate in front of Tommy.

“Yes… your phone number?” Tommy winked at her.

Felicity rolled her eyes, grabbing her cellphone in her purse.

“He really can’t help himself, can he?” she snorted, her voice low.

“Nope. It’s like a second nature, I’m afraid,” Oliver smiled apologetically.

Felicity quietly observed the exchange from the corner of her eyes, as the waitress started to giggle and glance towards the back of the restaurant, probably nervous her boss might find her getting friendly with the clientele.

“I would very much appreciate it if you could do me the honor of letting me take you out for dinner. Just dinner. Nothing more, nothing less. Gentleman’s honor.”

_You’ve got to be kidding me._

“You know, I’m not sure this is appropriate… you are a client and…”

“No, I’m not. My friend here is paying for the meal. He is the client. I am not. I just happened to stop by and your eyes have captured my heart. I am merely a victim.”

_Hey! Hey! Hey, hey, hey!_

_Macho, macho man_

_I’ve got to be, a macho man_
Macho, macho man

I’ve got to be a macho!

The song was so unexpected in such a delicate environment that it took them a couple of seconds to figure out where it was coming from.

The waitress looked at Tommy with raised eyebrows, her eyes landing on the pocket of his shirt.

“What the…” Tommy frowned, fishing for his cellphone whose lightened screen confirmed it was the source of the sound.

Oliver snickered, shaking his head at Felicity who did her best to keep an innocent face as she licked her spoon clean of her chocolate lava cake.

“Anyway. My friend will be waiting your table,” the waitress said with a stiff smile that didn’t quite reach her eyes as Tommy was fumbling with his phone, trying to shut it down.

Body, my body, body, wanna feel my body

Body, baby, body, body, come and thrill my body

Body, baby, body, body, love to funk, my body

Body, baby, body, body, it’s so hot, my body

“Wait, what? No! Come back!” Tommy said. “I promise you, that’s not my ring tone! I stopped being a Village People fan when I was 8!”

Taking pity on his poor attempts, Felicity wordlessly reached out a hand, wiggling her fingers.

He looked at her hopefully. “Can you do something? It must be a virus because I can’t even mute it…”

Seeing her mischievious smile, he narrowed his eyes suspiciously. “Wait a minute. Do you have something to do with that?”

“Who? Me?” she asked innocently, her fingers already at work. In less than two seconds, the annoying song stopped and she gave him back his cellphone.

“But… but why would you do that?” he all but whined. Turning to his best friend, he added, “and why did you let her?”

Oliver chuckled, raising his hands in defense. “It’s Felicity you’re talking about. I can’t even get her to bring me a cup of coffee. And I’m her boss.”

“That girl could have been the love of my life! The future Mrs Merlyn!”

“If she really was, she would have accepted your dark taste in music,” Felicity dryly said.
“You put that song there, not me!”

“I found it in your workout playlist,” she deadpanned.

“Dude, seriously? Village People?” Oliver laughed out loud, throwing his head back.

Tommy pinched his lips. “The beat makes it a very good song for exercising, I’ll let you know.”

Oliver was still laughing as they made their way back to the office, much later than she had expected.

“Poor Tommy. I guess this is payback for forcing your hand?”

“... That’s actually payback for the drunk call in the middle of the night. As for the Vegas trip and dinner with my mom… I’m still considering my options,” she smiled cheekily as she shrugged her jacket off. Oliver stepped behind her, helping her to get rid of it.

“Should I be fearing for myself?” Oliver asked.

“... You’re still on probation for that one,” she answered as she turned back to face him.

“Anything I could do to help my case?” he murmured.

She bit her lower lip nervously. “I think you’ve been doing a great job so far.”

He licked his lips, his eyes travelling down to her mouth. She took a deep breath, feeling her own eyes closing despite her best efforts, her body craving a connection with his.

He cleared his throat “I’m sorry. I should… I’ll be in my office.”

Her eyes snapped open as she swallowed back her disappointment, knowing she only had herself to blame for her frustration. She was the one who set up barriers. He was only trying to respect her wish.

Sitting down at her desk, she gritted her teeth, repeating to herself why giving into the attraction was a bad idea. No matter how many times she told herself that a relationship with her boss would only end badly, it didn’t help her deal with the frustration. Glancing at his office, she saw him sitting on his desk, facing the window. He was wearing black slacks and a light blue shirt that did wonders for his eyes. His usual tie was slightly askew and the knot wasn’t as neat as it had been in the morning. As if he sensed her eyes on him, he turned his head, their gazes locking.

She doesn’t know who moves first but suddenly he is walking, his steps fast, and she is standing up, moving away from her desk. There is something in his eyes, a heat, a confidence, that she has never seen before, as if something has finally snapped. He is next to her in a second, his hands cradling her face like they did at the Christmas party, his thumbs gently stroking her cheeks. Her breath catches in her throat, his name already on her lips.

“Felicity...” he whispers softly and it’s her undoing. She grabs his tie, pulling until his head leans towards her and her mouth is on his. The kiss is so much more desperate this time. It’s a build-up of frustration and longing, with the taste of forbidden fruit. She moans as she feels his tongue begging entrance and chuckles at the thought. There is no need for begging, she’s as desperate as he is.
The movement causes him to pause, his eyes opening, questioning.

She smiles, shaking her head as she whispers against his lips, “nevermind. Don’t stop.”

He mirrors her smile and suckles on her lower lip. Her hands reach for his skull, gripping his short hair and she is rewarded when a small groan escapes him. She doesn’t even notice they’re moving, so caught up in the whirlwind of emotions, but Oliver’s strong arm is around her waist, and he’s guiding her. A flash of consciousness rears its head and she realizes that they’re in the middle of her office, in broad daylight and anyone could see them but suddenly it’s dark around her.

The archive room. They are in the archive room. She can feel one of Oliver’s hands leaving her as he searches for the light. He closes the door on them, his lips still on hers as if he can’t possibly let her go for one second. He finally finds the switch and as the light turns on, she opens her eyes, and the vision of him, his dark pupils and red cheeks, causes such a deep stir inside of her that her legs wobble. He gently pushes her against a small table where she leans back, her hands gripping his shirt and pulling him towards her. She has declined what her body craves for so long that now when she is finally giving in, she can’t even imagine spending one second away from him. A voice deep down tells her that this can’t happen again, that she has to stop, that it is probably the worst idea she has ever had but… she shuts it down. She’ll deal with the fallout later.

When Oliver is kissing her like that, like it’s the last thing he’ll ever do, there is nothing she can do but try to give as much as he does. One of his hands travels down her back, sending shivers along her spine, and pauses when it reaches the end of her blouse. There is just a small patch of skin showing above the flowy skirt she is wearing and the feel of his fingers there makes her whimper with need. That’s apparently the only encouragement he needs as his hand starts stroking the tender skin of her lower back, slipping further more underneath the fabric of her blouse.

His warm, large hand against her naked skin sends a deep flash of arousal straight to her core. How can he even do that is a wonder to her. She has never been with a man who held such power over her own body. Her breathing quickens and she pulls her lips away from his, trying to catch her breath. He presses a few small kisses over her lips, moving slowly down her chin. Letting her head fall back, she moans at the feeling of his mouth peppering hot kisses over her throat, his teeth nibbling the tender skin. She feels so light-headed that she has to reach out a hand against the wall behind her to keep her balance, the other hand gripping his head harder in encouragement.

His arm holds her more firmly against him and he steps in between her legs, his strong thigh parting her own. She automatically grips his leg, her muscles clamping on him. The sensation of the rugged fabric of his pants against the naked skin of her inner thighs makes her shiver. She can’t help but slightly move her leg, upwards and downwards, to enhance the feeling. A strangled cry escapes her as Oliver puts his other hand on her leg, right below the hem of her skirt. His warm palm, so soft, offers such a deep contrast with the fabric of his pants, filling her with the desire to feel more of his skin pressed against her.

Oliver’s mouth leaves her neck and he straightens his head, looking at her. His breathing is as short as hers and she lets her hand slowly fall from the back of his skull and rest it over his own, encouraging him. His eyes heat up even more, a small moan catching in his throat as he takes her cue and moves his palm forward, sliding it underneath her skirt. His mouth is on hers once more, and he bits lightly on her lower lip, their tongues meeting. His hand is tracing circles on her leg, his fingernails scratching her skin every now and then and sending goosebumps straight to the apex of her thighs. His thumb massaging her flesh while his other hand still caresses her lower back cause her to tremble in his arms, almost weeping with need.
“Oliver” she whispers against his lips, both hands gripping his face now as she trusts him to keep her from falling backwards. She travels down his chest, feeling the tense muscles, the taunting abs that she has dreamed of licking so many times in the last few nights. She deftly unties his tie, feverishly undoing enough buttons to be able to slip a hand underneath his shirt.

This is going fast, she can’t help but think. This is going way too fast.

The hand on her back presses her against him and she feel his thigh directly against her core, the pressure so amazing and... not enough at the same time. It’s like a fire growing wilder and wilder deep within her. He is everywhere, his hands on her leg and on her back, his leg between hers, his mouth,... he is everywhere and it’s not enough. She feels her arousal reaching new levels, and it’s ridiculous because she is still fully clothed for God’s sake but there is something in the way he holds her, the way he breathes her in that makes her tremble with lust. And she can’t help it but she slowly circles her hips, creating a friction that makes her see stars. He seems to sense what she needs, because he shifts his leg, moving it higher and pressing her down at the same time and it just brings her clit in direct contact with the hard muscles of his thigh.

She pants, squeezing her eyes shut at the sudden burst of pleasure, whimpering in his mouth. She can feel him, hot, hard, and she can’t resist. Her hand travels down, cupping him through his pants. He hisses in pleasure, or pain, she can’t possibly know for sure, but the way he presses himself against her makes her think it’s the former.

“Felicity, you’re killing me... “ he breathes as his lips travel down her neck, sucking on the skin. He’s going to leave a mark, she knows it, but at that moment, she wants his mark. She needs it. She craves it with every fiber of her being.

Her hips rotate against him more firmly and he guides her, his hand now reaching over her ass, kneading the flesh. He quickly lifts her, just for a second, but it’s enough for her to cry out as she loses the connection. She’s back where she was in the blink of an eye, though, her skirt lifted over her waist. Oliver grips her ass tightly, pressing her down once more and the feel of his hand there makes her snap as she grinds down on him. Unashamedly. Most of her weight is resting on his leg and he is encouraging her, guiding her.

“You’re so beautiful,” he whispers as his lips find her earlobe, gently pulling it with his teeth. She is completely unable to form any coherent thought - let alone a sentence and all that is left of her is a blubbering mess as she presses down on him, her hips moving up and down his leg.

“Oliver… oh God. Yes, yes, yes,” she pants as she feels the pleasure building and it almost scares her how fast it is. She’s already almost there and her whimpers get higher and higher as she feels her toes curl, her body stiffening as she’s chasing her release.

“Come on. Let go. I’ve got you,” Oliver softly encourages her and for a second she feels bad because she has her hand over the bulge in his pants but is unable to do anything but cup him and massage him through the fabric. Unbuckling his belt and lowering his zipper would ask for too much coordination and right now the only thing her brain is able to do is send the same instructions over and over again to her hips.

“Oh… oh…” she strangles as she reaches her peak, her hips now moving furiously against him. Her hand squeezes him and he swiftly moves it away, entwining their fingers. She holds onto him like her life depends on it and she rests her head in the crook of his neck, muffling her cries. She feels him kissing her head and his hot breath on her ear is enough to send her flying over the edge. She bites down on his shoulder, in a desperate attempt to silence her scream as the most intense orgasm she’s had in a long time ripples through her body.
She doesn’t know how long they stay like that but eventually, Oliver’s soft kisses on her head gently bring her back to earth. He is holding her close to him, his hands stroking calming patterns on her arm and lower back, waiting for her to gather her bearings. She notices that he is still hard and suddenly realizes that she all but dry-humped her boss in the middle of their archive room.

She gulps, ashamed of her behavior. Oliver, with his 6th sense when it comes to her, must have sensed the shift because he gently forces her to raise her head and look at him. The tenderness in his eyes makes her teary.

“Hey,” he smiles softly at her.

Felicity clears her throat. “Hey. I’m… I’m sorry…”

“Shhh” he presses a finger against her lips, shaking his head. “That is something I never want to hear between us. Not in this kind of situation.”

“But I just… on your leg… and you’re still…” she waves around his crotch, feeling her cheeks burning up even more. Which is an achievement in itself.

“It doesn’t matter. This was for you,” he assures her with a quiet smile, leaning in to press a small kiss on her lips. She kisses him back despite her own lips trembling. It is much slower now, as if she can finally take her time to taste him. Oliver lets her set the pace, willingly giving her the lead. When they finally have to break away for air, he gently nudges her nose with his, the movement reminding her of their first kiss. She grins as she suddenly realizes how big of a sap Oliver Queen actually is.

“What?” he asks as he sees her stifling a giggle.

“Nothing,” she denies, pinching her lips.

“Come on. You’re laughing!”

“I just… I never realized how big of a sap you could actually be.”

Oliver pauses. “... I’m not a sap.”

“Yes, you are. You just don’t want to admit it,” she laughs out loud.

He visibly tries to fight back a smile but his eyes are shining so bright with humor and tenderness that it’s pointless. She drinks him in, the small voice she silenced earlier back with a vengeance. This can’t happen again.

But as long as they’re in this room, in their bubble, she lets herself savor it. And she can see in Oliver’s eyes that he feels the same. They left reality behind that door and even if neither of them is willing to step out… they’ll eventually have to.

She strokes his cheeks with her fingertips, marveling once more at the scratchy feeling. He sighs deeply, his eyes closing as he leans into her touch.

“Oliver…” she starts.

“I know,” he answers, keeping his eyes shut. “I know. This can’t happen again.”

“Not as long as…”

“As long as we work together,” he finishes for her, his eyes opening. He takes a hold of her hand, gently pressing a kiss on her palm. He looks at her one more time then kisses her forehead, before
stepping away from her.

He opens the door and walks out, leaving her alone inside the room. The bubble has burst.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... what did you guys think?
*bites nails*

It's... smutty. Without being smut...although it is... more like foreplay smut... so... I don't know if you liked it or... well.

*shifty eyes*
Hi guys!!

I have to say that I was absolutely blown away by your response concerning the last chapter and -clears throat- our very first olicity smutty little thing. When I say our, I mean my. This really gives me a boost of confidence in that area, so I'll be able to approach their smut much more at ease. Phew.

I have to thank pidanka, who actually picked the song this time and mysticaldetectivepanda who beta'd the chapter :) Thank you so much, to the both of you. You are so precious and I might even want to adopt you at some point.

Song: Hypnotized - Fever Fever

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hypnotized

Oh I know that I love you even though
You seem to string me along
But when we lock eyes
And your smiles shining bright
Your transe turns right into wrong
And I'm hypnotized (Oh oh oh oh oh)
And I'm hypnotized (Oh oh oh oh oh)
Oh I know that I love you even though
You'll get me killed one day
But when we lock eyes
And your smiles shining bright
I'll do anything that you say
Cause I'm hypnotized (Oh oh oh oh oh)
I'm hypnotized (Oh oh oh oh oh)
I'm hypnotized by the light in your eyes
To say that walking out of that archive room had been hard was an understatement - pun intended. The truth was, no matter how much he wanted to stay with her and finish what they had started… he knew that once they would take that step, there would be no turning back. And a part of him didn’t want their first time to be a quickie in a small archive room. He wanted to take his time and savor her, not rush in and risk getting caught in the middle of it. She deserved so much more.

But when her breathing had quickened, her breasts rising faster and her cheeks burning with arousal… there was nothing that could have stopped him. The urge to hold her, touch her, take care of her, had been so strong that it had blinded him. It wasn’t about his needs, it was all about her. Coaxing her into his arms, letting her use his body for her own pleasure had been so natural, so instinctive, that he genuinely wondered how it hadn’t happened sooner. Seeing her eyes full of trust had humbled him. Bringing her to the edge and sending her flying over it, hearing her soft cries, the way she had gripped his hand, the feeling of her short breaths on his neck… it wouldn’t have taken much more to have him come in his pants like a 14 year-old. Truth be told, one of the main reasons why he had left the room was so he could calm his senses and get a grip on himself.

When he had walked out of the bathroom, Felicity was already gone.

He was almost expecting her to call in sick on Thursday, but she had shown up, and despite the awkwardness between them, they had gone on with their day as if nothing had happened.

Except something had happened. Something big.

Oliver shook his head, trying to clear his thoughts and focus on what his best friend was rambling about.

“So, no strip club, I guess?”

Oliver turned his head, staring at Tommy. They were on their way to the airport, Tommy behind the wheel, where they were supposed to meet Sara and Felicity.
“You think?” Oliver answered sarcastically.

“Hey! Sara likes girls too and… Felicity is from Vegas!”

“No strippers,” Oliver scolded him.

“Fine. I’ll just find myself a nice bachelorette party while you’re busy making heart eyes and watching the fountains. But you’d better cheer up. Jeez, I can’t remember the last time I’ve seen you so grumpy.”

“I’ve had a long week.”

“… and?” Tommy pushed.

“And nothing, Tommy.” Oliver closed his eyes, resting his head on the headrest. “I’m tired, that’s all.”

Tommy snorted. "Tired. Sure. If you want my opinion -”

“I don’t,” Oliver cut him off.

“I’d say you need to loosen up a bit,” Tommy continued, unfazed. “And get laid. It’s been months, dude. Months.”

“Thank you for keeping tabs on my love life,” Oliver snickered.

“Anytime. So, I suggest you take advantage of this long weekend away from the office, from Starling, and maybe get her flowers or take her to a nice restaurant. That gorgeous suite you rented for her at the Bellagio can’t be just for sleep. It… it can’t. That room wants to see some action, Ollie. That room deserves to see some action.”

Staying silent, Oliver rested his elbow against the window, keeping his eyes stubbornly on the road.

Tommy frowned, quickly glancing at him. Realization dawned on him suddenly. “Oh my… you and Felicity?!”

Oliver felt the tip of his ears heat up as he tried to keep his voice neutral and innocent. “What? Felicity and I what?”

“You totally did it!” Tommy shouted, one of his hands leaving the wheel to pat his friend vigorously on the shoulder. “Oh man, I’m so proud of you. I feel like we just flashbacked to the first time a girl went down on you.”

“That’s… that’s not…” Oliver stuttered, fearing that whatever he would say next would be the wrong thing.

“Oh. Oh no.” Tommy winced, misunderstanding him. “It didn’t go well? Is that why you’re so grumpy? Did all those months make you lose your touch or something?”

Oliver rolled his eyes. “I don’t want to talk about what happened between Felicity and I.”

“So something happened,” Tommy smirked. “You know, between you and I, I was getting worried about little Ollie there.”

Oliver snorted. “Little Ollie didn’t play a part at all. And this conversation is over.”
“What?! You can’t just drop that kind of things and leave me hanging!”

“Yes, I can. Besides, we’re almost there.” Oliver pointed to the road sign leading to the airport.

Tommy groaned as he took the next exit. “So it was just for her, I guess?”

“Drop it, Tommy.”

“It was just for her….” Tommy raised his eyebrows in awe. “So what went wrong? She didn’t like it?”

“I’m this close to asking you to stop the car and punching you in the face, you know that?”

“Yes, you have that same face you made when I kissed Nadia Polkins in third grade. But don’t change the subject. You know, if you need some advice, I’ll gladly help,” Tommy rambled as he parked the car in one of the private spots. “I know a trick or two and I know how to woo a woman. I’m a very good wooer. One could even say that my motto is ‘I wooed, I came, I conquered’ but it might seem cocky. Not to mention, apparently some douchebag named Caesar already used it.”

Oliver sighed with relief as he opened his door, not bothering to reply. Tommy joined him behind the car and they unloaded their luggage. Oliver was just putting his jacket on when his best friend nudged him, pointing towards the entrance of the parking lot. He recognized Sara’s car right away as it drove past them. They parked right next to Tommy’s car and both men walked to greet the girls.

A loud, squealing Sara jumped out of her seat, hugging Tommy and Oliver, followed by a much quieter Felicity who waved at them.

Oliver gulped when he saw her stretch out, her legs showcased in a pair of tight fitting blue jeans. She was wearing a small flowy shirt with thin straps, her slightly curly hair hanging loosely around her face.

“You guys have no idea how excited I am. I haven’t been to Vegas ever since my 21st birthday!” Sara rambled as she picked up her bag from the backseat. “And we have so much to do!”

Oliver nodded distractedly, his eyes travelling down Felicity’s body as she bent down to retrieve her own luggage, the fabric of her jeans clinging to the most perfect ass he had ever seen.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Tommy murmured.

Frowning, Oliver glanced at him, noticing his best friend was staring at Felicity the same way he had been for the last minute.

“Stop.”

“I can’t,” Tommy hissed. “It’s… it’s right there! And it’s so perfect… is it even real?”

“Yeah… yeah it is.” Oliver smiled, remembering the feeling of his hand against her backside. So firm, round and… yeah. Perfect. Oh, what he wouldn’t give to feel it again, pressing the tender flesh, holding her firmly as he picks her up and presses her against a wall… or have her lying on her front, his mouth worshipping her as he trails kisses down her spine, his hands gripping her underwear, sliding it slowly down her hips and revealing…

“Stop.” Tommy’s voice reached him as Sara and Felicity finally closed their doors, having gathered all their belongings.
Oliver cleared his throat, shooting a slightly embarrassed look at him, not surprised to see the knowing smirk on his face.

“Flowers and dinner, buddy. Flowers and dinner,” he whispered before turning his complete attention to their companions.

“Ladies… I hope you’re ready for the best weekend of your life?”

“You mean you’re not coming?” Felicity asked mischievously. She was standing close to Sara, much to Oliver’s chagrin. He knew she was probably putting distance between them, and understood the reasons why but couldn’t help but hope she would eventually relax. He hated seeing Felicity so guarded and unsure.

“Aw, Miss Felicity. You’re hurting my feelings,” Tommy proclaimed, a hand on his heart.

“I’d have to get through that gigantic ego of yours first for that to happen,” she snorted.

Tommy stopped as they approached the small security line reserved for private jets. Grinning, he faced her. “You and I are gonna have such a good time.”

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“OK. Spill the beans,” Sara said, keeping her voice down, as soon as they had taken their seats on the small plane. As soon as they had boarded, she had dragged Felicity by the arm all the way down to the end of the jet under the pretense of “girl talk”.

“What are you talking about?” Felicity whispered, struggling with her seatbelt.

“Oh, come on. I knew there was something bothering you as soon as you got into my car. And now, Oliver is looking at you like… like…” Sara trailed off, her eyes growing the size of saucers. “Like he’s seen you naked. Oh my God! He totally saw you naked, didn’t he?”

“What?! No he didn’t!” Felicity huffed, checking anxiously to see where the boys were. They were still at the front of the plane, talking with their one and only crew member, a young man going by the name of Todd.

“Come on. I know Ollie. I also know you quite well. Last time I saw him, he was looking at you with kicked puppy eyes and now it’s all ‘I want to get into the mile high club with you’. Something happened, I know it.”

Groaning, Felicity dropped her head back on the seat. “Something might have happened but… it’s not what you think.”

Sara squealed, clapping her hands. “I knew it! Did you act out on that secretary fantasy you have?”

“Of course not! Well. Not exactly. We might have had a.. close encounter… in the archive room,” she muttered embarrassingly.

“You guys were safe, right?”

“Sara!”
“What? I’m concerned, that’s all!” Sara said, holding out her hands in defense.

“We didn’t need to be safe,” Felicity explained reluctantly, pinching her lips.

“What do you mean, you didn’t need to be safe? Listen, I love Ollie and I know he’s a good guy but… believe me when I say that: he’s had his fair share of partners in the past.”

Felicity snorted, remembering the women she had seen passing through Oliver’s life. “Yeah. I know that. What I meant is that it didn’t go far enough for us to need protection.”


“You’re sorry?” she asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Well… I know from some very reliable sources that Oliver is quite… gifted and… talented in that area,” Sara whispered. “So I’m sorry you didn’t get to… enjoy this aspect of him.”

“Oh I did!” Felicity blurted out, before closing her eyes, cursing herself. “I mean… it’s not because we didn’t need to… that I didn’t… because I did. He didn’t, though. Not that he wasn’t… ready or anything. I would have been offended if he… he wasn’t affected. But he was! Affected, I mean.” She took a small breath, holding out her hands in front of her as if mimicking a small explosion. “Very affected. Like wow affected, actually.”

Sara stared at her, gaping. “You’re really taking this whole babbling thing of yours to a whole new level.”

Felicity glared at her.

“But… I think I got the point,” Sara added hurriedly. “You got freaky-freaky, things turned good for you, not for him for whatever reason and now you feel awkward and he feels like ravishing you in the back of the plane.”

They were interrupted by the captain announcing their take-off. Oliver and Tommy joined them in the seats opposite them, efficiently ending their conversation, much to Felicity’s relief. It’s not that she was ashamed of what had happened between them. They were both single, consenting adults. But she couldn’t deny there was a good part of embarrassment regarding the whole encounter. Not only had she literally used his body for her own pleasure, which was something she clearly wasn’t used to, but the whole experience had been quite a shock to her. Never in her life had she felt so… wanton. The sensations had just taken over her body in a way that had never happened to her. From the moment he had pushed her against the table, a desire like no other had grown and spread like a wildfire from deep within her lower stomach. Burning, scorching hot, and uncontrollable. Whenever she closed her eyes, she could still feel her skin tingling, could still sense his hands over her body. She wanted him. She wanted him badly.

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“Ready?” Oliver asked her with a smile.

She grinned widely, unable to hide her excitement. A chauffeur had been waiting for them as soon as their plane landed - which shouldn’t have surprised her as much as it did. The destination had been unknown to her, but she had been to the Bellagio enough times to recognize the parking entrance.
She had turned her head towards Oliver, who was observing her quietly, a soft smile on his face. And now, they were both standing on the threshold of her room, Oliver taunting her with the keycard.

“Yes!” she all but jumped, ready to snatch the key from his hands.

Chuckling, he opened the door, letting her walk through first. She dropped her bags on one of the queen size beds, barely noticing the beauty of the room. She went right to the window that gave her a view over the small lake where the fountains would soon spring to life.

Turning around, she took in the elegance of the room, in blue and cream tones that screamed luxury and comfort. There was a small boudoir attached to the bedroom area and even a small kitchenette. It wasn’t just a standard room at the Bellagio - which would still have been impressive. No, this was a suite.

“Wow,” she breathed.

“You like it?” Oliver asked, shifting on his feet. “They didn’t have many options left. I wanted a bigger suite but they were all sold-out.”

“This is… this is incredible,” Felicity said as walked in the ensuite bathroom. She moaned at the view of the giant tub and the marble counter.

As she stepped back into the bedroom, she saw Oliver sitting on the bed where she had thrown her bags, his elbows resting on his knees.

“It’s just…” she started, biting her lips.

He raised his head, looking at her with questioning eyes.

“I absolutely love it, Oliver but… a normal room would have been fine. I know how much it costs and I’m not sure this is…”

He cut her off. “It’s a thank you gift. For everything you’ve done. Consider it as a risk premium? For breaking into buildings at night?”

She laughed. “Oh. That I can get behind. I do deserve it.”

“Good. If you’re all settled, I’ll see myself out. My room is right next to yours, don’t hesitate to reach out. If you need anything, I mean.”

She nodded, shoving her hands in her pockets, feeling suddenly very nervous and awkward. “I won’t. Hesitate, I mean” she rolled her eyes, groaning “As in ‘I won’t hesitate to reach out’, not… ‘I won’t need anything’. Because I might… need something. From you. Not necessarily, though! I mean it is a possibility!” Oh, Oliver, have mercy and stop me...

Smiling, Oliver tilted his head as he put his hand on her shoulder, interrupting her rambling. “OK. I’ll meet you downstairs, I guess?”

“Yep. Thirty minutes. Tommy drilled me,” she breathed in deeply, silently thanking him for putting her out of her misery.

She locked the door behind him, leaning on it, sighing. Having him so close, yet having to keep her distance was taking a toll on her. She was afraid that all the reasons why she had to keep him at
arm’s length would slowly but surely fade away up to the point where she would throw all caution to
the wind. Seeing him sitting on her bed hadn’t helped her already wild imagination.

Groaning, she quickly tied her hair, pushing the thoughts back in a corner of her head. She would
tackle the whole Oliver Queen issue later. Preferably when he wasn’t in the room next to hers.

Stepping out of her shoes, she quickly undressed, looking forward to a nice shower. The heat in
Vegas always reached its peak in the summer and despite having spent most of the time in an air-
conditioned car or hotel, she still felt icky. The pair of jeans she was wearing was fine for Starling
City, not so much for Vegas where the temperatures were already way past 100°.

Twenty minutes later, she was making her way downstairs, her hair tied up in a messy bun, wearing
a small pair of white shorts and a yellow buttoned shirt with no sleeves. The outfit was practical and
comfortable, probably making her look younger than her age but at least it would make the hellish
heat more bearable.

“Here she comes!” Tommy welcomed her with a wide grin. She noticed that everyone had changed
into lighter clothes as well, the four of them now resembling a bunch of tourists on vacation.

Tommy’s plan for the late afternoon mostly involved drinks and bars, something that didn’t surprise
her. It took them a while to get to a tropical-themed bar, mostly due to the traffic. She had forgotten
what a nightmare it could be, especially on weekends, just to travel up and down the strip. They
ordered a pitcher of Margaritas with some snacks, enjoying the cool air and the gorgeous
surroundings. The whole place looked like a tropical island, with palm trees, coconuts, green plants
and flowers everywhere. It wasn’t as loud as most bars, for which she was thankful.

“I don’t know about you guys… but tonight I’m getting hammered,” Sara stated as she poured them
a glass.

“Already?” Oliver smiled, turning to Felicity. “Aren’t you supposed to meet with your mom
tomorrow?”

“Yes, but it’s for brunch. I guess she’ll have time to sleep it off,” she answered.

“Yup!” Sara chimed in, raising her glass for a toast. “Here is to my departure… to Oliver’s belated
birthday and Felicity kicking ass left and right at QC and finally getting us rid of Isabitch!”

“Hey!” Tommy exclaimed. “I’m the one who planned this whole trip and yet I’m the only one left
out?”

Oliver and Felicity shared an amused look as Sara lowered her glass, frowning.

“You’re right. Sorry,” she said, raising her drink in his direction. “Here’s to Tommy Merlyn being
STD free for two years in a row!”

“Nice… very nice,” Tommy pouted. “I’ll let you know it’s actually my third year.”

“My bad. It’s hard to keep track with you.”

Despite the margaritas being light on the alcohol, Felicity stopped after her second glass, already
feeling a bit too light-headed for her liking. She was actually thankful her seat wasn’t too close to
Oliver’s, despite being next to him. Their arms had brushed once before she had pulled her chair
slightly away as discreetly as possible. Not taking any chances tonight. Things are going to stay
strictly business. Or as business as can be.

“So, where are we going for dinner?” Tommy asked, his mouth full of nachos.

Oliver sighed. “Miss Smoak here wanted a buffet.”

She stuck out her tongue at him. “You guys have really been missing on the fun if you've never been to a buffet in Vegas.”

“A buffet?” Tommy asked, grimacing. “You mean… like when you have to go get your food yourself?”

Sara rolled her eyes. “You sissy… If you can go get your own drinks at a bar, you sure as hell can do the same at a restaurant, can’t you?”

“Yeah but… there is no cute bartender at a buffet. I am not spending this entire weekend celibate, I need opportunities!”

“Oh come on, like that would hurt you!” Sara snorted, gulping down the last of her third glass.

“What… well yes!” Tommy answered. “Just because you are about to rejoin the love of your life and these two are busy making heart eyes at each other doesn't mean that I have to suffer in silence!”

Felicity’s head snapped up at his words, her cheeks flaming up. She had been very careful in her interactions with Oliver, keeping a safe distance between them. Apparently, it had not been enough. A small glance in his direction confirmed that he was probably feeling the same as he protectively crossed his arms on his chest and tried his best to avoid her eyes.

Oliver coughed. “I think we should get to dinner, now.”

“Yes!” Felicity jumped off her seat. “Great idea!”

She couldn’t miss the small look Tommy and Sara shared but before she could put the pieces together, Sara smiled innocently. “I’m not that hungry, actually… why don’t you guys go ahead?”

“Yeah… and I’ll stay here to keep you company,” Tommy added as he turned to face them. “But you two should go. Totally.”

Oliver shifted on his feet, clearly uncomfortable. Felicity narrowed her eyes at the pair, not fooled by their innocent faces.

“Sara…” she hissed.

Her friend smiled, before jumping off of her seat. “Ok bathroom break. You guys have fun, stay safe… you know. The usual.”

She was away from their table and out of their sight in an instant.

Taking a deep breath, Felicity turned her wrath to Tommy. Before she could open her mouth to say anything, he stood up almost as fast as Sara had, hurrying behind her. “I’ll… I’ll just go with her!”

“She’s going to the Ladies’ room, Tommy!” Felicity shouted.

“Sounds like my kind of place!” He yelled back across his shoulder.

She tilted her head, huffing a small laugh. Despite the fact that their scheming was far from discreet,
she couldn’t deny they were quite persistent.

She felt Oliver’s hand reaching over her lower back as he leaned towards her “come on.”

He gently guided her out of the bar and onto the street. The heat of the afternoon was getting more bearable and the streets were already incredibly busy with party-goers. Oliver left his hand on her back as they made their way through the crowd, slightly hovering over her and making sure no one would bump into her. It was only then that she realized how much of a height difference there was between them, with her wearing flat shoes. The top of her head wasn’t even reaching his chin and although having him towering over her should have made her feel threatened, it was actually the complete opposite. She felt safe, protected, cared for.

Her cheek brushing against his the cotton of his shirt every few steps was unintentional but her taking a deep breath every time it did was totally on purpose. Not exactly on purpose. More like I wish I could help it but I just can’t because he smells too damn good.

They didn’t exchange a word. There was no need for that, the silence between them was comfortable and oh so natural. Being so close to each other, surrounded by this mass of unknown faces, giving them a sense of anonymity, was causing her walls to crumble. Restraining herself from touching him was one thing in Starling where she knew anyone could see them. Here, though…

Oliver must have shared the same thoughts, or sensed her leaning towards him because his hand moved from her back to her waist, under the pretense of guiding her towards the entry of Caesar’s Palace. The pavement was less crowded there, but he left his hand on her hip, his thumb brushing the small patch of skin between her shorts and her shirt. The small touch was enough to relax her, and she melted into his side, her head resting in the crook of his arm as he held her closer.

Thankfully, there were only a few people waiting for a table before them and the line was moving quickly. They both stood in silence, letting the animated voices of the tourists surround them. Felicity turned slightly in his arms, her cheek resting on his pec as his arm followed the movement. She felt him press a small kiss on the top of her head as she put her hand across his stomach.

She was feeling so utterly at ease with him, despite her fear of sending the wrong message. Yet, she just seemed completely unable to move and put some distance between them again. Truth be told, she was tired of having to control herself everytime she was around him.

“Party of two?” The unknown voice startled her, breaking the spell.

“Yes,” Oliver replied, his voice deeper than usual.

She moved away from him, and his arm fell from her side as they followed the hostess.

Her somewhat depressed mood lifted quite fast though as she saw Oliver’s uncomfortable face as they both sat down. He was looking around him like he had never seen such a place before, with curiosity and also bewilderment.

“So what do we do now?” He asked her as their hostess left them.

Felicity smiled. “Well, we wait for our waitress so we can order our drinks. Then we get up from the table, walk aaaaaaaaall the way over the food section and help ourselves.”

He glared at her. “You don’t have to make fun of me, you know?”

“I know,” she nodded enthusiastically. “It’s just one of my guilty pleasures.”
Once they had ordered their drinks, both went to different sides of the huge restaurant. Felicity wasn’t surprised to see Oliver coming back with a selection of roasted meats that he was observing closely.

“They’re not gonna bite you, you know.”

He raised his head. “I know. It’s just… they cook the entire piece of meat then cut it in front of you.”

“Yes. It’s the carving station. You’ll see that it actually preserves the meat’s flavor much more than when you cut small pieces to cook afterwards.”

She was grabbing her fork when she noticed he had barely listened to her words, too busy staring at her own plate of food.

“What?” she asked defensively, pulling her plate closer to her.

“That’s your dinner?” he asked back, pointing to her plate.

She pinched her lips. “Well, technically, this is my first course.”

“Felicity, you only have desserts!”

“That’s not true. I have a few grapes.” She pointed to the two isolated grapes on a side of her plate that she had grabbed more out of guilt than anything else.

“Which is fruit, which is dessert,” Oliver stated, raising an eyebrow.

“We’re gonna have to agree to disagree, there. Fruit is healthy, therefore it can’t be dessert.” She bit her lips in an effort to not add the “duh” she was thinking very hard at the moment. No need to look even more childish.

He opened his mouth, then closed it again as understanding grew on his face. “Is this why you wanted to go to a buffet?”

“Maybe?” She winced. “I’m sorry but it’s the only place where I can eat dessert first without people staring at me!”

“Why do you even have to eat dessert first?” Oliver asked as he grabbed fork and knife and started to cut a piece of prime rib.

“Several reasons,” she said as she took a bite of cheesecake.

“Which are?” He prompted as she was savoring her meal.

“Well. What if we all die before we can have a second plate? Or what if I’m full after said first plate?”

“Sure. We both know you just have a sweet tooth,” Oliver snickered as he took his first bite.

She quietly observed him as she dug her spoon into a small glass of chocolate mousse, noticing his expression shifting from amusement to appreciation.

“Good, right?”

“Yeah…” he answered, his tone unable to mask his surprise. “It’s pretty good, actually.”
“See?” She winked as she took a sip of water. “You are now officially a tourist!”

“Yeah… not sure I feel good about it”, Oliver said, looking around him. “I was fine with just being a billionaire, you know.”

They made small talk throughout their meal, Oliver teasing her weird tastes in food and Felicity telling him stories about her mother’s lack of skills in the kitchen. It was slightly disconcerting to her how easily they could switch from forbidden proximity to easy friendly banter. They both decided to hit the casinos instead of joining Sara and Tommy who, judging by the texts they sent, were already well into their night of partying.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you walk that fast,” Oliver chuckled as they both walked out of the restaurant.

“Fountains are every fifteen minutes, we need to be there ahead so we get a good spot,” she answered, grabbing his arm and pulling him behind her. “The best strategy is to arrive when they’re at work and then, when everyone leaves, you pick your spot so you’ll get the perfect view when the next ones start.”

She didn’t waste any more time, making her way through the tourists. If the sidewalks had been crowded on their way to the restaurant, it was nothing close to what they were now. She lost her grip on Oliver several times as they got separated by party-goers. The third time, he just stepped up to her with a resolved look on his face, grabbing her hand and holding it tight.

Just as she had calculated, they arrived in front of the small lake in the middle of the show. They stood on the curb, slightly away from the bystanders until they slowly started to walk away as the song accompanying the waterworks ended.

“And now?” Oliver asked as soon as Felicity found what she had called ‘the perfect spot’.

“Well… now we wait. It’s barely ten minutes, you know,” she shrugged. They were both leaning on one of the fences right on the edge of the lake. As the minutes went by, more and more people joined them, making Oliver edgy. A small group of young men, clearly already slightly drunk, took place right next to her. They didn’t seem to pay attention to her, but she felt Oliver tense at her side.

Curious, she turned to face him and she was taken aback by his grim expression.

“What’s wrong?” She asked, surprised. He only tipped his head towards the group, which made her roll her eyes. If one of these men had been pushy or rude, she could have understood his concern but it seemed like they were mostly interested in their beers.

Not to mention, she had grown up surrounded by guys like that… she could handle them.

Just as she was about to make fun of him, one of the young men tripped and elbowed her as he tried to catch his balance on the fence.

“Oh, I’m sorry, ma’am,” he said right away, his face turning a deep shade of red while his friends snickered behind him.

Rubbing her arm, she nodded reassuringly, secretly more offended by the fact that he called her ‘ma’am’ than by what was barely going to turn into a bruise.

Oliver’s body stiffened besides her and for one second she actually feared he might do something
stupid and reckless. She was surprised when he moved from his post, taking place behind her and leaning an arm on the fence as a barrier between her and them.

She had to bite back a smile at his macho attitude but didn’t complain. She was almost completely encased in his arms, so while his protectiveness might have been over the top, it did have its perks. She leaned back on him, her head resting beneath his chin. She felt him hesitate, his arm fidgeting by her side until the lights around them were dimmed. He seemed to make up his mind when the first notes of an Elvis Presley song started, both of his arms circling her and pressing her tight against him. She rubbed her cheek against his bicep, her hands stroking his forearms. There was something so familiar about being here with him, sharing that moment with him. It was as if she was opening up a part of herself to him, letting him catch a glimpse of the girl she used to be. She had always felt out of place in this city where everything was too loud, too bright, too superficial for her to fit. Yet, in that instant, with Oliver by her side, she felt like she belonged. Watching the fountains had always been a way to escape reality for her, to forget her everyday life, the struggles, the loneliness after her father left.

His heart beating underneath her ear reminded her that he was always there for her. He had been from the beginning, even if it hadn’t been obvious. Right from the start he had helped her, whether it was finding an apartment or giving her confidence in her work. The teenager she was when she had left Vegas was long gone. She had grown into a confident, strong woman and Oliver had played a part in that. He was a piece of her new reality. One she finally didn’t feel the need to escape from.

As the song ended, she felt him press a kiss on her temple, his arms moving away from her. Sighing, she followed him as they circled the lake to get back inside the Bellagio.

“It was something I used to do with my father when I was a child. Then, when he left, my mom didn’t really have time to take me. It was only when I was old enough to take the bus by myself that I started to come again,” she quietly explained.

Oliver’s eyebrows rose in obvious surprise, probably not expecting her to share that part of her past so easily.

“There is some kind of a cave underneath the lake, you know,” she continued. “He always promised me that we’d visit it one day, that he knew someone who worked there. I was dying to find out how they could make the water jets work in such perfect sync.”

“You never did?” Oliver finally asked.

“No. Like I told you, I was young when he left.” She shook her head, smiling in an attempt to lighten the mood. “But enough of the depressing talk. I am about to gamble legally for the first time!”

Oliver observed her quietly for a few seconds, then grinned, humoring her. “I have to say…I can’t wait to see you at work.”

“So what do you want to do first?” Oliver asked, scanning the room. The sounds of the slot machines mixed with the dozens of people talking loudly were forcing him to raise his voice.

Felicity didn’t hesitate. “Craps!”

“Craps?” Oliver repeated, his eyebrows raised. “I would have thought you’d want to go with Blackjack.”
“No. I’d be tempted to count cards.” She bit her lips nervously, adding, “and this is the hotel where we’re staying. It would be bad if they asked us to leave. Not that I would get caught. I’m pretty good at covering my tracks. But still not worth taking the risk.”

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “Alright, then. Craps it is.”

They spent the next two hours playing, Oliver gambling rather recklessly, Felicity being much more cautious and calculating risks and probabilities. They quickly moved from the craps table to baccarat, then onto slot machines. Felicity knew that slot machines were risky but she was having fun and Oliver was so clueless about them that it made it worth it.

“But honestly, all those buttons… 1 line, 2 lines,... what are they even for?!” He complained after he lost several hundreds of dollars.

“To make you lose your money even faster?” She chuckled, bumping her shoulder against his arm.

He took a sip of his beer as he circled her shoulders with his arm. “Very funny, Smoak.”

She checked her watch, surprised to see it was already close to midnight. They had spent several hours in the casino, where she had made a profit of about 20% of her total bets. Oliver, on the other hand, despite a certain talent at baccarat, was way too careless to have won anything.

“So what’s next? Ready to call it a night?” Oliver asked.

“Nope. Ready for the next casino is more like it.” She rubbed her hands with glee as they crossed the street. “Unless you’re too old for this?”

“Me? Old? I’ll show you old...” he smiled, suddenly leaning in and pecking her nose. “You’ll be falling asleep on a slot machine way before I’m done.”

She grabbed his bottle of beer, taking a sip as he nuzzled the lobe of her ear with his nose. She felt the now familiar shiver start at the bottom of her spine, spreading all the way to her neck. He lightly pressed a kiss over her industrial piercing, making her skin tingle.

What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.

The old saying whispered its way into her brain, weakening her resolutions. And as long as we stay in public, surely things can’t get out of hand, after all.

She quickly turned right, startling Oliver who didn’t have any other choice but to follow her.

“Wha... where are you going?”

She smiled mischievously, winking at him over her shoulder, guiding him through the bystanders. He grinned back at her, his eyes shining with laugh, following her lead without any more complain. She found what she was looking for right away: a small corner near an out of order ATM machine, away from the busy street.

Biting her lips she pushed him against the wall. “You’ve been tempting me all night, Mister Queen.”

“I never said I’d play fair, Miss Smoak,” he murmured, his voice deeper than usual.

She reached up on her toes, her hands resting on his chest for leverage as he circled her waist with his arms, supporting her.

“I really like that,” she whispered, peppering kisses across his chin.
“Yeah?” He breathed, lowering his face and brushing against her lips.

“Yeah,” she nodded, smiling into the kiss as their mouths finally joined. The music, the screams, the horns around them faded away almost instantly, as if all her senses chose to focus on him. His tongue traced her lower lip, asking for entrance and she sighed with deep contentment as she let him in. Their kiss was lazy, different from the other ones but still more than enough to cause her knees to wobble. Oliver chuckled, one of his arms holding her more firmly, while the other lowered down, gripping her ass and pressing her against his body. His touch was much more firm, not as hesitant as it had been in the archive room and it was causing her blood to boil in her veins. She softly bit his lip, grinning at the groan that escaped him. She quickly sobered up when he suckled on her tongue in retaliation.

When they finally came up for air, she kept her eyes closed, resting her forehead against his chest.

Just a kiss and she was breathless, her heart beating wildly in her chest. What will happen of her when they - finally - make it to the bedroom?

“Hopefully, you’ll be just as enthusiastic and willing,” Oliver murmured in her ear.

She groaned, snuggling even more in his arms. “I wasn’t supposed to say that out loud.”

He laughed, both of his hands cradling her face and coaxing her to meet his eyes. “I’m glad you did. It’s very good for my ego.”

She playfully hit him on the chest. “We both know it is big enough as it is!”

Oliver paused, observing her. “… Are we still talking about my ego or are you trying to flatter me?”

“Oliver!” She yelped, unable to fight the grin that took over.

He grinned back at her, taking her hand and entwining their fingers. “Now, come on. We should go before I start listening to my gigantic ego.”

“Now, who’s flattering who?” she snorted as she followed him.

They quickly found the entrance to Bally’s, heading straight to the blackjack tables. They were about to sit down when a voice behind her caught her attention.

“What a small world we live in…”

The smile fell from her lips as she turned around, facing one of the other players on the table.

“Felicity Smoak. I almost didn’t recognize you with the blonde hair. It suits you.”

Felicity stared at the man in front of her, barely aware that Oliver was asking if she knew the guy. Slim, blonde hair, a knowing smirk on his face. It suddenly felt like someone had punched her in the guts. Her breath catching in her throat, she only managed to form one word.

“Cooper.”

Chapter End Notes
It had been a while since the last cliffhanger, right? You missed them, didn't you? :D

Two quick little things: Isabitch comes from several of you who called her like that. I felt like Sara naming her that way was totally in character. SO kudos to you!

Also, yeah, Nadia... you were Tommy's first kiss (I don't know your last name so I made one up and even if I did I wouldn't have used it anyway, but know that it's you ;) )

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or Tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Hi guys!
I am updating a bit earlier than I thought because I'm ahead of schedule (for once).

I mostly stayed glued to my TV yesterday, with the events that happened in my country. Thanks to all of you who reached out. I am safe, so are my loved ones. It is still devastating, but life has to go on.

So I wrote and wrote and wrote yesterday... not this chapter but the next one. Either way, I still hope you'll like it ;)

Song: London Rain (nothing heals me like you do) Heather Nova

PS: thank you to pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda. They both help me so much and are very precious to me :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"London Rain (Nothing Heals Me Like You Do)"

I'm coming home to you
I'm alive I'm a mess
I can't wait to get home to you
To get warm and undressed
There've been changes beyond my dreams;
Everybody wants me to sing
There've been changes beyond my grasp;
Things I'm sinking in

So keep me in your bed all day
Nothing heals me like you do

And when somebody knows you well
Well there's no comfort like that
And when somebody needs you
Well there's no drug like that

And where I'm home, curled in your arms
And I'm safe again
I'll close my eyes and sleep
“Cooper.”

Oliver frowned, trying to make sense of the scene in front of him. One minute Felicity was all smiles and sparkling eyes, the next she was standing next to her chair in shock, staring at a young man Oliver had never seen before.

“Felicity? Is everything alright?” He asked, trying to get her attention but she was fixated on the other man.

“Cooper. Cooper Seldon,” the man finally said, as he reached out his hand.

Years of good manners forced Oliver to shake it. “Oliver Queen.”

He didn’t know who the guy was but judging by Felicity’s reaction, it wasn’t someone she was pleased to see.

Felicity shook her head. “What are you doing here?”

Cooper laughed. “Just having a weekend of fun in Vegas! I never thought I’d see you here. You always told me how much you hated the place.”

“Well… sometimes people change,” she gritted through her teeth.

“Yes… I can see that,” Cooper said slyly, his eyes roaming over her body then glancing at Oliver. “A part of me wants to say you’re nothing like the girl you used to be but then again… maybe you are.”

The look in his eyes made Oliver’s blood boil. Balling his fists, he was about to step up when Felicity straightened her shoulders.

“And I can see you’re exactly the same,” she said in a voice so cold that if Oliver hadn’t been standing right next to her, he would have thought it was coming from another person.

All he could do was stand there, a clear outsider in this conversation. He felt like getting closer to her and showing his support could be the wrong move, but standing there and being useless wasn’t making him feel any better.
“You never seemed to mind,” Cooper smirked as he showed them the stack of chips he was holding in his hands. “Anyway… it was a pleasure but I must cash out.”

Oliver quietly observed Felicity as Cooper walked away. She seemed in some kind of trance, her eyes unfocused, staring at the spot he had just vacated.

“Are you playing? Sir? Ma'am?” The dealer tried to get their attention. Felicity shook her head, looking at him in surprise as if she had forgotten where they were.

“No. No, sorry,” she mumbled, turning around.

Oliver followed her silently as she walked out of the casino in a much different mood than when she had walked in. His mind was buzzing with thoughts - who was that guy, where did she meet him, had they been intimate? Judging from the words they had exchanged, he was ready to bet that yes, they had been in a relationship.

She didn’t say a word as they walked back to their hotel, her arms crossed protectively against her chest, her head down. Seeing her so lost and insecure was twisting his insides, the urge to reach for her and protect her almost too strong to resist. He wanted to give her space and also be the shoulder she could lean on.

He struggled between the two options until they made it back to their hotel. As she was searching her purse for her key, he leaned on the door frame.

“Talk to me, Felicity,” he murmured softly, his hands shoved in his pockets.

She froze as she was about to open the door. She took a couple of fast, short breaths, still not meeting his eyes.

“Goodnight, Oliver,” she finally said as she yanked the handle down. She quietly closed the door behind her, leaving him alone in the hallway.

He sighed, trying to ignore the ache in his chest caused by her rejection. He knew she hadn’t done it to hurt him, and that she probably needed to be alone. Whoever that man was, he had caused a lot of trauma and despite Oliver's need to put a smile back on her face, he was fully aware that she didn’t want his help at the moment. And he hated that feeling. He wanted to be the one to comfort her and make her laugh, not the one standing helplessly, staring at that damn door that was keeping them apart.

***

Felicity closed her eyes, letting the warm water soothe her. Despite the heat, her brief encounter with Cooper had chilled her to the bone. The last thing she had expected when coming to Vegas was to stumble across her ex-boyfriend. Especially since he was still living on the east coast the last time she had heard of him. She had walked out on him about a year ago and even if her heart had had the time to heal, coming face to face with him had been quite a shock. The love was long gone, and seeing him had only confirmed that. But being over someone was one thing. Being suddenly confronted by what had been the biggest mistake of her life was something else. The pain and the shame were dulled now, but they were still there.

She had been so focused on the whirlwind of emotions that had overcome her that she had barely
paid attention to Oliver. She knew from his face that he was confused and eager to help but what she had needed was space and time to process. Now that her nerves were a bit calmer, she felt guilty about the way she had left him standing in the hallway while all he wanted to do was support her. Remembering the soft pleading tone in his voice when he had begged her to talk to him caused a pinch in her heart. She owed him at least an explanation, especially since Cooper and her relationship with him were the direct cause of her moving to Starling and also of her pushing him away.

She decidedly turned the water off, grabbing a towel to wrap around her head. Quickly drying herself off, she put her pajamas on - a simple pair of green cotton shorts with a white tank top. Laying down in bed, she grabbed her cellphone, intending to text Oliver an apology and the promise of an explanation.

Biting her lips, she stared at the small screen, words failing her. Everything she typed seemed so cold and superficial that she kept on erasing and starting over. Sighing, she eventually put the phone down, promising herself she would talk to him first thing in the morning. She turned off the lamps after setting her alarm clock, hoping sleep would come easily.

Four and a half minutes later, she was switching on the lights and throwing the blankets away, unable to take it much longer.

Quickly grabbing her phone and her key, she made her way to Oliver’s room and quietly knocked on his door. A part of her was hoping he was already asleep so she would have no other choice but to get back to bed. She was actually already turning around when the door opened.

“Felicity?” Oliver’s surprised voice reached her.

Wincing, she turned around, already forming an apology in her head but the words caught in her throat. Oliver was standing on the threshold, a simple towel around his waist, his hair wet, drops of water running down his chest. She gulped, trying to keep her eyes from travelling south and catching herself just as she reached the top hem of the towel. It was still enough for her to get a glimpse of the small trail of hair going down from his navel, disappearing underneath the fabric. A vision of her licking down that same path while he was lying on his back flashed in front of her eyes and she instinctively stepped closer to him, her hand almost reaching out. She stopped herself just in time, forcing her arm down.

“Felicity?” He repeated, frowning in obvious concern. “What’s wrong?”

“You’re half naked,” she squeaked. Shaking her head, she tried to clear her throat. “I mean… there’s nothing wrong with that. Really, nothing… nothing wrong because you look…” she trailed off, her hand vaguely gesturing towards his torso, the end of her sentence an intelligible mix of moans and whimpers. Focus, Felicity. Focus.

“I’m sorry. Come in, I’ll put something on.” He moved away from the door, inviting her in.

She stood awkwardly in his room, which was smaller than hers with a king-sized bed and no boudoir. He was back in an instant, wearing a pair of sweatpants. He grabbed a white t-shirt from his bag, quickly putting it on as well.

He sat down on the bed, looking at her expectantly.

Twisting her hands nervously, she started pacing, avoiding his eyes.

“I’m sorry. About earlier, I mean. That was cold of me… to close the door on you like that.”
He stayed silent, waiting for her to continue.

She eventually took a deep breath, sitting on the small desk opposite of him. “I met Cooper in college. I was a student, he was a teaching assistant, working on his PhD. I didn’t have many friends, being younger than most and having to work two jobs on the side. I met him during my last year. We started dating quite quickly. Obviously… discreetly. TA or Professors are not exactly supposed to be in a relationship with a student. I wanted to get my own PhD and eventually work as a professor or a researcher, as I already told you.”

“I remember that, yes,” Oliver nodded quietly.

“So… months passed by. I was young and stupid and… stupidly in love. Several of my teachers were backing me up for my PhD, already recommending me as a TA as soon as I’d have my Master’s. I was living the dream and thinking maybe I could have it all” she laughed bitterly “the job of my dreams and a real relationship.”

“What happened?” He asked. “Did someone find out?”

“I was actually planning to move in with him as soon as I graduated. He seemed to be on the same page but… to be fair he was also always diverting the conversation. I should have figured it out…” she shook her head, remembering how stupid she had felt afterwards. “Anyway. Cooper finished his dissertation and finally got his PhD. All that was left was for me to get my Master’s and we would finally be able to become a real couple, both working for MIT.”

She fiddled with her phone, using the hem of her top to wipe the already clean screen. “A few days after I finally presented my thesis, I got summoned by one of my professors. My work was extremely similar to what a TA had previously worked on. They suspected a case of plagiarism.”

Oliver frowned. “You mean Cooper took your research ?”

“He was a TA, I was one of his students. They assumed it was the other way around. Cooper tried to deny it, say it was a pure fluke. But once he got his back to the wall, he accused me. He showed them emails, texts, proving we were in a secret relationship and told them that I probably took advantage of that to steal his work,” she snorted. “I was so stupid, I even helped him in his own research, willingly, not once suspecting that he would betray me.”

“But you got your Master's, right?”

“Yes. The whole secret relationship was exposed but that wasn’t my main concern to be honest. Of course, I was seen as… that kind of girl. Who sleeps with her superior,” she added quietly, her eyes meeting his for the first time. “But I brushed it all aside. My degree was so much more important. I could lose my scholarship and would be in debt for probably the rest of my life if it was established that I had cheated. Thankfully… I was able to prove the work was mine and mine only. I had consulted another professor about my thesis and he was able to testify that he had seen me work on it. They also tested our knowledge of the research. My name was cleared, I got my Master's degree. Cooper got fired, lost his PhD and moved away. I never saw him again, until…”

“Until today,” Oliver finished for her.

“Yup,” she nodded, folding her lips over her teeth.

“Why do I have a feeling that’s not it?” He asked softly.

She paused, observing him for a few moments. “Do you remember when you drove me back to my place, I told you I wanted to be a professor?”
“Yes.”

“Working at MIT was… the dream of my life.” She smiled sadly, sighing. “But even though I had been accepted as a TA, they changed their mind. Suddenly, there wasn’t a ‘suitable position’ for me anymore. One of my professors told me, quite simply, that MIT was a prestigious school. Drama and scandals had no place there. Cooper had stolen my work but I was in a relationship with him. Willingly. They stopped seeing me as this smart, ambitious woman. I became a stupid, naive girl. I couldn’t be trusted or respected as a researcher or professor. I’d always be the girl who slept with her TA and was dumb enough to think he actually loved her.”

“So you left.”

“So I left. I found a job in Tech Village. Most boring thing ever, but it paid the bills and offered healthcare and dental. I couldn’t wait to leave everything behind and start over. So I started to look for companies on the West Coast.”

“You found QC,” he smiled.

“Yes. I saw they were recruiting, bought the cheapest plane ticket I could find, which arrived in the middle of the night. I overslept.”

“You missed the interview. And stumbled on me.” He gazed at her, probably remembering the day they met as clearly as she was.

She let out a small laugh, probably the most sincere one ever since they had walked out of Bally’s. “Well… yes.”

He reached out his hand, grabbing hers, and gently pulled until she was standing up, facing him. He looked up, stroking the palm of her hand. “I understand.”

She gulped, seeing in his eyes that he wasn’t talking about Cooper, or MIT. Oliver was telling her that he knew the experience had marked her and that her reluctance to pursue a relationship with him was directly linked to it.

“I know you’d never…” she took a deep breath, squeezing his hand. “You’d never do anything to hurt me on purpose. But I can’t take that kind of risk. I won’t make the same mistake again, Oliver. I can’t.”

“I’m aware that if things go south between us, you’ll be the one paying the price. It won’t be me. I’ll still have my last name on the top of the building, even if I probably don’t deserve it,” he snickered. “I can’t make any promise, Felicity. I wish I could but there are so many things that are out of my hands and… I don’t want to deceive you. I don’t want to fail you. I’m so sorry that you had to go through all of this, alone, and…” he frowned, adding, “and I really should have punched him now that I think of it.”

She giggled, sitting down next to him. “Because ending up in jail would have been such a good way to spend our weekend, right?”

“It might have been worth it,” he grinned as he circled her shoulders with his arm. He sobered up as if he was making up his mind. “I won’t lie, though. I hate to know you had to go through this… but it also made you walk into my life. And that makes me very happy.”

“So what you’re saying is that maybe you should have offered him a drink?” She chirped, her heart already beating faster with the simple fact that he was now touching her.
“I wouldn’t go that far,” he laughed. “Not to mention, you probably wouldn’t have given me enough
time to do so.”

“I’m sorry I ruined our night,” she winced, remembering how she had abruptly decided to go back to
the hotel.

“I have a gorgeous woman in my room. That’s the opposite of a ruined night, by my standards,” he
cheekily said, rolling a strand of her hair around his finger.

She playfully bopped his chest. “Oliver!”

“Oh, he whined.

She glared at him. “Ouch? Seriously?”

“You’re stronger than you look.”

Rolling her eyes, she stood up. “I guess I should get going, anyway.”

“Wait. We could watch a movie?”

She eyed him suspiciously.

He raised his hands in defense. “I don’t mean anything! Just a movie, I promise. I’m not tired.”

She nervously bit her lips, considering her options. Truth be told she wasn’t that tired either and… to
be totally honest didn’t really want to leave. But on the other hand, staying in a bedroom with Oliver
Queen was probably a bad idea. It’s not that she didn’t trust him. Oh no. The man had given her all
the proof she needed that he was indeed a gentleman. It was herself that she didn’t trust.

“I’ll even let you pick,” he added, probably sensing her hesitation.

“No funny business?” She asked him, fully aware that she was the one she should be wary of.

He paused, a serious expression on his face. “Do you consider snogging as funny business?”

She grinned, knowing she had lost the battle. “Snogging? Oliver Queen uses the word snogging?”

“Hop on the bed, Smoak, or I’m going to snog your brains out,” he smirked proudly.

Laughing, she kneeled on the bed, crawling all the way up to the headboard. She rearranged the
pillows, vigorously hitting them so they’d take the shape she was looking for.

“How many pillows do you need?” She asked, glancing at him over her shoulder. She raised an
eyebrow as she caught him red-handed staring at her butt.

He scratched the back of his neck, his eyes snapping up. “Just one. You can keep the rest.”

She plopped against the pillows, looking at him expectantly. He seemed to snap out of it and finally
joined her, sitting against the headboard. Despite being close to her, he still maintained a reasonable
distance. She bit back a smile at his -still- surprising gentlemanly behavior. Sometimes she wondered
if he was actually the same man as the one she had met all those months ago. There was still this
cheeky, smirking side of him but it was no longer his main trait. He had grown and evolved so much,
so quickly, and had turned into a caring and selfless man who always put her first. How come
someone who showed her so much respect could also inspire such naughty thoughts? Because as
much as she appreciated his consideration, there was no point in denying that he also made her blood
boil.

“You know, as much as I enjoy staring at a black screen, maybe we could move to the next step?”

Oliver’s voice finally reached her and she startled when she realized he had given her the remote.

“Sorry,” she mumbled, avoiding his eyes, her finger pressing the on button.

They settled on a James Bond movie, Felicity craving some English vibes. Twenty minutes in the movie, she finally relaxed, settling more comfortably on the pillows. Shivering, she instinctively sought the warmth of his legs, her toes having already turned into blocks of ice.

Oliver hissed, still absorbed by the movie, as he murmured, “you’re freezing. Get under the blankets.”

She barely hesitated before sliding underneath the sheets, sighing with pleasure when the warmth welcomed her. Her muscles relaxing even more, she discreetly glanced at Oliver. He was watching the screen intently, his expression serious, one arm behind his head, the other thrown over his stomach. She could see, from the corner of her eye, his hand slowly rising with each intake of breath. Suddenly extremely aware of his body next to hers, she found herself unable to focus on the movie. She also knew that she couldn’t be trusted when she was left alone with her thoughts.

Slightly turning on her side to face him, she asked, “so, usually, where do you stay?”

“Hmm?” He answered distractedly, scratching his stomach.

She licked her lips as she observed the movement of his hand.

“What a fine, fine specimen.”

“When you’re here? In which hotel do you stay?” She eventually explained.

“The Wynn.”

She rolled her eyes. Obviously. Rich frat boys like to have fun and silky sheets.

She stayed silent another couple of minutes, not even bothering to pretend she was watching the television. Her eyes travelled down his body, all the way down his legs. He had big feet, which wasn’t really surprising. Smiling, she stretched her own legs under the blankets, giggling once she saw the physical proof of their height difference, unable to go past his calves.

“Felicity…” he scolded her.

“I’m sorry, but I’ve seen that movie a gazillion times,” she whined.

“You’re the one who picked it!”

“I’m a woman. I’m entitled to change my mind,” she huffed as she completely turned to her stomach, facing him and punching her pillows to get more comfortable. “So, usually, what do you do when you’re here?”

He glared at her, sighing. “We’re not watching that movie, are we?”

“… I can multitask.”

Rolling his eyes, he turned the volume down, settling on his side to face her as well. “OK. What do you want to know exactly?”
She shrugged. “I don’t know… tell me a story about you and Tommy?”

He winced. “I’m not sure I want to share that with you.”

She playfully kicked him, her foot barely managing to graze his leg with the blankets between them.

He smirked at her unsuccessful attempt. “Muscle spasm?”

“Shut up and entertain me,” she grinned.

“Alright, then. I don’t think we told you about that time where we ended up in a drag queen strip-club, did we?”

She gasped. “Nooo!”

He nodded sternly. “Yup. Those were dark, dark times.”

As he proceeded to tell her the whole story, which involved a very drunk Tommy Merlyn trying to woo some of the dancers, unaware they were men, and a just as inebriated Oliver wondering why there were so many rainbow flags in the place.

“And that is also the story of how Tommy Merlyn had his one and only homosexual experience,” he concluded. “Not that you should tell him I told you.”

She was still laughing, trying to muffle the sounds with her pillow. “What?!?”

Oliver chuckled. “Nah, it didn’t get that far. Just a kiss.”

“And you?” She asked, still giggling.

“Nope. I figured it out sooner than him.”

“And you still let him…?”

He snorted. “Hell, yeah. He’s the one who dragged me there in the first place. And to be fair, he admitted it was a good kiss.”

“I guess it’s a good thing we spent the night away from him, then.”

He smiled softly, gazing at her. “I’d say so.”

She nervously bit her lip as her laughter finally died down.

Oliver suddenly frowned, his fingers grazing her nose. “You have more freckles than I remembered.”

“Ugh. It’s because of the sun. And I’m not wearing make-up,” she groaned.

“I like them,” he murmured, his fingers stroking her face. She moaned, nuzzling his hand, his touch turning her bones into jello. It was only then that she realized how close they were to each other. He seemed to come to the same conclusion, because he reluctantly pulled his hand away, letting it fall between their chests, right beside hers. Their gazes locking, her fingers reached out for his, grazing his hand.

“I should go,” she whispered, feeling her eyes beginning to shut. She suddenly was so relaxed, so at ease, so warm and safe that her brain seemed unable to force her body to move away.
“Mmmhmmm,” he nodded, his fingers entwining hers, his thumb stroking her knuckles.

“I’ll go in a minute,” she breathed.

The sensation of a tender kiss pressed on the back of her hand made her eyes flutter open. Seeing Oliver, with his eyes closed, his full lips so soft and inviting… she didn’t even realize she was moving until her lips were pressed against his. She felt his little catch of breath, indicating she had taken him by surprise but it only lasted a second until he responded. It was slow, sweet, lazy. It wasn’t a passionate kiss, both of them being too tired for it. It was a sleepy, tender goodnight kiss, their mouths moving together like they had all the time in the world.

The last thing she remembered was snuggling into his chest, being safely tucked underneath his chin as his arm protectively held her close.

“Just one minute,” she mumbled, the steady beat of his heart lulling her to sleep alarmingly fast.

He hummed quietly, his chin rubbing against her forehead.

She was asleep the next second.

The warm sensation that surrounded her was so unusual that it lured her out of sleep. She felt so warm, so safe and so at peace that it took her brain a few minutes to finally work properly.

Oliver. She was in Oliver’s bed. Sometime during the night, he had slipped underneath the blankets as well and was currently tightly pressed against her back. His arm was around her waist, and she was holding his hand protectively between her breasts. His breath was tingling the skin of her neck, his face nuzzling her hair. She moaned, knowing she should get out of that bed before things could get even more… intimate. But her bones and muscles seemed to have a mind of their own as she found herself snuggling even more in his embrace. He tightened his arm around her, his lips brushing the soft skin behind her ear.

“Morning,” he whispered, his voice hoarse and breathy.

She froze, unsure on how to react, squeezing her eyes shut. No matter how much she knew the best thing to do was to get out of that bed, every cell in her body was begging her to stay put.

He must have sensed the shift because his hand slipped from hers, spreading on her stomach and making smooth circles. It dawned on her that her tank top had somehow ridden up during her sleep, leaving only her chest covered. His large, warm hand was stroking lazy patterns, making her melt into his embrace. It felt like a million butterflies had taken over her stomach, sending shivers down her spine.

“I’m going to turn into a big pile of goo if you keep this up,” she murmured sleepily.

He chuckled, hiding his face in the crook of her neck. He squeezed her body tightly against his, and her breath caught in her throat when she felt what seemed like a raging hard-on pressed against her backside. It sent a deep flash of arousal directly down to her core, her skin tingling with pure, unadulterated lust.

She sensed him shift against her, probably intending to move away and the thought of depriving her body of that sensation had her shift against him, grinding her ass against his erection. He stilled for a
second, hesitating then his hand pulled her closer to him, his cock rubbing her through her shorts. He let out a strangled moan at the friction, his head growing heavier against her shoulder.

He quickly slipped his other arm underneath her head, his bicep forming a nice cushion and his hand brushed against her breast, her nipples already hard. His nose nuzzled her neck, his lips peppering kisses from her ear to her shoulder. He lightly nibbled on the sensitive skin between her neck and shoulder, causing her to whimper, her hand reaching out and holding his head close against her. His tongue swiftly soothed the ache and the combination of the wetness on the skin and his hot breath made something snap inside of her. Her hips started to rotate against him, one hand still pressing his face against her neck, the other reaching out to cover the one that was lingering over her breast, urging him on. He seemed to get the message as his palm covered the small mound of flesh, his thumb teasing the nipple through her top. She had never been especially sensitive when it came to her breasts but there was something in the way Oliver was touching her that made her eyes roll to the back of her head. It was like a fire had erupted beneath her skin, and she suspected Oliver was the only one able to calm it down.

His tongue traced the outline of her ear as he guided her hips, his other hand still massaging her breast.

“I want to kiss you,” he murmured. “I want to kiss you everywhere.”

She literally whimpered at his words, her brain coming up with some very vivid mental picture of Oliver between her thighs, gripping them tightly, lowering his mouth on her.

“I want to hear you whimper… and moan,” he continued, pressing a kiss between each word. “And beg… and scream. God, Felicity, I want to hear you scream so bad. I dream of you screaming my name every fucking night.”

Groaning, panting with need, she turned in his arms, barely having the time to regret losing that delicious touch on her breasts, her mouth already latching on his, craving him, craving his taste with an intensity that would have scared her if it wasn’t for him, for his arms holding her close, encasing her, making sure she always felt safe, protected… cherished.

She could tell by the way his lips crashed against hers that he was just as on edge as she was. His hand covered her ass, pushing her against him, against his crotch and the feel of him against her, hard and hot, sent a shiver down her spine. She bent her knee, resting her leg over his strong thigh, opening herself, allowing him to press his cock between her legs. She knew she was already wet, and she knew right away when he felt it too, despite the layers of fabric between them. He groaned, a deep, aching sound reverberating through his chest and suddenly she was lying on her back, his tongue invading her mouth, taking no prisoners. His hand caressed her waist, slowly travelling underneath her shirt, until his fingers finally reached a breast, massaging the flesh as he delicately pinched her nipple. Whimpering, she grabbed his head, her nails scratching the base of his skull, her legs falling open on either side of his hips until she could feel him, so hard, so impossibly close yet not close enough. She bent one of her legs, her foot resting firmly against the mattress giving her leverage to roll her hips, the other one pressing down on his ass as much as she could, seeking his heat, his stiffness and the intense pleasure he was already giving her. Her hands scrambled, trying to lift his shirt, desperate to feel his skin and he let go of her mouth for one moment, swiftly getting rid of it for her. His lips were back on hers barely a second later.

His hips started to rock against her, pressing tight against her core, making her see stars. Her hands palpated his back, feeling the hard muscles shifting, her nails tracing them and causing him to shudder, goosebumps erupting over his skin.

He raised her shirt, exposing her breast and his mouth was suddenly there, sucking the skin, teasing
and licking her nipple. He slid a hand underneath her ass and the new angle brought his cock directly across her clit. She let out a strangled moan, her arousal reaching new levels. She wanted him so badly, wanted to get rid of their clothes, and feel him naked, feel him press against her, inside her but she was already too far gone, already chasing her release, to even consider to slow things down.

Panting, unable to control the whimpers leaving her mouth as she felt her pleasure building up, her legs stiffened, her hips grinding against him relentlessly.

“Yes. Yes;” she breathed when he hit just the right spot. “Right there.”

She suddenly cradled his head, forcing him to leave her breast, unable to keep herself from kissing him, drinking him in. She let out a strangled cry when he sped up the tempo, the head of his cock rubbing over her clit over and over again, the pleasure building so fast that she bit down on his lip.

He hissed, breaking away from her. “Fuck, Felicity.”

“Sorry, sorry;” she moaned, peppering kisses across his jaw. “Please don’t stop. Don’t stop.”

He groaned, dropping his head in the crook of her neck, his mouth lavishing the soft skin, the feel of his scruff making her shiver.

“Oliver… oh God… Oliver;” she chanted, feeling his whole body tensing with restraint. His breathing was ragged, fast in her ear and it was obvious from the way his hands were holding her tight that he was on his last legs, but still determined to make her come.

“Come on, Felicity;” he grunted, squeezing her ass, his hips never breaking the rhythm.

“Oh… oh… oh;” she whined, squeezing her eyes shut as she felt herself approaching her peak, her foot digging into the mattress, her toes curling.

He bit down on her shoulder, hard and her back arched, the slight pain going straight to her core, mixing with her pleasure and she felt herself trembling, shaking, waiting for that one touch of his cock against her…

“Yeeeeees;” she wailed as her thighs gripped his hips, pressing him down as hard as she could. “Yes, yes, yes!”

The orgasm crashed through her violently, making her gasp, her head lifting from the pillow.

Oliver grunted, trying to lift from her, but her hips kept moving from their own will, riding out the wave, and she was unable to stop her own body.

“Felicity, no… fuck;” he groaned miserably as she felt his body stiffen and shudder as he found his own release.

Panting, she felt the waves of pleasure slowly subside, drowsily stroking his short hair, her eyes wide open fixed on the ceiling. She was numb, a deep satisfied feeling lingering in her lower stomach. Oliver’s face was still buried in her neck, his breathing fast and hot against her skin. She could feel his heart beating wildly against her chest, mimicking her own. He eventually moved his arms, putting them on each side of her body, lifting himself.

She moaned, not willing to lose the connection yet. “No… stay.”

He hesitated, his forehead still leaning on her shoulder until he moved, sliding down the bed a little until he could bury his face between her breasts, still trying to catch his breath and making sure he
didn’t crush her.

She softly kissed his head, caressing his shoulders covered by a sheer layer of sweat. She wished they could stay like this forever but he eventually moved away, rolling onto his side.

He passed a hand across his face, sighing.

“I hope it’s a good sigh?” She asked, pinching her lips.

He eventually lowered his hand, meeting her eyes. “I… God, Felicity. This hasn’t happened to me ever since I was… 16.”

“You haven’t had an orgasm in almost ten years?” She fake gasped.

He glared at her, which might have been intimidating if his eyes weren’t so shiny and his face still flush from their activities.

She bit back a smile. “I’m sorry. Go ahead.”

“I usually… don’t lose control like that,” he grumbled.

This time, she couldn’t keep the grin from her face. “If it makes you feel better… neither do I.”

This seemed to pique his interest as he raised an eyebrow. “… Really?”

She nodded. “Really. I honestly don’t know how you manage to get me all worked up so fast.”

He raised his head, resting it on his hand. “You mean you usually don’t…” he trailed off.

“Never that easily and that hard, that’s for sure. I can barely feel my legs as-” she interrupted herself as she saw the proud smirk on his face. “Oh my God, Oliver, there is no need to look so smug!”

“I tend to disagree with you,” he whispered, leaning in and brushing her lips. “I made you come hard and fast twice and we still technically haven’t had sex. I’m this close to beating my chest.”

Laughing, she let her lips melt against his, their tongues meeting in a slow kiss. He broke away way too soon to her liking. “Let me take a shower and then I can show you how that was just me warming up.”

She giggled. “I’m not sure I’ll survive another round.”

He gently slapped her butt as he sat up. “We’re gonna have to work on your stamina.”

She was about to answer when her alarm clock went off. Groaning, she dropped her head back on the pillows while Oliver stood up, grabbing her phone that was still on the desk. As he handed it to her, she stifled a laugh as she saw the mess on the front of his sweatpants.

She quickly turned the alarm down, admiring Oliver who was taking off his pants, using them to clean up the mess he had caused.

“Wanna join me?” He winked, catching her red-handed, completely at ease with his own nudity.

“I wish,” she sighed as she stood up. “But I have to meet my mom and Sara in less than one hour.”

She grabbed her key, walking to the door. She had just unlocked it when she felt a strong arm curling around her waist, turning her around.
“Oliver, seriously, I don’t -”

He cut her off with a kiss, softly pushing her against the door. It was brief, and surprisingly chaste but it still left her breathless.

One of his hands laid flat against the door, right next to her face while he rested his forehead against hers.

“Raincheck?” He asked, his eyes soft, a small smile tugging at his lips.

“Yes,” she breathed. *Oh God... yes. What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. I'll deal with the rest later.*

“Good,” he said as he opened the door, gently nudging her outside. She automatically stepped out, her head still fuzzy, wondering how on earth he was able to reduce her to a puppet with just one small kiss.

The man had skills. The man had mad skills.

Chapter End Notes

... soooo what did you think? Things are getting naughty, aren't they? ;)

... I do hope you don't mind if I got carried away in the morning scene and couldn't fit mama Smoak? :p

Also, I hope Felicity's doubts and hesitations make more sense to everyone now. The girl has very good reasons to keep her distance from Oliver.

Find me on Tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com or Twitter @pimsiepim

I had HUGE laptop issues so all of those who reached out on tumblr, I am sooo sooo soooooo sorry I couldn't reply! I just bought a new one, and things are much smoother. I'm back in business on tumblr now ;)
Chapter Notes

Hi guys :) 

So, so sorry this chapter took longer than usual. I really got caught in the voting for the polls - and also Delta left for a few days so no one was kicking my butt.

This chapter is longer than the other ones, though, so that's a plus XD

As usual, thanks to all of you who reach out (I'm still behind on tumblr, so sorry), and pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda for their help.

Song: Mama, I'm a big girl now - Hairspray

"Mama, I'm a big girl now"

Stop...
Stop telling me what to do-o
Don't...
Don't treat me like a child of two-o
No...
I know that you want what's best
Please...
But mother please... give it a rest!

Stop, don't, no!
Please...

Mama, I'm a big girl now!

Once upon a time when I was just a kid
You never let me do just what the older kids did
But lose that laundry list of what you won't allow
Cause mama, I'm a big girl now!

Once upon a time I used to play with toys...
But now I'd rather play around with older boys
So if I get a hicky please don't, have a cow!
Cause mama, I'm a big girl now!

Ma, I gotta tell you that without a doubt
I got my best dancing lessons from yo-ou
You're the one who taught me how to twist and shout
Because you shout non-stop, and you're so twisted to-o
Ooooo
Once I used to fidget cause I just sat home
But now I'm just like Gidget, and I gotta get to Rome
So say arrividicci, toodle-loo, and ciao!
Cause mama I'm a big girl now!

Oooo
Stop, don't, no!
Please...
Mama, I'm a big girl now!

Hey mama...
Hey mama...

Once upon a time I was a shy young thing
Could barely walk and talk so much as dance and sing
But let me hit that stage I wanna take my bow...
Cause mama, I'm a big girl now!

Ooooh!
Once upon a time I used to dress up Ken
But now that I'm a woman I like... bigger men
And I don't need a barbie doll to show me how
Cause mama I'm a big girl now!

Ooooh!

Ma, you always taught me what was right from wrong
And now I just wanna give it a try
Mama, I'm been in a nest for far to long!
So please give a push and mama watch me fly!
Watch me fly!

Hey mama...
Say mama...

One day I will meet a man you won't condemn
And we will have some kids and you can torture them
But let me be a star before I take that vow!
Cause mama, I'm a big girl now

OOO
Mama, I'm a big girl now
Hey, ya, ya, ya, yay
Mama... I'm a big girl...
Oo, such a big big girl
I'm a big girl... now... oooo
(Stop don't no please)
Mama, I'm a big girl now!
Despite her best efforts, Felicity couldn’t wipe off the huge smile that had taken over her face. Humming, she dropped her towel on the floor, the cool air on her naked body making her skin tingle, reminding her of her intense... snogging session with Oliver. She giggled as she remembered his threat from last night. He had indeed delivered and snogged her brains out. She knew she was going against every single one of her principles and resolutions but God help her... she had tried to resist. She had tried so hard and for so long until her body had finally caved in, in a major “screw you, I’m getting some lovin’” move. Although, the screwing part is still technically yet to come...

She closed her eyes, biting her lips. She was standing completely naked in the middle of her room, and all she could think about was him. His lips, his hands, his voice, his ragged breathing. She was craving him with an intensity that left her dizzy. There was a hunger inside of her that she couldn’t wait to satisfy. Truth be told if he could make her feel that way while they still had their clothes on... she was pretty confident he would fry her brains when they would eventually have sex. It wasn’t just about the way he could play her body, coaxing her into what had been two very, very satisfying orgasms - although that part had been amazing - but how he managed to make her relax. She felt so... free and liberated with him, something she had never experienced before. Like he was getting rid of her insecurities and doubts one by one, accepting her the way she was and proving to her, by his actions, that she didn’t have to hold back with him. There was no shame, no hesitation when it was just the two of them. She was vocal, telling him what she liked, what she needed, even if it was just a few words or a small nudge. He only encouraged her, without judgement or expectation. He was never pushy, only aiming to make her feel good and comfortable with herself. He was literally creating a bubble around them, where there was only him and her, discovering each other’s bodies at their own pace. It was their safe harbor, their own shelter, where there was no place for self-doubt and awkwardness. A new part of her was slowly awakening, crawling her way out, refusing to be contained any longer and desperate to shine and live freely. Oliver was the one slowly coaxing that part to life, with his heated looks and hungry kisses. He made her feel beautiful, sexy… desirable. To know that she could make a man like him lose control the way he had was boosting her confidence up to new levels. She was no longer fearing the unstoppable emotions he could inspire, the sensual need that set her skin on fire. She was embracing that part of herself now, ready to let it shine, dying to explore all those new sensations that she knew were just within her grasp.

Or, to be more accurate, in the room next to hers.

She threw a regretful glance at her still-made bed. Oliver had picked such a gorgeous suite for her and she hadn’t even spent the night in it. She smiled as she put on her underwear, promising herself that tonight, he’d be the one to come to her room. She would worry about Starling and QC on Monday. For one more day, they were in Vegas and she was going to have some fun. On his naked body, preferably.

She met Sara downstairs, stifling a laugh as she saw her friend wearing a pair of huge sunglasses, her face white as a sheet.

“I take it the night was good?”

Sara groaned. “Don’t... Just give me half an hour, so the three dozen aspirins I took can work their magic.”

“What happened?” Felicity asked once they were inside their cab, driving to a small restaurant she used to go with her mother when she was younger. The place was cheap, but offered a nice authentic Downtown charm and the food was great.
“I honestly don’t remember that much. We went to a strip-club and I think… I think I ended up on the stage.”

Laughing, Felicity patted her leg as she remembered the story Oliver had told her about Tommy. “If it was a regular strip-club, then it’s all good. It could have been way worse. Tommy was with you?”

“Yeah. I made him swear he wouldn’t leave me alone,” Sara replied as she took a sip from the water bottle she had bought on the way.

By the time they had made it to the restaurant, she was already more like her usual self. As Felicity was paying the cab driver, Sara was stretching on the sidewalk, gulping the rest of her water.

“I can’t wait to meet your mother. You’ve been so mysterious about her, I almost expect her to work for the CIA or something.”

Felicity snorted. “Oh… you’re in for a ride, then.”

As they walked inside, Felicity smiled as she saw that the whole place was exactly like in her memories. Wood tables, mismatched chairs and big windows letting the desert sun shine through.

“Oh… that’s so cute!” Sara cooed as she spotted a small electric train against one of the walls. “Was it already there when -”

A high-pitched screech caught her off guard as she turned, wide-eyed, to Felicity, her hand covering her chest.

Felicity smiled apologetically, having recognized her mother’s voice.

“My baby girl!” Donna Smoak squealed, her tiny figure showcased by a short bright blue dress and a pair of neck-breaking stilettos.

Sara instinctively turned around, probably checking to see if the small bubbly woman wasn’t welcoming someone else.

“Oh my God…” she whispered in shock as Donna threw her arms around Felicity, peppering kisses on her cheek.

“Mom… mom,” Felicity tried to stop her. “This is Sara, my friend.”

Donna finally let her go. “Of course, of course. I’m sorry.”

“Mrs Smoak,” Sara smiled nervously as she offered her hand.

“Oh, come on,” Donna waved her off as she engulfed her in a big hug as well. “Call me Donna! Mrs Smoak makes me feel so old!”

The three women took place around a small table near a window, Donna already babbling about their future shopping trip in one of the outlet centers outside of town. Felicity glanced at Sara who was still staring at her mother with wide eyes and her mouth slightly agape. She swiftly kicked her underneath the table, trying to get her attention.

“Ow!” Sara yelped.

“What’s wrong, dear?” Donna asked, worried.

“Nothing. Just… Just a hangover and a sudden headache,” Sara stuttered, glancing furiously at
Felicity.

Donna laughed. “Oh I’ve had my fair share of those. You need a Bloody Mary!”

They eventually ordered their meals, Donna making most of the conversation.

“So where did you guys go last night? I would have come with you but couldn’t get the day off on such short notice.”

“Well… I gambled a bit,” Felicity said, remaining as vague as possible. “Bellagio, Bally’s…”

“And I’m not entirely sure where I went. I know there were palm trees and the last thing I remember is being on a stage with a fake gorilla,” Sara shrugged.

“Oh. You weren’t together?” Donna asked, surprised. “It’s not wise to be partying alone. Vegas is relatively safe but things can escalate very fast.”

“Oh, no. We weren’t alone. I was with Tommy and Felicity with Oliver” Sara smiled reassuringly.

“Oliver Queen?” Donna leaned over the table, whispering. “I have seen pictures and let me tell you something… I wouldn’t make him sleep in the bathtub.”

“Mom,” Felicity moaned. “You are talking about my boss, remember?”

And the guy who woke me up in the best possible way a few hours ago.

“Oh, honey. But I’m merely a woman, made of flesh and bones. I honestly don’t know how you can just work around him and not be affected.”

Sara pinched her lips, side-eyeing Felicity who was saved by the bell as their waiter brought their food. The rest of the meal was an interesting mix of awkward stories and giggles, Sara and her mother bonding right away.

Two hours later, they were dragged by her mother to a lingerie shop, much to Felicity’s horror.

“I don’t need lingerie, mom,” she whined.

Sara wasn’t helping at all, already going through a selection of pajama shorts on sale.

“Don’t be silly. Even if you don’t have a boyfriend, you never know… sometimes things happen and you’ll be so thankful to be wearing lace panties!” Donna held out a red lace thong, wiggling her eyebrows. “Also, lace is much easier to rip off.”

“Mom!” Felicity yelped as she snatched the pair of underwear from her mother’s hands, her cheeks flaming up under the stares of the few customers nearby.

“What? It’s really sexy when a man rips your panties off, I’ll have you know!”

Felicity shoved the thong back in its basket, groaning with frustration.

Donna sighed. “So no thong, then?”
“No, mom. No thongs. No lace panties so a non-existent boyfriend could rip them off my body either,” Felicity snapped. She saw the flicker of hurt in her mother’s eyes and felt guilty. She knew they had never been able to bond, and this was probably Donna’s way of trying to spend some time and share a bit with her daughter.

“I… I could use a new bra, though,” she added reluctantly, willing to compromise.

Donna grinned widely, clapping her hands together as she excitedly walked to the other side of the store. “I can work with that! Don’t move, I’m going to find the perfect one for you!”

“She’s… quite something,” Sara noted, her hands full of shorts and panties.

“You don’t say…” Felicity shook her head.

“She looks like she could be your big sister, not your mother. You could have warned me,” Sara snorted as she shoved all of her new belongings in the small shopping basket that Donna had abandoned at Felicity’s feet.

“Would it have changed anything?”

Sara paused, grinning. “... No. I probably wouldn’t have believed you if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes. I can’t imagine my mother making me buy lace thongs as a way to spice up my sex-life. I’m also pretty sure she doesn’t know my bra size.”

“I think I’d love your mom,” Felicity pouted.

“She’s… a normal mom. You’ve got a fun one, don’t complain!”

“You’re saying that but you’re not the one who had condoms shoved into your purse before going out on a date!”

Sara gaped, her eyes blinking. “Well… she was just making sure you’d be safe?”

“She did it in front of my date! The poor guy felt so pressured he never called me again!”

Sara snorted, her shoulders shaking with laugh. “A teenage boy feeling pressured to have sex? Wow. I didn’t even know that existed.”

Felicity pinched her lips. “He actually came out shortly after that. It turns out having my mother encouraging him to have sex with a girl made him realize it really wasn’t his cup of tea.”

Sara laughed out loud. “Damn… looks like you did a 180 on your type of guy…”

Felicity glared at her.

Smirking, her friend put her arm around her shoulders. “Do you really think I didn’t notice how vague you were about your nightly activities? Or the fact that your eyes were unusually shiny this morning?”

“… it’s so not what you think.”

“Suuuure… and that tiny hickey on the top of your boob is not what I think either, right?”

“What?!” Felicity squeaked, her eyes dropping to her cleavage. Her blouse had drifted a bit, showing the top of her chest and indeed a small hickey could be seen, marking her skin. Blushing, she quickly adjusted herself, silently grateful her mother hadn’t noticed.
“So… I take it last night was good?” Sara winked at her.

“It was this morning,” Felicity answered automatically, then shut her eyes, cursing herself and her lack of filter.

Sara’s eyebrows raised almost all the way to her hairline. “This morning? Did you… Oh my did you guys spend the night together?!”

“We fell asleep in the same bed while watching a movie, that’s all,” Felicity mumbled, fiddling with her purse.

“Morning sex, mmh? I approve.”

“We still haven’t… technically… gone all the way.”

“… you’re kidding, right?”

Felicity pinched her lips. “No. But it was still really good. Like really, really…” she sighed, a few vivid pictures flashing through her mind. “Really good.”

“For the both of you, this time?”

Felicity smiled shyly. “Yes.”

“Good. That’s some progress at least,” Sara bumped her shoulder cheekily.

The sound of heels on the stone floor let them know that Donna was back. She had probably a dozen different kinds of bras hanging from her arms, her smile wide.

“I think I have a nice little selection for you!” She said as she shoved her daughter towards the changing rooms.

“Little?”

“Don’t worry, if it’s not enough, I know there are plenty of other ones there.”

Sighing, Felicity quickly got into one of the small rooms, closing the curtain behind her. She took off her blouse and bra, grabbing the first one she could get and trying it on. It was made of pink lace, with a little black bow on each strap. It was cute, and Felicity couldn’t deny it felt good to have such delicate fabric directly on her skin.

In the end, she bought 4 new bras, the pink one she had tried first and three others, all made of lace. She quickly realized that those bras needed companions, so she ended up buying half a dozen panties as well. Despite her mother’s nagging, she flat out refused to buy thongs. She was mostly wearing skirts for work these days and the idea of a thong underneath a skirt made her uncomfortable.

Although… the idea of Oliver’s eyes on her backside… she had a few very tight fitting dresses and knowing he could probably figure out what kind of underwear she was wearing almost tipped the scale. But if Oliver could figure it out… so could other people.

“It’s too bad really. We, Smoak women, have great asses. A thong really shows it off,” Donna sighed as they were waiting for the clerk to pack their bags.

“Mom…”

“Sorry. Sorry. I know, sweetheart. It’s just that showing off your assets is a good way to catch a
“I sure hope I have other assets apart from my butt,” Felicity taunted. “Anyway, I need a few dresses. I’m running out of options for work.”

“Maybe also a party dress?” Donna asked hopefully.

“... maybe,” Felicity nodded half-heartedly as she drank the last of the water bottle she had brought with her.

“What’s this?” Donna asked, concerned as she forced her daughter’s head to the side. She felt her finger grazing the skin between her neck and shoulder and she froze, remembering the way Oliver had suckled and nibbled. She had made sure her chest area was covered, but unfortunately, the strap of her purse had caused her blouse to slide over her shoulder, exposing the skin there as well.

“Hum… I think I got... bitten last night. By… by a spider,” Felicity stuttered, praying she wouldn’t blush.

Sara snorted, snickering under her breath. “Must have been a hell of a spider.”

Donna glanced at her. “Yes… it’s quite a mark. Maybe you should get it checked?”

“I’m sure she will. Right, Felicity? You’re gonna make sure someone checks this... thoroughly? I mean… that spider could have bitten you somewhere else as well for all we know,” Sara smiled mischievously. “Is there any other place that feels... sore?”

“Sara…” Felicity gritted through her teeth as they stepped inside a store with a few cute dresses in the window.

Donna gasped in realization, squealing loudly as she grabbed her arm. “Oh my God! My baby had sex last night!”

“Mom!” Felicity hissed, trying to get her mother under control.

“Oh, honey… it’s been so long! Were you safe? I know one night stands can be a great way to let off some steam but you should always be a responsible young woman.”

“Mom, don’t… “ Felicity tried to explain, her eyes throwing daggers at Sara who was looking at her innocently, biting her lips.

“That’s why you seem more relaxed than usual!” Her mother kept on babbling. “I’m so glad you had a good night of hot sex, sometimes that’s what a girl needs. I know I sent you a few little things to help you take care of yourself but… getting the real thing with someone can’t hurt, right?”

Felicity winced. “Mom…”

“Oh, honey, don’t be ashamed. It’s perfectly natural, right Sara?”

“Perfectly natural, indeed,” Sara nodded innocently. “Especially when the real thing is… good. Really good.”

“You are dead,” Felicity mouthed at Sara behind her mother’s back, her finger mimicking a throat being slit. “You are so dead.”
Oliver was whistling as he joined Tommy for a drink by the pool. After Felicity had left his room, he had taken a shower, wishing she could have stayed and joined him. Actually, he wished they could have done a lot more things than just share a shower. They probably wouldn’t have left the room for the rest of their trip, surviving on room service and sex. He had brought her to orgasm twice and he had the feeling it was soon going to become an addiction. He couldn’t wait to do it again. Preferably naked this time. And inside of her.

The few hours away from her had given him a chance to get some work done, even though he had spent more time thinking about their future nightly activities. He even went to buy a pack of condoms, knowing that the one and only he kept in his wallet would definitely not be enough for his plans. He didn’t know if Felicity had some with her and didn’t want to risk having to interrupt their night. He had big plans for them. Big, big plans. That involved her in a multitude of positions and finding out exactly how many times he could get her to moan his name.

As he stepped outside, the blinding sun welcomed him, forcing him to put his sunglasses on. He quickly spotted his best friend, lazily spread on a long chair, apparently sleeping. He swiftly kicked his shin as he plopped down on the chair next to him.

“T’m up, sweetie, T’m up!” Tommy groggily said, blinking.

“Oh wow. Last night must have been good. I can’t even remember the last time you called me sweetie,” Oliver snorted as he took off his shirt, carelessly throwing it on the ground. He laid down as well, noting he was completely protected by the parasol. Which was fine by him since he was hoping he could catch a bit of sleep.

“Yeah… yeah,” Tommy groaned as he tried to sit up, then gave up, sprawling back on his chair. “I honestly don’t remember much, but it was fun.”

“Any luck?” Oliver asked.

“What do you think? I was chaperoning a lesbian just so you could play Romeo…” Tommy waved off. “Please tell me it was worth it. I didn’t sacrifice one night of wild sex in Vegas just so you could go back to your room by yourself.”

Oliver grinned cheekily. “I’m sorry but I did go back to my room by myself…”

“Fuck!” Tommy cursed, raising his head and watching him in disbelief. “Are you kidding me right now? All that hard work, man… I swear to God, you’re going to make me age way too fast. And you don’t even seem to mind… what is wrong with you?!”

Oliver shrugged, folding his hands across his chest, a lopsided smile on his lips.

“Tommy sighed. “Please, at least tell me she enjoyed her night in her suite?”

“I wouldn’t know.”

“You haven’t seen her yet?”

“I have. But she didn’t sleep in her room last night,” Oliver smirked proudly.

Tommy smiled as he shook his head. “Damn you. So it was worth it?”
“Oh yeah,” Oliver nodded, closing his eyes, intending to get at least one hour of sleep. “And no, I’m not telling you anything more about it.”

“Damn. Not even a bit? Have mercy!”

“No. Now, shut up, I’m trying to sleep.”

“Yeah… gotta build up your strength.”

Oliver didn’t even have to look at him to know Tommy was probably wiggling his eyebrows. Sighing, he gave him the finger, blocking out the rest of his words. Thankfully, ignoring Tommy’s rambling was something he had gotten very good at over the years. In less than two minutes, he was already drifting to sleep.

A small laughing voice was what lured him out of his nap.

“I am not joining you in the hot tub, Tommy.”

“Awww, come on. You can’t let me out there by myself! The ladies will throw themselves at me and I need to be in good shape to make an impression on your mother.”

Felicity’s giggle was like music to his ears and he smiled, his eyes still closed, savoring the sound. He could sense that she was very close to him, yet he couldn’t feel the heat of her body. Her voice was coming from Tommy’s side, so he assumed she was sharing his chair. It was that thought that made him open his eyes, while mentally cursing himself for a totally over-the-top, inappropriate feeling of possessiveness.

She was standing between the chairs, spreading sunscreen over her calves. He got mesmerized by the movements of her hands, palpating circles over the smooth skin. His mouth salivated at the vision of her backside as she bent further down. She was wearing a very thin white short sleeved sundress over a simple black bikini. Her outfit was miles away from the tiny little pieces of clothes that most women were wearing around the pool but it was enough to make his heart beat faster. He let his eyes wander over her ass, promising himself that he would worship it tonight, the way it deserved to be worshiped. With his hands, his mouth, his teeth. He’d feel those killer legs wrapped around him, pulling him closer, like she had done in the morning, holding him so tightly that he had completely lost control. He would pull her legs over his shoulders, pushing into that wet heat he had only been able to feel through their clothes.

He shook his head, trying to get rid of the thoughts as they were already having a… visible effect on him. Suddenly very thankful he was wearing a pair of cargo shorts, he cleared his throat, efficiently gaining her attention.

“Hey! You’re awake!” She smiled as she started to spread sunscreen over her arms.

Tommy glanced at him then stood up, leaving his chair for Felicity. “Well. I’m going to let all those ladies enjoy my company. I have deprived them of my body for far too long.”

Felicity chuckled as Tommy started to strut over to the pool. “Go. I feel guilty for the rest of my gender enough as it is.”
Tommy turned around, winking at her as he flexed his pecs. “You only had one word to say, Miss Felicity, and all of this could have been yours.”

She burst out laughing, wiping her hands off on a towel. Oliver gazed at her, leaning over on his side. He noticed a couple of drinks were on a small table between the two chairs. He grabbed the glass closer to him, taking a sip of the refreshing drink.

“Do you…” Felicity asked, holding out the small bottle of sunscreen. “Do you mind putting some on my back?”

He put the drink back down, sitting up with one leg on each side of the chair. He swiftly grabbed her hand, pulling her between his thighs. She yelped as he gently forced her to sit down, her back to his front.

“Give the girl a warning, next time,” she huffed jokingly as he helped her peel her sundress off of her.

“I missed you,” he whispered, pressing a small kiss behind her ear. He felt a flash of pure masculine pride as goosebumps erupted over her skin.

Smirking, he pulled back, his hands reaching for her hair. “Do you have something to tie it?”

“Yup.” She handed him the tie that was wrapped around her wrist. He quickly took care of it, making sure her hair was high on her head.

“It’s not too tight?” He asked, admiring his handy work.

“No,” she answered as she handed him her sunscreen. He opened the lid, pouring a generous amount in his hand, then spread it over her shoulders and down her back, making sure he didn’t miss any spot. He was so focused on his task that he didn’t see at first the small hickeys peppering her neck and shoulders. It was only when he was making sure she was completely protected that he noticed the purple marks. He froze, his hand reaching out and grazing the skin.

“Did I…?”

“Hum… yes?” Felicity answered hesitantly.

“I’m sorry. Does it hurt?” He asked, suddenly worried he had been too rough. Truth be told, he remembered kissing her and… laving on her skin, but he hadn’t been aware he had been so intense.

“No, it’s… it’s fine, really.” She turned around, a reassuring smile on her lips “I kinda like them.”

He frowned, searching her eyes.

She smiled suddenly as her eyes lowered to his shoulder. “Besides… you have one too.”

Smiling, he automatically reached for the fading bruise near his neck, where she had bitten him a few days earlier.

“So you’re sure you’re OK?” He still asked, seeking confirmation that she was comfortable with him and the physical aspect of their relationship.

“Positive.” She grinned, then sobered up with a small frown on her face. “Although my mother saw them too.”

“Oh. What did you say?”
She rolled her eyes. “That a spider bit me.”

He chuckled, his head dropping to rest on her shoulder.

“Needless to say, with a bit of help from Sara Traitor Lance, she figured it out.”

“Does she know about me?”

“No. God, no. She thinks I had a hot and crazy one night stand with a stranger.”

He stiffened at her words. The mere idea of Felicity with another man was twisting his insides, leaving an acrid taste in his mouth. The thought of someone else touching her and holding her like he had seemed so wrong… almost as wrong as it was for him to touch or hold another woman, he realized suddenly.

His feelings must have shown on his face, because Felicity slightly pulled away, looking at him with a question in her eyes. “Is everything alright?”

“Yeah,” he smiled peacefully, gazing at her. He picked up a strand of hair that had escaped, carefully placing it behind her ear. She leaned into his touch, like she always did and it brought the same familiar surge of protectiveness. Their surroundings became blurry, the screaming voices around them merely a background noise as he pulled her closer, his lips softly brushing against hers. He didn’t even try to deepen the kiss, just lingering and savoring the feeling of their lips connecting. She was the one to press herself closer to him, opening her mouth, seeking his tongue with hers, letting a small strangled moan escape her as her hand reached for his arm, her nails scratching him. The sensation was already so familiar, so promising that he felt his body react right away. Like a fucking Pavlov’s dog.

He reluctantly pulled away, his jaw locked.

“What?” She asked when he avoided her lips a second time. “What’s wrong?”

“You really can’t tell?” He asked, perking an eyebrow. He wasn’t exactly fully erect, but surely she could at least feel a little something…

She frowned. “Hum… no?”

He sighed, his eyes quickly dropping to his lap. She folded her lips over her teeth, failing to hold back a giggle. “Really?”

“Yes… really.” He rolled his eyes, adding, “and stop… giggling… you’re making it worse!”

“I’m not doing anything!” She laughed.

“Please.” He glared at her, tilting his head. “I woke up with your ass in my face. Then you asked me to massage you and you make that little moan that you make when…”

She swiftly covered his mouth with her hand. “Don’t you dare finish that sentence.”

“When you’re turned on,” he finished,softly forcing her hand away. “And you scratched me. Which turns me on.”

“... it does?” She breathed.

“Yeah… it does,” he groaned. “So can we please talk about something else, just so… everything can get back to its normal state?”
She smiled mischievously. “Raincheck?”

“Definitely,” he whispered as he quickly pecked her lips one last time.

After an hour spent by the pool, they all went back to their rooms in order to get ready for their dinner. He and Tommy decided to go down to the sports bar in order to have a drink before their dinner with Felicity’s mother. He couldn’t deny that he was quite nervous at the idea of meeting Donna Smoak in the flesh. All he knew of her was that she was the mother of the girl he loved and that she was some kind of a connoisseur of sex toys. Nothing that was really suitable for dinner conversation, in short.

Tommy’s assistant had made all the arrangements and booked a table in one of the finest restaurants of the Bellagio, but his best friend had been completely useless in bringing intel about Felicity’s mother.

“I don’t know, man. Terry told me she seemed very nice on the phone and… excited,” Tommy explained while they were both having a beer at the bar. The place was rather quiet, most people probably still enjoying the pools or having already hit the casinos.

Oliver checked his watch, noting that Felicity and Sara were supposed to meet them in fifteen minutes. He was taking a sip of his beer when Tommy nudged him.

“Three stools on your right,” he whispered.

Oliver discreetly turned his head, noticing right away the woman seated at the bar. She seemed on the small side, but with a lean body and curves in all the right places. She was wearing a tight fitting yellow dress, her blonde hair covering one shoulder, leaving the other one naked. Suffice to say… she was exactly Tommy’s type: Hot, blonde, and lonely.

Oliver rolled his eyes. “Dude, come on. We’re supposed to meet Felicity and Sara in fifteen minutes.”

“I only need five, you know that,” Tommy smirked as he stood up. “And I can’t leave a single woman in a bar. I just… I can’t. It hurts me. In my soul.”

“No, seriously. You made plans to have dinner, you’re not going to abandon me,” Oliver hissed. Just the idea of being alone with the three women was making him nervous. He was always comfortable in society, but he wanted to make a good impression on Donna Smoak. Having a best friend who didn’t show up at the last minute would not be a good start.

“I’ll just get her phone number, alright?” Tommy patted his shoulder and buttoned up his suit, already making his way to his prey.

“Miss?” He asked in his usual charming voice. Oliver sighed, knowing there was no point in trying to talk sense into him.

“I couldn’t help but notice you were alone. A woman as beautiful as you should never wait alone at a bar. May I offer you a drink?”

The woman’s voice was softer than Tommy’s making it hard for Oliver to hear her answer. Her small pleased laugh was quite clear, though. From the corner of his eyes, he could see Tommy taking a seat and gesturing the barman.
Groaning, Oliver gulped down half of his beer. His best friend had always been the charmer. Sure, Oliver had had his fair share of playboy days, but usually his mind was always set on the reward. Tommy, on the other hand, seemed to like the chase just as much… if not more. As he focused his attention on what they were saying, he snorted at his friend’s words.

“Yes. I’m single and… looking for love. The real one. Aren’t we all?”

“And you really think you’re going to find it in Las Vegas?”

“If I have to find the love of my life, I’d rather make sure she is a bit on the wild side as well.”

“I hope you’ll find her…”

“Tommy. Call me Tommy.”

“Nice to meet you, Tommy. My name is Donna.”

Oliver choked on his beer, coughing violently as he swiftly turned his head and observed the woman. It had to be a coincidence. First of all, they were supposed to meet Donna Smoak at the restaurant, not the bar. And… she clearly didn’t look old enough to have a daughter of Felicity’s age. To be fair, she didn’t even look old enough to have a teenage daughter, period.

Yet, there was something familiar in her. Was it the way she was crossing her legs, or her laugh, Oliver didn’t know.

As Tommy was picking up her hand and placing a kiss on the back of her palm, earning yet another giggle, Oliver was texting Sara. He couldn’t exactly ask Felicity what her mother looked like without having to explain how Tommy was currently trying to woo a woman who shared the same name. 

*Please, let it be a gigantic coincidence.*

He tried to get Tommy’s attention as discreetly as possible, which included frantic moves with his hands and mouthing “abort, abort!”, only earning a confused look from his friend.

Horrified, Oliver witnessed him circling her shoulders with his arm, whispering in her ear just as he got a reply from Sara.

**Blonde, short. Nothing like you’d expect Felicity’s mother to be. Get ready for your jaw to hit the floor. Btw I’m running late. Will meet you at the restaurant.**

“Oh fuck,” he murmured, face-palming. Talk about good first impressions.

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Felicity hurried inside the bar, knowing she wasn’t exactly late, but clearly not wanting to be the last one again. She had the reputation of being always on time and it was something she really took pride in. And the fact that she was about to see Oliver had nothing to do with her impatience. Nope. Not at all. She quickly checked her outfit one last time in one of the big mirrors surrounding the bar. She was wearing a simple red dress, that covered most of her shoulders and chest area. The skirt was flowy, stopping right above her knees.

Her mother didn’t know about what was going on between them. As far as Donna Smoak was
concerned, Oliver Queen was her boss and a friend. She had seen first hand how destroyed Felicity had been because of Cooper and probably wouldn’t be as happy about her “hot one night stand” if she knew it had happened with her boss.

Spotting Oliver’s familiar figure sitting at the bar, she smiled, her pace faster. She was just a few steps from him when she realized he was looking at a couple, grimacing with discomfort.

She stopped dead in her tracks at the sight in front of her, her eyes growing to the size of saucers. “Mom?... Tommy?” She squeaked, horrified. Her mother and Tommy Merlyn were sitting together, chuckling, their faces leaning close to each other. Tommy’s hand was hovering over her mother’s lower back. *My eyes... My eyes!*

She winced in horror, barely noticing Oliver standing up next to her, muttering what seemed like an apology.

Tommy’s head snapped at her words, looking at her, a confused, dumbfounded expression on his face.

“Honey!” Her mother squealed, jumping up from her stool. “Oh that dress looks amazing on you.”

As she was engulfed in one of Donna’s typical mama bear hugs, she saw Tommy gaping, his eyes frowning as if he couldn’t comprehend the scene in front of him.

“Mom… Mom?” He repeated, his voice strangled. “She’s your mom?! You’re her daughter?!”

“Oh, are you two friends?” Donna asked, her mouth forming a perfect O.

“Not anymore,” Felicity gritted through her teeth. The fact that Tommy’s face was almost the same color as her dress didn’t soothe her anger at all.

“Baby, don’t be mad. He was just keeping me company. He has been such a gentleman!”

“Now, that would be a first,” Felicity hissed, glaring at Tommy who stepped closer to Oliver, still looking to be in shock.

Donna gasped. “Oh my! He isn’t… he’s not the man you spent the night with, is he?”

“No!” Felicity shouted, horrified. “Oh God… no!”

“Oh. Good. Cause that would have been awkward,” Donna giggled, waving off.

“Felicity…” Tommy squeaked, then cleared his throat. “Felicity, I swear I didn’t know and to my defense, Donna… can I still call you Donna?”

“Of course, dear!”

“Donna really doesn’t look like she could be your mother. I mean… she barely looks thirty,” Tommy tried to defend himself.

“Aww, you’re flattering me,” Donna playfully slapped his chest with her purse.

Felicity rolled her eyes in frustration as she tried to distract her mother’s attention. “Mom, this is Oliver-”

“Oliver Queen. My baby’s boss!”
Oliver pinched his lips, obviously holding back a smile as he shook her hand. “Very nice to meet you.”

Tommy shoved his hands in his pocket, still not meeting Felicity’s eyes. “Hum. Well. Can I offer you all a drink while we wait for-”

“Sara is running late,” Oliver cut him off. "She said she’d meet us at the restaurant.

As they all made their way to the restaurant, Oliver and Tommy leading the way, Donna leaned in. “My, my, my… aren’t they the definition of panty-dropping?”

“You have no idea.”

Ten minutes later, they were seated around a table near a giant aquarium. Donna had taken place between Tommy and Felicity, and Oliver was on Felicity’s left. The only empty chair was between both men, waiting for Sara. She showed up a few minutes after them, while they were still reading their menu in a somehow stiff silence. Felicity was still pissed at Tommy and her mother, Oliver nervous and uncomfortable and Tommy was sheepishly glancing at them every three seconds. Donna had tried to keep the conversation going, but had given up and imitated them, focusing her attention on her menu after a couple of minutes.

Soon enough, with Sara’s natural good humor, things went much more smoothly. Felicity couldn’t bring herself to take part in their animated conversations, though. She was sitting, her hands folded in her lap, smiling and nodding every now and then, playing the part. She knew her mother was flirty, and playful. Donna was the kind of woman who got a room’s attention as soon as she walked in. Felicity had always been much more reserved, usually happy to stay in the shadow of her flamboyant mother. But tonight, it had rubbed her the wrong way. Was it because it was, once again, the proof of how different both women were? How, no matter how hard Felicity tried, she’d never be as beautiful, as gorgeous as her mother? And since when did she even care?

Probably since you started developing feelings for a man who makes heads turn as well when he walks into a room, a taunting voice whispered in her head.

Sometime after their first course, Oliver’s reassuring hand landed on hers, causing her to quickly glance at him. He wasn’t looking at her, deep in talk with the rest of her dinner companions, but his thumb started to draw soft circles on the back of her hand as if he had sensed her discomfort, the table cloth hiding them. She gulped, feeling a knot in her throat, the gesture so simple, yet so intimate and caring, bringing tears to her eyes. Here she was, letting her insecurities creep back up, letting her doubts invade her brain. She thought she had laid those fears to rest years ago, but it seemed like she was more insecure than she believed.

“What do you think, honey? Isn’t it a great idea?” Her mother’s voice interrupted her thoughts and she found herself nodding automatically.

“… yeah. Yes.”

“That’s settled, then! Girls night!” Sara clapped in enthusiasm.

Wait, what?!

“But… didn’t you tell me you had that bachelorette party?” Felicity asked in despair, the idea of clubbing with her mother a bit too much for her. Not to mention, she had plans for the night. Plans
that involved a very naked Oliver. Not slipping dollar bills in thongs.

“I’m sure they won’t mind! I mean I barely get to see you, they’ll understand I’d rather spend the night with you.”

“Somebody said bachelorette party?” Tommy’s chimed in, his interest clearly piqued.

“Yes, one of my friends is getting married and -”

“Isn’t she from your club, mom?” Felicity chirped, a plan already forming in her head.

“Yes!”

“And… where exactly is this bachelorette party supposed to take place?” Tommy asked innocently.

“Oh, I don’t think you’d like that,” Donna waved him off, laughing.

“Oh, no, mom. Tommy loves bachelorette parties, especially if it involves bridesmaids from Vegas, right?”

“Sounds like my kind of party,” Tommy grinned, apparently happy to see Felicity talking to him again. “Vegas girls are the most fun, after all, aren’t they?”

“Well… yes,” Donna said hesitantly. “I mean… most of the bridesmaids are single and would love to have a charming young man like you to entertain them. But I’m not sure-”

“Mom, trust me. I remember your club. Tommy will love it,” Felicity said firmly.

“Alright, then… if you think so,” Donna eventually agreed. “But you can’t leave Oliver alone, can you? You have to go with Tommy. I mean, the more, the merrier, right?”

Oliver took a deep breath. “I’m not sure, Donna…”

“Oh, maybe you should go. Be Tommy’s wingman, you know,” Felicity nodded enthusiastically.

Tommy glanced at her with a pleased smile on his face. “Damn, girl. You rock.”

Oliver looked at her, frowning. “Are you sure?”

She discreetly tapped his hand in reassurance. “Positive. You should have fun, too. Really, it’s OK.”

Wincing, Oliver shook his head. “I was planning to get some work done tonight, anyway. I’m sure Tommy can handle all these ladies by himself.”

“Damn right I can,” Tommy grinned, raising his glass. “To Vegas and bachelorette parties!”

As she took a sip of water, she didn’t see her mother’s concerned eyes going from her to Oliver.

Donna gave Tommy the address and the time for the rendez-vous with her friends. They had rented one of those party buses and had originally planned to pick up Donna behind the Bellagio. She had called them right before dessert was served to inform them she wouldn’t come but that she was sending them a little “surprise”.

Felicity was smiling mischievously as she remembered the bounce in Tommy’s steps. He had looked like a kid about to step inside a candy store.
“Ok. Spill the beans, Smoak. You were waaaay too enthusiastic about this bachelorette party,” Sara snorted as they had just ordered their first drinks in a bar on the strip. Donna was currently paying a visit to the ladies’ room and they had found a small table in a corner.

“What? No,” she quickly denied. “I just felt like I was being too harsh on him.”

“So you were going to send the guy you… I don’t even know what to call the two of you, btw, but anyway… you were more than willing to send your man to a bachelorette party with a big smile on your face. I know there’s something fishy going on.”

Felicity smiled peacefully. “Oliver isn’t the same man… and if I don’t trust him then I don’t think there is a need to find a term to describe our relationship, don’t you think?”

Sara observed her quietly, then shrugged just as Donna was making her way back to them. “I guess you’re right.”

Her cellphone buzzed at that moment and she grinned when she saw a text from Oliver.

… I just got a very interesting text from Tommy. What kind of party is it?!

Biting her lips, she quickly replied:

A real bachelorette party with real Vegas girls. Why? Does he not approve?

You little vixen…

You should keep that in mind ;)

As if I could forget. Let me know as soon as you’re back?

I will.

I didn’t get the chance to tell you but you look stunning tonight. I’ll probably spend the evening imaging all the ways I could peel that dress off of you.

She grinned, quickly storing her phone back in her purse, knowing that starting a game of sexting with her mother nearby was not a good idea.

“Now I really wonder who is making you smile like that?” Her mother asked, winking at Sara.

“No one.” Felicity pinched her lips as she grabbed her drink, taking a sip.

“Sure, sure…” Sara sing-songed, earning an annoyed look from her.

Felicity swiftly moved the conversation to Sara’s future departure, knowing such a love story was more than enough to get her mother talking for hours. Her plan was to spend one hour, two maximum at the bar and then head back to the hotel. Unfortunately, her mother had something else in mind.

A mission, to be exact.
“What about this one?” Donna asked for what seemed the hundredth time, pointing to a young man, probably in his mid-twenties.

“Mom… I’m not interested!” Felicity groaned in frustration. Sara had abandoned them thirty minutes ago to hit the dancefloor.

“Oh, come on. You’re young, single, beautiful! Have some fun!”

“What exactly makes you think I don’t have fun?!”

“Felicity. I know you. You work all the time. Work, work, work, work. I mean it’s not surprising that you finally had sex the first time you’re away from…” Donna trailed off as Felicity gulped down the rest of her drink. She observed her daughter quietly for a few seconds. “Why did Oliver ask you if it was OK for him to spend the night partying?”

Felicity froze, her hand lingering over the table. Taking a deep breath, she put her glass down, turning to her mother. “He didn’t ask me, mom. He probably just wanted to make sure it wouldn’t be inappropriate.”

“Oh no. Oh, baby… no,” Donna sighed, her hand reaching her forehead. “It’s Oliver, right? There is something between the two of you!”

“Mom…” Felicity winced, knowing her mother had a creepy sixth sense when it came to lies.

“Felicity… you’re supposed to be smarter than that!”

“I didn’t exactly plan it!”

“After Cooper, I thought you had learned your lesson,” Donna huffed out a dry laugh.

“Oliver is nothing like Cooper, mom,” Felicity hissed, gripping her purse.

“He is still your boss! What happens when things go south? Who’s going to pay the price?!”

“You think I don’t know that?! I tried, mom. I really tried! And… I’m not the same girl anymore! I was young and naive, but I grew up from that!”

“I know, Oliver seems like a good guy but he does have a reputation and… I don’t want you to get hurt.” Donna gripped her hand between hers, her eyes softer.

Sighing, Felicity sat back on her chair. “He’s changed, mom. He really has. He’s nothing like the man he used to be.”

Donna pinched her lips, her eyes travelling on the dancefloor. “I hope you’re right, sweetie.”

“I am. He works hard, he puts his family and his friends first, he broke off his engagement months ago and has been single ever since then. He’s done nothing but prove to me how different he is.” Felicity’s voice wavered as she realized how true her words were.

Donna’s face softened. “He did seem very smitten.”

“… what?” Felicity blinked at the sudden change in her mother’s behavior.

“Oh, I saw the way he looked at you. You are more reserved, that’s why I wasn’t sure at first… but you’re still my baby girl. I will always worry about you.”
“Mom…” Felicity’s voice caught in her throat.

Caressing her daughter’s hair, Donna smiled at her reassuringly. “I can’t deny I’m glad to see you willing to take a risk. Just be careful, things could backfire really fast.”

“I know… I know. That’s what’s been holding me back for weeks. Nothing has even really happened yet between us.”

Donna raised her eyebrows. “How the hell did you manage to keep your hands off of an ass like that?!”

“Mom!” Felicity whined, hiding her face in embarrassment.

“Oh, come on. If a man like him was making heart eyes at me like Oliver does with you… I would have already climbed him like a tree!”

Felicity stifled a laugh behind her hand. “I am so not talking about that with you.”

“Alright, then. How long has it been going on?”

“I… I don’t know, really. I guess you could say we started being friends when we went on that road trip together a few months ago. Then… things shifted. When you and Sara couldn’t make it for my birthday, he cancelled his plans and spent the evening with me” she remembered, a soft smile growing on her lips “we started to talk more and more, we spent time together and one day I just realized… I was in love with him. I think I fell in love a little bit everyday until I couldn’t ignore it anymore. It’s always been little gestures. When he’d bring me coffee in the morning or my favorite pastry. When he’d let me steal his fries. Or when he’d rent a room at the Bellagio so I could see the fountains. He just… he somehow always notices when something is bothering me. I… I’ve never been a priority for a man but… Oliver always puts me first, mom.”

“He seems like a wonderful man,” Donna smiled, fishing a handkerchief from her purse and patting her eyes dry.

“He is.”

“Then go! Why are you spending the night with your mother?! Go have mind-blowing sex with your hunk!” Donna said, shoving Felicity's purse in her hands and forcing her to stand up.

Felicity laughed, grinning so wide her face was hurting. She was already several steps away when she suddenly turned back and rushed to her mother, hugging her tightly. “Thank you, mom.”

Donna held her close, kissing her cheek. “You just be careful. But love is not easy to find. It’s worth fighting for.”

Felicity nodded then, with one last kiss on her cheek, finally walked away. She didn’t know how they were going to make things work. She didn’t even know if they could adapt their relationship. But she wasn’t scared anymore. Together they would find a way, even if they had to hide it at first. She was done waiting.

Chapter End Notes

Sooooo... what did you think? A little bit of everything in the chapter. Tommy, Sara,
Donna, Oliver and Felicity. A bit of fluff, a bit of laugh, a bit of emotional talk with Mama, a bit of naughty thinking with Oliver...

Find me on twitter @Pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don’t be shy, come say hi ;)

Also, this chapter officially sends HGW over the 200,000 words. I created a monster O_O
Chapter Notes

Hi guys!
So sorry I am sooo behind in the comments you sent me. I'm trying to get back on schedule with the writing and figured you'd prefer a chapter.

Huge thank you, as always to pidanka (even though she didn't send me her notes for that one :/) and mysticaldetectivepanda who, therefore, had more work to do XD

Song: Love Runs Out - OneRepublic

PS: don't hate me...

PPS: HOLY COW 3000 KUDOS GUYS!!! THANK YOU SOOOOO MUCH!!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Love Runs Out"

I'll be your light, your match, your burning sun,
I'll be the bright, in black that's makin' you run.
And we'll feel alright, and we'll feel alright,
'Cause we'll work it out, yeah, we'll work it out.

    I'll be doin' this, if you had a doubt,
    'Til the love runs out, 'til the love runs out.

I'll be your ghost, your game, your stadium.
I'll be your fifty-thousand clapping like one.
And I feel alright, and I feel alright,
'Cause I worked it out, yeah, I worked it out.

    I'll be doin' this, if you had a doubt,
    'Til the love runs out, 'til the love runs out.

I got my mind made up, man, I can't let go.
I'm killing every second 'til it saves my soul.
(Ooh) I'll be running, (Ooh) I'll be running,
'Til the love runs out, 'til the love runs out.
And we'll start a fire, and we'll shut it down,
'Til the love runs out, 'til the love runs out.

    There's a maniac out in front of me.
    Got an angel on my shoulder, and Mestopheles.
    but mama raised me good, mama raised me right.
    Mama said, "Do what you want, say prayers at night,"
    And I'm saying them, 'cause I'm so devout.
Felicity Smoak was the kind of woman to think things through. Evaluate each possibility, each scenario. Measure the odds and probabilities. But once she had her mind set on something… she was like a dog with a bone.

She made her way out of the club in record time, not even stopping to let Sara know. Hailing a cab and getting back to the hotel didn’t diminish her resolution. She had made a decision and she was going to stick with it. Oliver was waiting in his hotel room for her call and the picturing him, bare chest, in his sweatpants made her salivate. The man was eye candy to say the least.

Tonight… I'm getting this hunk.

The woman next to her in the elevator let out an offended cry. Felicity snapped her head, her eyes growing wide as she realized she had talked out loud.
“Oh, no, no. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean… I mean I did say a hunk but… mine. Not…” she tried to explain, her eyes drifting to the woman’s companion, a sixty-something year old man with a beer belly, wearing sandals with white socks. She gulped, “not… yours.”

The man looked at her, readjusting his fanny pack and straightening his shoulders in a boost of confidence.

Felicity felt her cheeks burn with embarrassment as she tried to focus on the floor numbers on the digital display. She let out a deep sigh of relief when it reached her floor and burst out of the elevator as if Lucifer himself was behind her.

Before the doors closed behind her, she heard the man say, “See? I told you I had lost weight.”

“Richard, you did not lose weight.”

“I lost two and a half pounds!”

She stifled a giggle as she fished out her cellphone from her purse. Please don’t be asleep, please don’t be asleep…

She quickly sent Oliver a text, not bothering with a greeting - *My room in 10min?*

He replied just as fast with a simple “OK”. Her heart already beating faster, she didn’t waste any time as soon as she opened the door. Kicking off her shoes, she went to the bathroom, freshening up a bit, making sure there was no big drama going on with her make-up or outfit and changed her underwear into something a little more spicy. She wished she could have gone with one of her new sets of lingerie but unfortunately hadn’t had the chance to wash them first. A small pair of red cotton panties would have to do for now. She critically looked at her figure in the mirror, combing her hair with her fingers. Taking a deep breath, trying to soothe her nerves, she made sure nothing embarrassing was visible in her room. As she sat down on the bed, she checked her phone, biting her lips when she realized she still had a couple of minutes by herself. As the seconds went by, the doubts started to arise, eating up a bit of her confidence. She knew Oliver was a very experienced man - Hell, she had enjoyed a part of his experience already. She was no prude but clearly hadn’t had as many adventures as he had had in the bedroom department. Their two encounters had been completely unplanned, in the spur of the moment kind of thing, where her brain’s only job had basically been to shut down and let her body take control. Let Oliver take control. A part of her was actually annoyed by that, because she had never seen herself as the kind of woman content to let the man take charge. But she couldn’t deny that the outcome had been more than positive for her. Not to mention, she wasn’t sure she would have been so confident if he hadn’t been there to guide her in the first place. All in all, she had let the circumstances carry her. Now, on the other hand… her brain was in full control and she wasn’t sure it was a good idea anymore. What if she was boring? Or uncoordinated? Or clumsy? Oliver had been with dozens of women. Hot, sexy, experienced women. While Felicity had only bought her first lace bras a few hours earlier.

“What am I doing?” She asked herself out loud, her hands rubbing her temples. This was a bad idea. A terrible idea. It was like challenging Steffi Graf to a tennis match while her only experience in tennis was her three -compulsory- classes back in high school.

Unable to stay seated, she started pacing, twisting her hands, her insides now in a tight knot. She forced herself to take deep breaths, exhaling slowly. She was an adult. Oliver cared about her. There was no reason to think that something would go wrong. Besides, all first times were a bit awkward or disappointing… right? All she needed to do was relax and let things follow their natural course.

She yelped at the sound of Oliver knocking on her door. She froze, staring at said door like a deer
caught in the headlights. It was too late to back down now and truth be told, she wanted to spend the night with him. She wanted to feel him against her, feel their bodies finally together. If only she could shut her brain down, there was probably a very, very nice orgasm at the finish line for her.

Another knock startled her and she hurried to the door, opening it wide. Her breath caught in her throat when she saw Oliver, wearing a simple pair of jeans and a white t-shirt, barefoot. Why the view of his bare feet made her legs wobble, she had no idea. She had probably developed a weird fetish over her year of forced celibacy.

He was sporting a shit-eating grin as he stepped inside, engulfing her in his arms, his lips on hers. She heard the door being closed, felt the wall against her back as he cradled her face between his hands, tilting her head to deepen the kiss. There was a sense of urgency and despair in his kiss, like he had been waiting for that moment for way too long and she couldn’t deny it boosted her own desire. Her hands fistied the material of his shirt, her tongue chasing his and God… it felt so right kissing him like that. He pressed her against him, his arm bending underneath her ass, lifting her up. She followed his lead, her legs wrapping around his waist and bringing her face to his level. She let her fingers trail the line of his jaw as she sucked on his lower lip, God… it felt so right kissing him like that. He pressed her against him, his arm bending underneath her ass, lifting her up. She followed his lead, her legs wrapping around his waist and bringing her face to his level. She let her fingers trail the line of his jaw as she sucked on his lower lip, feeling his hands tightening on her ass in retaliation. Suddenly they were moving, depriving her of the reassuring wall in her back. She gripped his neck in reaction, earning a small chuckle.

“Trust me,” he whispered against her lips. “I’m not gonna let you fall.”

She opened her eyes, meeting his own, soft, reassuring. He walked to the bed but didn’t put her down. He sat with her still in his arms. She shifted slightly, unlocking her legs so her knees were on each side of his hips. The position allowed her to tower over him - even if it was just for an inch. She smirked, glad to feel taller than him for once.

“Don’t get used to it.” He quirked an eyebrow, clearly understanding the reason of her smugness.

“I like it. The view is different,” she chirped, her nails scratching the back of his neck.

He lowered his eyes to her cleavage. “I have to admit… I like the new view as well.”

She giggled, knowing fully well that her boobs were on the small side and couldn’t exactly qualify as “view”. Not to mention, her dress was more than covering the area.

Cradling his face, she lowered her lips to his, gently kissing them. His hands gripped her hips tightly, pulling her flush against him. She tilted his head, deepening the kiss, savoring the taste of his mouth, his tongue playing leisurely with hers. The only sound in the room was their ragged breaths, and they could hear the noise coming from the streets. The animated screams and honks were in direct opposition to the quiet bubble they were creating around them. She shifted, pressing herself closer to him, her mouth leaving his to pepper small kisses along his jaw. His chin was prickly, tingling her already sensitive lips. She heard a small moan escaping him when she reached his ear and playfully nibbled on the lobe. He smelt so good, a mix of his usual soap and something uniquely him that was enough to bring her nerves to life. He stayed still for a moment, letting her discover the places that would make his heart beat faster, but she would always come back to his lips, tasting them, biting them until he let her in and every time felt like she was discovering him for the first time all over again.

One of his hands left her hips, reaching out for the top of her dress, lowering the strap on her shoulder as far as he could. He didn’t waste any time, tracing open kisses on the skin, paying extra attention to the small bruises he had already left there, soothing the dull ache with his tongue. She shivered, goosebumps erupting across her skin as the scruff on his jaw started to rasp the crook of her neck. Moaning, she let her hand travel down his back, feeling the hard muscles underneath his shirt.
She gripped his neck, her nails scratching him as she surrendered to the sensation of his mouth over her neck. He groaned in approval and she let out a small laugh as she remembered his words by the pool. She purposefully let her nails scratch his skull, the action only making him pull her flush against him in retaliation. His hand lingered on the back of her dress, over the small zipper at the top. Suddenly, she remembered the lacy bra she had tried on that afternoon, regretting her choice of the simple white cotton one she was wearing.

She must have tensed somehow because Oliver paused, raising his head to look at her.

“You OK?” He murmured, his voice deep, his eyes darker than usual as he licked his lips.

She nodded with a small smile, willing herself to relax and enjoy the moment. This was weeks in the making and she wanted everything that was about to happen. She wanted him. Leaning, she pressed a soft kiss on his lips, breathing him in. He rubbed soothing circles over her back, once again letting her take the lead. She felt her heart swell up at the thought, knowing he was doing everything to make sure she felt comfortable and at ease with him. Oliver Queen might have been the biggest manwhore she had ever met, but he also was the most respectful partner she had ever been with. There was something strangely exhilarating at the thought of having a man like Oliver, willing to follow her lead. She knew he was holding back, and his natural behavior would dictate him to be in charge. She had witnessed it first hand in the archive room, after all. He was more than experienced and confident in that department.

Something you’re not - a sneaky little voice whispered inside her head. She pushed it back, focusing on everything that was him. His taste, his smell, the way his body felt against hers, the beating of his heart. She leaned back, sitting fully on his thighs, feeling the hard muscles underneath her ass. Their lips parting, she let her hands travel over his torso, feeling suddenly very small compared to him. Wherever she touched him, he would tense then relax under her touch, his hands caressing her sides, hovering near her breasts. His thumbs grazed her chest, making her arch her back, seeking more contact. The movement allowed her to move up on his lap, creating a delicious friction between her legs. The sensation of the rough fabric of his jeans against the naked skin of her inner thighs was... exhilarating. Whimpering, her arousal peeking up once more, she latched onto his mouth, her hands scrambling for the hem of his shirt, eager to touch his skin. She traced the muscles of his abs underneath the fabric, biting his lower lip in her impatience. He chuckled, the sound reverberating through his chest as he palmed one of her breasts, his thumb finding the already erect nipple through the layers of fabric, teasing it mercilessly. Her breath caught in her throat at the flash of pure pleasure it sent down her core, her fingers digging into the flesh of his stomach, making him hiss.

“You really are a little vixen aren’t you?” He murmured against her lips.

“I’m-” she started to apologize, feeling her cheeks flush in embarrassment. How could she lack any basic control over her own hands was beyond her.

“Don’t even think about it,” he warned her, his stern voice at odds with the wide grin on his face. He pecked her lips several times, retreating when she tried to deepen the kiss, his eyes soft and playful. “I love it. I fucking love it.”

She smiled shyly, her fingers now soothing the skin she had scratched too vigorously. Keeping his eyes on her, Oliver reached for the back of her dress, searching for the small zipper. Despite her best efforts, despite how much she wanted it, she couldn’t help but stiffen once more. Mentally cursing herself and her stupid, stupid doubts, she gulped, her eyes leaving his and landing on a small booklet someone had given her on the street. She had thrown it on her bed earlier in the afternoon, not thinking twice about it. It was quite customary in Vegas but the sight of women in bikinis advertising for a pool party was enough to remind her that this was the Vegas Oliver was used to. This was the
kind of woman Oliver was used to. Not bubbly assistant with glasses.

She barely felt his hands lowering on her hips, his mouth pressing a small kiss on her cheek.

“... what’s wrong?” He whispered in her ear.

She groaned, resting her forehead against his shoulder for a second. She had ruined the mood. She disentangled herself, her legs wobbly as she stepped away from him, avoiding his eyes. She straightened her dress, soothing invisible wrinkles and ended up crossing her arms over her chest, looking everywhere but at him, feeling tears burning her eyes. She had the man of her dreams at her disposal, in a gorgeous suite and here she was, twisting her hands, insecure. Why couldn’t she just shut her brains up? Switch them off, let her enjoy her night? Why was she creating all those doubts, while Oliver had been nothing but encouraging and focused on her?

“What’s wrong?” he pleaded softly. “What is going on? Have I done something…?”

She huffed out a dry laugh. “No. God, no. You did nothing wrong. It’s just… my stupid brain won’t shut up.”

Oliver frowned, reaching out for her but suspending his movement once he saw her hesitation. “Tell me, then. What is going on?”

Felicity started pacing, her hands fidgeting nervously. “I… I’m just not… I mean… You are you. And I am me.”

He stared at her for a second, his mouth slightly open, obviously trying to make sense of her words and… obviously failing.

“What I mean is that you’re Oliver Queen and I’m just… I’m just Felicity Smoak and you’ve dated all these gorgeous women, actually scratch that, I know for sure you didn’t date a lot of them. Not that we are dating! We are not. Oh my God… we are not even dating and I was planning on a wild night of sex with you. Maybe we should have talked about that first although to be fair there isn’t much to talk about, we can’t exactly officially date each other while I work under you,” she rambled in one breath, then paused after her last words, frowning. “When I say under you… I don’t mean it as an inappropriate metaphor for the missionary position, by the way.”

“I’m sorry but you kinda lost me after the wild night of sex,” Oliver smiled, trying to lighten the mood.

She groaned, squeezing her eyes shut, knowing how ridiculous she sounded yet unable to get her mind off of it.

Oliver rested his elbows on his knees, sighing. “Felicity…”

“I know. I know, Oliver. I’m stupid,” she winced.

“That is probably the very last word I would use to describe you,” he laughed lightly, shaking his head. “I just wanted to say that… I know I have a… busy past. But believe me when I say that when I’m with you… you are the only one in my mind. I want you, I want to be with you. Not because you’re hot…” he trailed off, his heated eyes traveling down her figure, “although believe me… you are. Or because you’re flirty… ‘cause you don’t need to be flirty with me to get me all worked up.”

He reached out for her hand, holding it between his. “But because I love being with you. You make me laugh, you make me smile, you challenge me. Sometimes I don’t even know how I feel because it’s just so many different emotions at the same time. You tease me, you infuriate me, you make me
feel about a hundred different other things I never felt with anyone before you.”

She let out a trembling smile at his words.

He pressed a soft kiss to the back of her hand. “Please, tell me if there’s anything bothering you.”

“I’m not wearing lingerie,” she finally blurted out, cursing herself.

His eyebrows almost reached his hairline. “You’re not…”

“Wearing lingerie,” she continued, grimacing. “I didn’t exactly plan… and to be fair I’ve never really been a lingerie kind of girl but I did buy some this afternoon and now I realize that I’m wearing plain underwear and you’re used to…”

He stared at her. “You mean you got nervous because you’re not wearing lingerie?”

“Well, to be fair, your speech made me feel better about your past, too. But… yes. I know I’m being silly but I… I don’t want you to be bored.” Lowering her eyes, she added in a whisper, “with me.”

“Bored?” He repeated, his eyes wide. “Bored?! Felicity… you made me come in my pants this very morning while you were still wearing pajamas! Actually, now that I think of it, I hope you’re wearing granny panties, that might help me last long enough for us to eventually get to the main course this time.”

She grinned, biting her lips to keep her laugh at bay. He smiled at her, stroking the palm of the hand he was still holding.

“So… are we good about the lack of lingerie, now?”

Felicity nodded as he pulled her between his open legs.

“Good. Because I have to confess... I’m not wearing any either.”

She giggled, the sound muffled when she leaned in to kiss him. He was smiling just as much as she was and it made their kiss much more sloppy than usual. She sobered up when she felt his hand slowly disappearing underneath her skirt, his warm palm stroking the tender skin, eventually resting right below her ass. She squirmed, craving his touch, and he obliged, slowly circling the back of her thigh, his fingers grazing the fabric of her panties on the way. Her breathing stopped once he started to caress the inside of her upper leg, his index finger tracing her outer lips. Her arousal reached another level, their lips parting. Their eyes locked, heated, dark… full of pure, unadulterated lust. It was so intimate to be so close to him, to stare into his eyes and have him staring back with his hand between her legs while she was still fully dressed. Her breathing quickened, matching his own. He was gazing at her with a hunger she had never seen before and she felt captivated by his look, unable to look away. She could feel the warmth of his hand between her thighs, his fingers barely touching her but still maintaining a fluttering contact. Keeping his eyes on her, Oliver slowly moved his hand, his finger stroking her through her panties. His touch was light, delicate, and so, so teasing. Her hands stiffened around the back of his skull when he pressed right against her clit, making her eyes flutter. She knew she was already wet, but the small touch had her literally weeping with need. Oliver must have felt it too because he groaned and suddenly stood up, his hands reaching for her waist.

The brutal lack of contact made her moan in frustration. She didn’t even have the time to voice her protestations before he turned around, lowering them on the bed, landing above her.

“Oomf,” she breathed, dizzy, staring at the ceiling. She watched him as he kneeled back between her
legs, getting rid of his shirt. She sat up as well, her hands already caressing his skin, peppering kisses over his chest. She couldn’t help but notice the already obvious bulge in his pants and couldn’t keep her hands from reaching, palpating him through the fabric, marvelling at how hard he already was. He growled, his eyes closing in pleasure as she caressed his erection, salivating at the idea of what was to come. Suddenly, she couldn’t wait anymore. He was just as ready for her as she was for him and the thought was enough to send her into a frenzy. She wanted him badly, wanted to feel him between her legs, pushing in, pressing his cock inside of her, spreading her. She didn’t even notice him reaching for the zipper at the back of her dress, only coming to her senses when he pushed her back on the bed, his mouth hovering on her breasts, still covered by her bra. He lowered a cup, his tongue circling the areola, lapping her nipple once, twice before sucking on it. The strangled cry that left her mouth seemed to encourage him as his hand reached for the other breast, lowering the cup as well and palming it, massaging the small mound of flesh. He pressed his crotch between her thighs, her legs falling open to accommodate him. The hand that was not busy reached for her knee, sliding beneath the skirt of her dress. His fingers slipped underneath the hem of her panties, caressing the hyper sensitive skin at the apex of her thigh. Her heart was beating so hard she was sure he could hear it. It was like a thumping noise in her ears, reaching through her, calling her name from afar.

... calling my name?

As if a bucket of ice cold water had been dropped on her, she realized that the sound wasn’t her own heart but someone knocking on the door. Oliver probably sensed something was off because he raised his head, looking at her questioningly. The sight of him, his pupils dilated, his mouth humid from his ministrations was enough to make her forget all about the annoying noise. She was about to kiss him when a loud bang followed by what sounded like a cow in labor wailing her name froze them in place, their mouths touching.

“Miss Fecil… Miss Feli… Miss Felicily!” A muffled voice reached them through the door. They both shared a look then scrambled to their feet when the loud bang resumed. “Miss Feficily, you open that damn door right now!”

“Is that…” she asked Oliver as he helped her zip her dress back.

“Tommy. Yup.” Oliver frowned, his jaw tight, breathing through his nose and probably coming up with the best way to discreetly murder his best friend and hide the body.

Oliver went to open the door, knowing that Tommy would only alert the hotel staff and having to deal with this kind of situation would probably only make things worse.

“Tommy, now is really not the time,” he gritted through his teeth.

Felicity followed him, staying hidden behind Oliver’s back.

Tommy was standing on the threshold, his shirt hanging loosely from his pants, his tie now circling his forehead. He was covered in lipstick marks and was glaring at her, leaning heavily on the doorframe.

“You… you!!” He pointed his finger at her.

“Me?” Felicity shifted on her feet uncomfortably, peeking from above Oliver’s shoulder.

“Do you have any idea what they did to me?” Tommy slurred as he stepped inside the room, pushing Oliver aside. He made it to one of the beds, stumbling on it.

“You told me it was a bachelorette party,” he whined. “How could you play with my emotions like
Felicity pinched her lips, glancing at Oliver who was putting his shirt back on, a frowny look upon his face. Yep… tonight definitely wasn’t going according to either of their plans.

“Technically, it was a bachelorette party.”

Tommy raised his head from the pillow, glaring at her.

“It was!” Felicity defended herself as she went to grab one of Tommy’s feet, trying to pull him off of the bed.

“What… what are you doing?” Oliver asked her.

“I’m trying to get your best friend out of my bed so we can have sex,” she grunted, banding her muscles. Despite her best efforts, Tommy didn’t bulge. “Feel free to help me any moment, by the way.”

“He’s already asleep,” Oliver stated calmly, leaning on the wall.

“What… what?!” She exclaimed, turning around abruptly. Sure enough, Tommy Merlyn was laying down, his arms spread, mouth slightly hanging, fast asleep.

“But… how did he fall asleep that fast?!”

“When Tommy is drunk, all he needs is to lay down somewhere and he is out in about two seconds,” Oliver shrugged. “Although he usually prefers the bathtub.”

Felicity sat down on the foot of the bed, her shoulders slumping. “I can’t believe I did this to myself.”

“I’m gonna have to ask again: what kind of bachelorette party was it exactly?”

She blushed, picking at a loose thread on the comforter. “... Just a woman getting married and her friends making sure she’s having a good night? Which is actually the definition of a bachelorette party, I’ll have you know.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows, not fooled for one second. “Alright then… I guess we’re gonna have to take this to my room.”

Pouting, Felicity stood up, reaching for his hand. “I won’t have spent one night in my suite. My very first suite.”

Oliver chuckled, pulling her into his arms, kissing her forehead. “I’m sorry. Next time, I promise we won’t even leave the suite.”

“Next time?” She repeated hopefully, her smile already back.

“Well… not necessarily here, if you don’t want to. We could go somewhere else. I don’t really care. I think I’d like to have you all to myself for a few days, the place doesn’t matter to me,” he murmured.

“I think I’d really like that too,” she grinned, her eyes twinkling.

As she reached on her toes to kiss him, Tommy coughed, attracting their attention. He was still sprawled out, oblivious to the world, his tie covering most of his eyes. Felicity nervously bit her lip, suddenly uncomfortable at the idea of leaving him alone. What if he got sick during the night? Or
what if he fell into a coma? They had no way of knowing how drunk he really was. Mental pictures of Tommy being carried out of the room on a stretcher flashed through her mind. She would never forgive herself if something happened to him because of what she had thought would be a harmless prank.

Oliver pulled her along with him as he walked to the door. She resisted, holding him back behind. As he turned around, his eyes curious, she explained, “I’m not sure leaving him alone is a good idea” she mumbled sheepishly.

“You want to stay here? With him?” Oliver asked, raising his eyebrows.

“It’s not really something I want,” she explained, twisting her hands. “But what if he gets sick? I’ve heard so many stories of people choking and…”

“Felicity, he’s not gonna choke.”

“You don’t know that!”

“Tommy Merlyn’s body is more used to being inebriated than sober,” he deadpanned, pulling on her hand once more. “He’ll be fine.”

“Oliver what if he’s not? What if something happens and it’s somehow because of me?”

Oliver sighed, putting his hands on his waist. “We’re never gonna have sex, are we?”

She grimaced. “Tell me, honestly, that there is zero chance of anything bad happening. He is completely hammered.”

Oliver opened his mouth, then closed it. “... OK there might have been that one time when-”

“Ha! See! It is possible!” She hissed, snapping her fingers.

Groaning, he passed a tired hand over his face. “You won. Let me just change my clothes. You can go sleep in my room, I’ll stay with him.”

Felicity pouted. “I can stay, too. I mean there’s another bed.”

Oliver glared at her. “Fine. But you keep your hands to yourself.”

She gasped. “Like I would try to take advantage of you?!”

“Like we both know how things can escalate between us.” He winked at her, leaning to quickly peck her lips and lightly slapping her ass. “Now look after Mr Cockblocker, I’ll be right back.”

Sighing, she sat on the other bed, crossing her legs. The night was going to be very different from what she had thought.

**

When Oliver walked back inside Felicity’s room, she was resting against the pillows, watching TV. The sound was very low, probably too low for her to hear and definitely too low to cover Tommy’s snores.
“He started snoring about three seconds after you closed that door,” she welcomed him back.

He huffed out a laugh as he dropped his key, his phone and all the food he had found in his mini-bar on the desk.

“Typical.”

Felicity stood up, examining what he had brought. “Are you planning some kind of a pj party?”

“I figured we could put the sofa in front of the windows. We have the perfect view over the fountains,” he shrugged. “And I know you like your snacks.”

She smiled, stretching her arms over her head. “That sounds like a perfect plan B if you ask me. I’m just going to take a shower and put something comfortable on.”

“Don’t do it on my account. I like that dress,” he smirked, his hand hovering over the hem. “It’s very accessible.”

She slapped his hand away. “Which is exactly why I need to change.”

While she was in the bathroom, Oliver turned the sofa around, facing the windows. He picked up some pillows from both beds, as well as the comforter and a blanket, arranging some kind of cocoon. Taking advantage of the small kitchenette, he grabbed a couple of glasses, as well as the snacks and drinks available. He was busy reading the labels on the food when the door opened. He gulped when he saw Felicity, barefoot, wearing another of her tiny sleep shorts and a tank top. As she stepped inside the bedroom, the AC made her shiver and he clearly saw her nipples hardening underneath the fabric. Oh, honey… you’re not helping. You’re not helping at all.

“It’s actually more chilly than I thought,” she frowned, oblivious as to where his thoughts had stranded.

He quickly shrugged his hoodie off, handing it to her. Mostly so she would be warm but also so he wouldn’t be too tempted, if he was honest with himself.

She smiled gratefully, moaning as the warmth of his clothes engulfed her. As he went back to reading the label of a sugar cookie - double checking to see if there was any trace of nuts- he saw her, from the corner of his eyes, discreetly sniffing the fabric. He couldn’t help the smug smile that took over his face at the sight of his girl wearing his clothes. And obviously enjoying it.

“Why are you smiling?” She asked him as she fished out a pair of socks from her suitcase.

“No reason,” he shook his head. “Just you in my hoodie. You seem tiny.”

“It’s because you’re gigantic,” she giggled.

“Flattering my ego, again, Miss Smoak?”

“As if you need it, Mister Queen,” she smiled cheekily as she walked to him, eyeing the arrangements he had made. “Oh wow… that is pretty romantic.”

Oliver felt his cheeks heating up when he took a look at the small scene he had created. The curtains were wide opened, offering them a perfect view over the strip and the lake. He had turned a small bedside lamp on, throwing one of Felicity’s t-shirts over it so the light was dimmed, offering an
intimate atmosphere. There were pillows everywhere, and the comforter was sprawled on the floor. He didn’t want her to sit on the carpeted floor, fearing it might be irritating for her skin. He had noticed how her skin had reacted to his beard, and figured the silky fabric would be more comfortable for her.

He was about to reply when Tommy let out a loud snore, followed by an intelligible mumble about a pole bar.

“So much for the romantic part, I guess?” He sheepishly asked to Felicity who muffled her laugh behind her hands. He sat down on the floor, his back resting against the sofa, his hand reaching for her. She joined him, shifting against him until she found the right spot. He threw a blanket over them, his arm resting over her shoulders, fingers stroking her arm. She was slightly stiff at first but eventually relaxed in his arms, her head snuggling his shoulder.

“When are we leaving tomorrow?” She eventually asked, breaking the silence that had taken over.

“Whenever we want to. I figured we could have brunch and get by the pool or hit the casinos again, if you want to. We need to leave by 2PM, though.”

“Does someone need the jet at the company?”

He shook his head. “I’m supposed to meet with Thea. We’re taking the Gambit for a small trip for the last time.”

“That was your father’s boat, right?”

“Yup. None of us actually really like sailing, mind you. But we have good memories of that boat. Mom fears we might regret it if we don’t properly say goodbye.”

Felicity stayed silent for a while. “I think she’s right. It’s something that you and Thea should do. Together, I mean.”

“We haven’t really done anything together ever since dad died,” he said thoughtfully. “I mean we talk, but it’s just not the same anymore. She doesn’t feel like my little sister anymore. She grew up suddenly.”

“She’ll always be your little sister, even when she has grand-children. Maybe sharing that experience will just show you a different way to be siblings. More as equals, now.”

“I hope so. I don’t want her to feel left out but I just don’t really know how to get to her anymore. It was much easier when all I had to do was watch a Disney movie with her. Now she’s talking about make-up and… boys,” he shuddered.

Felicity chuckled. “Well it was bound to happen. Although it could have been girls and not boys.”

“Honestly… I might have preferred. I know how boys her age are. I was one and…” he winced, remembering the douchebag he had been at that age, going through girls, only seeing them as notches on his bedpost.

“Then that’s your new role.”

He frowned, not understanding what she meant. “My new role?”

“Yes. As big brother. It used to be Disney movies and probably taking care of ouchies. Now it’s to show her how a girl deserves to be treated. Your dad is gone, he can’t do that anymore. But you’re
“I’m not sure I’m a great role-model,” he said, his throat suddenly tight. The way he had treated women in the past, including his ex-fiancée -even if that engagement had lasted about twenty minutes- was the opposite of respectful. Now, more than ever, he felt the absence of his father. Sure enough, Robert had been almost as much of a player but Thea had always been his little princess. Now the responsibility of being a good role-model for what she was supposed to expect from love was weighing heavily on his shoulders. Screwing up his life was one thing, setting a bad example for his baby sister was something else.

Felicity softly patted his stomach, raising her head to face him. Her eyes were tender, her smile understanding. “You probably were not in the past. But believe me… the man you are right now is more than honorable.” She pressed a kiss on his jaw, adding, “and also really hot, but that’s not something your sister should be too aware of.”

He laughed, shaking his head. Willing to lighten the mood, he reached behind her, grabbing a pack of skittles. Ripping the bag open with his teeth, he poured a generous amount of candy in Felicity’s waiting hands.

Popping a few in his mouth, he asked. “What was it like, growing up without siblings?”

“Lonely,” she sighed. “It was just my mother and I, you know. She was working as much as possible so I was often alone. Not that I had that many friends anyway. I was a few classes ahead and the other kids thought I was a weirdo.”

He gazed at her, his fingers brushing a few strands of hair on her forehead. He could see she was lost in her memories by the way her eyes were unfocused, staring into emptiness. There was a sadness he didn’t like to see on her face.

“There must have been good sides, too,” he nudged her.

“Well. When my dad was still there, it was easier. He was like me, you know. I built my first computer stealing some of his things.”

“You already had a dark side, I see,” he grinned.

“I guess so. He left one month later. I always thought it was because of what I did,” she whispered, her hand unconsciously gripping his shirt.

Oliver gulped, knowing how much it had to cost her to voice that out loud. He gently pulled her against him, circling her with his arms, his head resting over hers.

“I know now that it wasn’t because of that,” she eventually said, “but it took me years to understand it wasn’t because of me. He wasn’t a good guy, but I only found out about that when I turned 18.”

“What do you mean, not a good guy?” Oliver asked, nervous about her answer. What if her father had been a violent man?

“He did some illegal things, tracking people, creating viruses. Cyber-criminality,” she shrugged. “He left because he knew there was a good chance he’d end up in jail. He disappeared, probably changed his identity.”

“Wow. And I thought my relationship with my father was complicated.”

She snorted, picking a few skittles, shoving them in her mouth. “I still think you make a very good
They stayed silent for a while as a new show was starting across the window. His hand slipped underneath the hoodie, leisurely stroking the skin of her lower back. She melted into his arms, snuggling into his chest, her head resting over his heart.

Once the fountains had died once more, she asked him quietly, “what is going to happen when we go back to the office?”

Her voice was so small that he barely understood her words. He breathed in deeply, knowing their little bubble of happiness would disappear as soon as they got back to their lives. Despite that, he didn’t want to let go. He was there, with her in his arms and there was no other place he’d rather be. Even with his best friend currently playing a comatose third wheel. It wasn’t enough to make everything go away but he wasn’t about to give up without a fight.

“I don’t know. I just can’t see myself not being with you anymore,” he finally answered.

“Same.”

“Then… we’ll be discreet for now?” He asked, trying not to sound too hopeful.

“No funny business at the office,” she stated firmly.

“Not even a bit of smooching?”

She paused and he couldn’t help but grin at the thought that she was struggling just as much as he was with the idea of keeping their distances with each other.

“No smooching,” she eventually said weakly. “I mean… maybe a tiny bit. But in the archive room.”

“I really like that archive room.”

“Me too,” she sighed.

“I seem to remember that,” he noted smugly, his hand stroking her hair.

“You’re never gonna let that one go, are you?” She laughed.

“Nope. That was honestly one of the hottest things I’ve ever done in my life.”

Felicity slowly raised her head, perking an eyebrow. “Yeah, right.”

“Seriously!” He held his hand in defense under her glare. “I mean… I had been fantasizing about you for weeks in my sleep and… maybe a couple of very explicit daydreams as well, to be honest, and then you just…”

“I just…?”

He licked his lips. “Felicity do you have any idea how hot it was to see you using a part of my body like that? To know that I turned you on so much that I didn’t even need to do anything to get you off?”

He nuzzled her neck, his lips tracing the lightest of kiss underneath her ear. “And the way you moaned my name, when you lost control and bit me… Fuck. I never wanted anyone that much.”

“But you didn’t… I mean you left and didn’t want to…” she protested weakly as she gripped his
“What exactly do you think I did in that bathroom?” He whispered in her ear. He felt the tremor that went through her, sensed how her breath caught in her throat and he mentally cursed himself. No funny business. No funny business.

He cleared his throat, trying to get a grip over himself. “I just wanted to please you more than I needed to find relief. But make no mistake… the slightest brush of your fingers and I would have made a mess of those pants, too.”

She observed him silently, her eyes darkening as her voice lowered, “tell me more about those daydreams…”

“Oh no. You wouldn’t be able to keep your hands to yourself,” he chuckled.

She gasped, her hand lightly slapping his stomach. “As if I was the one with straying hands right now!”

Oliver smirked, his nails lightly scratching the skin of her lower back underneath the hoodie. “I’ll tell you all about them when my best friend isn’t sleeping in the same room, how about that?”

Grinning, she nodded. “I’ll hold you to it.”

“I’m sure you will,” he whispered leaning in, letting his lips brush against hers. His hand reached out, cradling her face, thumb brushing across her jaw. Her eyes fluttered, shutting as he licked her lower lip, asking for entrance. Their kiss was languid, their tongues dancing together at a leisurely pace. He would never be able to tell how long they stayed like that, sitting against the sofa on the floor of her suite, sharing slow kisses, their noses nuzzling whenever they would come up for air. The outside music was muffled, but enough to drown their sighs as well as the little moans that escaped them every now and then. They didn’t let things escalate, pausing whenever one of them got carried away, sharing a sheepish smile, gazing at each other until one would cave in and seek another kiss.

Eventually, Felicity’s eyes started to shut more and more frequently, her head growing heavier on his shoulder until her lips would barely move against his. He dropped one final peck on her nose, earning a tired grin from her and the sight was so perfect, so peaceful that he couldn’t tear his eyes off of her. It felt so right to have her in his arms, she fitted so perfectly against him that he just didn’t want the night to end. His plans had been completely ruined, yet the thought of the condoms still hidden in a pocket of his jeans only brought a peaceful smile on his face. He was perfectly content spending the night holding her, surrounded by her warmth, her breath caressing his skin.

I really am turning into a gigantic sap.

Felicity stirred, mumbling about going to bed but he stopped her, holding her back, his hand stroking her hair.

“Shhh… I’ve got you,” he murmured, softly kissing her forehead.

She relaxed against his touch, her breathing slowing down. He sensed her body slumbering against his as she drifted to sleep.

He stayed sat a little longer, letting her use him as a giant pillow, watching the fountains, listening to her regular breathing, his hand lazily combing through her hair, utterly at peace.
He finally moved, shifting as delicately as possible. He closed the curtains and picked her up, carrying her to the second bed. He threw a quick glance at Tommy who was still snoring softly, out of this world. As soon as he laid Felicity down, she turned on her side and he slipped under the sheets behind her, his arm circling her waist. With a deep sigh, he burrowed his face into her hair, breathing her in, the smell of green apples invading his senses and the familiarity of it made his heart swell.

It felt like coming home.

Chapter End Notes

I know. I know.

It's frustrating.

I just honestly, really want them to have sex once every issue is solved. So there is zero bitterness or regret. I think you can assume what is the last issue at play here, and you'll see that next chapter will have Felicity making a decision ;)

Also, it felt realistic to me to have Felicity nervous and doubting: I wanted to address that now so that it's out of the way when "it" happens.

That being said, I'd love to hear your thoughts, even if you're cursing me (or Tommy. Although I have a reason to have Tommy crashing them... a little scene I've had in mind for a while and that you'll read about in the next chapter ;))

Twitter @PimsiePim
Tumblr Pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Hi guys!
Thank you for all of your comments, and kudos, and feedback, and asks, and everything really. It means a lot to me. I know some of you are... frustrated? with the pace of the story. The vast majority is more than fine with it and like they say... you can't always please everyone ;)

Just hang in there, it won't be that long anymore.

Special thanks to pidanka and mysticadetectivepanda. I couldn't do this without these two.

Song: Feels Like Home - Chantal Kreviazuk

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Feels Like Home"

Somethin' in your eyes, makes me wanna lose myself
   Makes me wanna lose myself, in your arms
There's somethin' in your voice, makes my heart beat fast
   Hope this feeling lasts, the rest of my life

   If you knew how lonely my life has been
      And how long I've been so alone
And if you knew how I wanted someone to come along
   And change my life the way you've done

   It feels like home to me, it feels like home to me
It feels like I'm all the way back where I come from
   It feels like home to me, it feels like home to me
It feels like I'm all the way back where I belong

   A window breaks, down a long, dark street
      And a siren wails in the night
But I'm alright, 'cause I have you here with me
   And I can almost see, through the dark there is light

Well, if you knew how much this moment means to me
   And how long I've waited for your touch
And if you knew how happy you are making me
   I never thought that I'd love anyone so much

   It feels like home to me, it feels like home to me
The room was still dark when Felicity woke up. It took her a few minutes to fully wake up and it was mostly due to the utter content she was feeling. She was so warm, so comfortable that her brain seemed to refuse to switch on. She eventually gave up, content to stay in sleep limbo for a little longer. Her legs were entwined with Oliver’s and they were obviously in a bed. The last thing she could remember was Oliver kissing her nose by the sofa. He must have carried her to bed after she had fallen asleep on him, joining her underneath the sheets.

She could feel his quiet, deep breathing on the back of her neck, playing with the few strands of hair that were lingering on her shoulder. His arm was around her waist, holding her tight against him. She absent-mindedly caressed it, stroking his skin with her fingertips, her eyes still closed as she savored the quiet intimacy of the moment. The only sound apart from Oliver’s soft breathing was the humming of the AC. There was no sound coming from the outside, which was not surprising for a Sunday morning on the Strip.

It was the second morning in a row that she had woken up in Oliver’s arms. The third one ever, counting the one in Ivy Town, even if the circumstances had been completely different. To say that it was something she could get used to was putting it mildly. They were supposed to leave later and for the first time in her life… she was dreading leaving Vegas behind. Yet, she knew it couldn’t last and they had to get back to the real world, where they would have to hide, to pretend. Hopefully not for long, she thought with a smile. And to be totally fair, the whole secret relationship aspect had some perks. Teasing glances, secret kisses and stolen moments were a little something mysterious and exciting.

Oliver had told her he was going to spend the next couple of days with Thea, which would probably give her a bit of time by herself. She needed a plan, and was already forming one in her head. If this weekend had proved something to her, it was that Oliver was just as all in as she was. It was time to take a stand. And it started with maybe trying to find another job. She had been scared of change, scared of leaving him. A tiny little part of her had been thinking that once they’d be away from each other, their bond would disappear. Or Oliver would fall back into his old habits.

Her conversation with her mother had opened her eyes. Oliver had changed. Tremendously. The man would never do anything that could possibly hurt her. Of that she was confident. So it was time to act on that trust, and jump. Working for him was safe but where would that lead them eventually? What she had told Sara about trust was true. If she didn’t trust him then… what was the point of even being with him? Especially when Oliver had never done anything to her that could even make her suspect he would repeat the same pattern of his old relationships.

He wanted to be with her.

She wanted to be with him.

Grinning, she finally opened her eyes, glancing at his arm. He was still holding her tight against him, still obviously fast asleep. The room was dark but she still could make out the outlines of his arm. She lightly stroked his hand, marveling at how big it was compared to hers. His fingers grazed back and she froze, wondering if she had woken him up. His breathing was still the same and after a minute, she relaxed back. Reluctant to disrupt his peaceful sleep, she carefully lifted his arm, slowly slipping away from his embrace. He mumbled in his sleep, reaching for her pillow, burying his face
in it as he settled back on his stomach. She pinched her lips, holding back a laugh at the small moan that escaped him. She sat up, scrubbing her eyes. Since she was awake, and unable to get fun time with the hot guy in her bed, she stood up, padding her way to the bathroom.

She hadn't had the chance to take a bath, and since she had a bit of time ahead of her… it looked like the perfect time to relax and think about her future job possibilities.

Closing the door behind her, she switched on the light above the sink, and winced at the sight of her bed hair. Grabbing a comb, she untangled the knots and tied it high on her skull.

Humming, she opened the curtain hanging above the tub and froze mid-track.

A bubbling scream formed inside her chest but she was too shocked to do anything. For a second, she stared at the form lying in the tub, her breath caught in her lungs.

It was only when the form moved that she yelped in fear, looking around her for a potential weapon. Her eyes landed on the toilet brush and she grabbed it, raising it above her head, swinging it down forcefully, aiming at the head of what looked like a male.

“Whaaa-”

Felicity hit the intruder with full strength, the toilet brush bending in the middle with the force of the impact.

“OW!”

In her frenzied state, all she could hear was the wild beating of her heart. She was swinging her weapon, hitting him repeatedly in the back of his shoulders when he rolled over himself in protection, covering his head with his hands. She could hear him yelping every time she would hit her target, crying for help but she was unable to comprehend his words, her brain having switched to survival mode. The man was a threat, she needed to defend herself. He was probably one of those perverts that sneaked inside people’s rooms at night. She must have caught him off guard when she had woken up. She couldn’t remember if Oliver had locked the door before they went to bed, and a flash of fear went through her, hoping Oliver was indeed just asleep and not… Oh, God. Oliver.

“OLIVER!” She shouted when her toilet brush broke in her hands. She carelessly threw the useless weapon over her shoulder, grabbing the showerhead instead.

The door was opened with a bang by a disheveled Oliver.

“OLIVER CALL THE POLICE!” She yelled in relief as she half-climbed in the bathtub, her knee pressing on the back of the man, forcing him down while her other foot was still safely on the floor.

“Felicity, what…” Oliver said in shock as he took in the scene in front of him.

"There's... there's a perv in the bathtub, Oliver. He must have sneaked inside our room while we were sleeping,” Felicity panted, struggling to keep the man in place with her weight, trying to force the shower hose around his neck while he scrambled for purchase, trying to escape her. This seemed to shake Oliver out of of his trance and he was by her side in two big steps.

She yelped when he grabbed her waist, lifting her out of the bathtub, setting her safely on the floor behind him. He quickly looked at her, shaking his head as he dropped a small peck on the corner of her lips, before leaning towards the silhouette in the tub.

“Tommy. It’s fine,” he sighed.
“... Is she... is she gone?” Tommy whimpered, the sound muffled by his arms. He was still in a fetal position, cradling his head protectively.

Felicity gasped in horror as she suddenly remembered Oliver’s words from the night before. “Tommy usually prefers to crash in the bathtub...”

“Oh my... Oh my God, I’m so sorry!” She squeaked, twisting her hands nervously. “Tommy, I’m so sorry, I didn’t know it was you!”

Tommy carefully lowered his arms, peeking cautiously towards her. Felicity flinched when she saw the bruises already forming on his face.

“I didn’t recognize you, I swear! I don’t have my glasses and the light is dim and...” she trailed off, wincing in shame as Oliver grabbed his best friend’s hand, helping him stand up.

Tommy wobbled out of the bathtub, his hair sticking up in every direction. He leaned heavily on Oliver, glaring at her cautiously.

Felicity held out her hands in a peaceful gesture. “I’m not gonna hurt you!”

“What... what the hell went through your mind?” Tommy asked in disbelief. “And what did you hit me with?! You could have killed me!”

She pinched her lips, her cheeks burning up as she tried to explain herself. “I thought you were a pervert. Or a serial killer. Or both. And I couldn’t have killed you. It’s made of plastic. Well... mostly.”

Oliver perked an eyebrow at her, an amused smirk growing on his lips as his eyes travelled to what was left of the toilet brush.

“What was it then?” Tommy asked, scrubbing his forehead, where she had hit him first.

She traced circles on the floor with the tip of her foot, mumbling, “... a toilet brush.”

Tommy narrowed his eyes. “A what? A... a toilet... Ewwww!”

Oliver bit his lips, chuckling and avoiding his best friend’s eyes.

“Felicity! This is... couldn’t you hit me with a baseball bat like a normal woman?! What is wrong with you??” Tommy exclaimed, his face wrinkling in disgust.

“I don’t exactly carry a baseball bat in my toiletry set, I’ll have you know!”

“Well, you should! Oliver, tell your girlfriend that attacking innocent men with toilet brushes is NOT OK, will you?!”

“Oh, he will! Right after he tells his best friend that crashing innocent women’s rooms at night is NOT OK!” Felicity snapped back.

Her eyes grew the size of saucers at what their words implied. Tommy had just called her Oliver’s girlfriend and she had rolled with it. She glanced at Oliver from the corner of her eye. He was standing between them, his arms crossed on his chest, with the cheesiest grin she had ever seen on his face. I guess it’s not a big deal, then.

“Felicity,” he eventually cleared his throat. “Maybe next time, before you attack someone, just... make sure they’re bad people first.”
She opened her mouth to argue back - after all this could have been a life and death situation where every second counts - but he held out a finger, raising an eyebrow.

“And you, Tommy,” he continued, “you crashed into her room last night, then into her bathtub.”

“Because she sent me to that... “ he shuddered. “That party.”

“Oh come on!” Felicity raised her arms, snorting. “Seeing how you were hitting on my mother, it was clear you like older women.”

“You told me they were from her club!” Tommy shouted in outrage.

“And they were!” She shouted back. Tommy glared at her, his hands on his hips while Oliver was observing her, a clear question in his eyes.

She sighed, rolling her eyes. “Fine. It’s her bingo club.”

Oliver pinched his lips. “Pardon me?”

“My mom loves bingo. I know those ladies, they’re sweet as can be. You probably made their night, anyway.”

Tommy shifted on his feet, holding his arms protectively around him. “They... they took advantage of me,” he eventually squeaked. “They made me pole dance.”

Felicity hid her smile behind her hand, faking concern. “Pole dance? Wow. I’m... I’m really sorry. I had no idea it would be that bad.”

Tommy gulped, obviously holding onto his dignity. “Thank you.”

Felicity smiled sweetly at him before continuing, “did they slip dollar bills into your underwear, at least?”

“Felicity…” Oliver huffed a laugh, shaking his head.

“Just asking!” she defended herself.

“It’s not funny!” Tommy cried out. “It felt like getting freaky with my grandmother!”

“Your grandmother is dead” Oliver deadpanned, leaning on the counter.

“Exactly my point!” Tommy threw his hands in the air.

“Now, come on. They’re not that old” Felicity snorted, hopping on the counter next to Oliver. He winked at her, putting his hand on her knee.

“The bride was 87, Felicity,” Tommy replied curtly, his lips forming a thin line. “Two of the bridesmaids needed a walker.”

She rolled her eyes. “You know you could have walked away anytime.”

Tommy sighed deeply, sitting on the edge of the bathtub. “You should have seen their eyes lighting up when they saw me. I felt like Jesus Christ and Elvis Presley both rolled into one.”
He paused, his eyes narrowing. “Although now that I think about it, they probably met both in their younger days.”

Felicity giggled, muffling the sound against Oliver’s shoulder as she leaned against him, her arms circling his.

“So you stayed because you didn’t want to hurt their feelings?” Oliver asked.

“Well, yes. No matter their age, they are ladies and I am a gentleman. I couldn’t have faced the heartbreak in their eyes if I were to abandon them.”

“I think they would have survived, Tommy,” Felicity smirked.

“You’re saying that but I know from a reliable source that about a third of them had a pacemaker.”

“How did you manage to get that drunk with them?” Oliver wondered out loud.

“I was trying to keep up but let me tell you, Betty White and her friends can hold their liquor!”

Oliver slightly tapped Felicity’s thigh, straightening up. “I think we should let Miss Felicity take her bath in peace.”

Tommy stood up, grunting. “I’ll get back at you one day, Smoak.”

“Get back at me? For what, exactly?”

“For throwing me to the shewolves!”


Tommy shrugged. “OK, fine. What about hitting me with a toilet brush?”

“That’s for hitting on said mother as soon as you met her!”

“I didn’t know it was your mother! If I did, I would have never let my hand approach her thigh, I can guarantee you!”

Felicity paused at his words, her eyes darkening. “You did what?”

Tommy opened and closed his mouth like a fish out of water. “I swear it’s not what you think! I was merely patting it!”

Felicity jumped from the counter, approaching him, fuming.

“It wasn’t even her thigh, more like her knee!” Tommy tried to defend himself, climbing back in the bathtub.

“I should have stuck that toilet brush up your-”

“Alright, alright.” Oliver covered her mouth with his hand. “Maybe we should forget all about it until you’ve had your coffee.”

“My goodness, how can you be so tiny and so scary at the same time?!” Tommy cried out.

Felicity grumbled behind Oliver’s hand, her eyes still throwing daggers at him. She needed coffee. She needed a bath. And chocolate. And a cuddle. Not necessarily in that order.
“Come on, Tommy. Get out of that bathtub,” Oliver told him, his hands lowering over Felicity’s hips.

“She’s scaring me.”

“I’m holding her.”

“**She** is right here,” Felicity rolled her eyes, leaning back against Oliver’s chest.

Tommy climbed out of the tub, making a large circle to avoid them, always keeping his eyes on Felicity. As he reached the door, he winced. “Hum… dude. I kinda lost my key. That’s why I ended up here, actually.”

Oliver sighed. “I think I have the double in my room. Just give me a minute, OK?”

“Yup,” he nodded, walking away.

“And close the door,” Oliver shouted to his retreating back.

“You’re not gonna…” Tommy trailed off warily, his hand motioning between them.

“Of course not!” Oliver and Felicity cried out at the same time.

“Hey. Just asking,” Tommy mumbled, closing the door.

Felicity groaned, throwing her head back against Oliver’s shoulder. “And when I think how perfect everything was when I woke up…”

Oliver’s chest trembled in her back as he chuckled, his chin resting on her head. “That’s Tommy for you. Although I feel more bad for him, to be honest. You managed a few good hits.”

“Adrenaline, I guess,” she laughed lightly. “And I also might be PMS-ing.”

Oliver snorted, tightening his arms around her.

Felicity grimaced, embarrassed. “Sorry that was… TMI. Way, way TMI.”

“I’m glad I had a warning, actually. Especially after your little demonstration.”

She turned in his arms, snuggling into his chest. “I can’t believe I trashed a hotel room. I never did that.”

Oliver laughed. “I would hardly call that trashing a room, Felicity. You broke one thing.”

“Still. They’re gonna charge you. I’ll pay you back.”

“Don’t be silly. I can afford the extra charge.”

“It’s a matter of principle, Oliver.”

“Shut up,” he said as his finger slipped underneath her chin, gently forcing her to raise her head.

He was grinning, his hair ruffled and the sight was so perfect that she moaned in longing. Reaching on her toes, she pressed a soft kiss on his jaw. Sighing, she stepped away, not trusting herself any longer.

“Seriously?” He asked, his smile so wide that it made his eyes crinkle. He grabbed her hand, pulling
her back to him. “That’s not a morning kiss.”

He leaned in, swallowing her gasp of surprise as their lips met. She should have been concerned about trivial things such as morning breath or Tommy in the next room but, just like every time Oliver kissed her, everything around her melted away. She sighed in pleasure as their tongues met, wondering once more how a simple kiss could make her feel that way. He pulled away too soon for her liking, pecking her lips a couple of times, kissing her pout away.

“When do you think you’ll be ready?” He asked softly, his eyes probably shining as bright as hers.

“Mmmh?” She mumbled, dazzled, fixated on his mouth. Just one more kiss wouldn’t hurt, right?

“Felicity,” he grinned, his finger lifting her chin until their gazes met. “When do you want to meet for breakfast?”

Sighing, she shrugged. “One hour?”

“OK. I’ll come and get you,” he said, kissing her forehead and squeezing her hand before walking to the door.

She watched him leave with a deep, longing feeling growing in her chest. He was intoxicating.

True to his word, Oliver was knocking on her door 60 minutes after he had left her. Felicity had enjoyed a relaxing bubble bath, daydreaming a bit too much about him. Who would have ever thought that Oliver Queen would be such perfect boyfriend material? He was sweet, caring, funny and… hot as hell. If Felicity had known she was in love with him for a while now, there was no denying that she was falling deeper and deeper with every moment spent with him. Despite the frustration, she was actually glad their first time hadn’t happened in a random hotel room. The weekend had allowed them to explore their relationship and deepened their bond more than intercourse could have. But today was their last day in Vegas, and she was going to make the most of it before their return to the real world.

She laughed at the idea, thinking how weird it was that, for once in her life, she didn’t want to leave her hometown. She had just finished drying her hair when Oliver knocked on her door. Cursing, she quickly put her top on, having already decided on a pair of capri pants for the day. She rushed to the door when he was about to knock for a second time.

“Sorry,” she winced. “I’m not ready.”

He smiled reassuringly. “No problem. Tommy is sleeping and so is Sara, probably. It’s just us.”

Grinning at the thought that they could enjoy some private time, she grimaced when her stomach grumbled in protestation.

Blushing, she lowered her eyes, glaring at the offending organ. “Sorry. I’m starving.”

Oliver chuckled. “Come on. Put your shoes on.”

“I’ll just apply some make-up, it won’t take long,” she said, already heading to the bathroom.

He stopped her with a hand on her arm. “First of all, you don’t need make-up. Second of all, you’re hungry. Let’s go.”
“But… I have dark circles and…” she mumbled, knowing the lack of sleep of the last two days had left a mark on her face despite her constantly sparkling eyes - which were mostly due to Oliver, to be fair.

“You’re perfect,” he cut her off, pecking her nose.

Smiling, she put a pair of sandals on and grabbed her purse. She had just closed the door behind them when Oliver reached for her hand, entwining their fingers. She grinned at the sight of her small hand inside of his, her heart fluttering. She rolled her eyes at her own self, knowing fully well she was behaving like a fourteen year-old girl with her first crush.

As they made their way to one of the hotel restaurants, she kept glancing at him, mentally pinching herself. This was real. They were real. Maybe not exactly official but… real. Tangible.

He eventually caught her staring and grinned, shaking his head. “Is there something wrong with my face?”

“If only,” she sighed. "That would make my life much easier."

“Vixen,” he murmured, his eyes twinkling as he picked up their joined hands, kissing the back of hers.

They were so caught in each other that they almost bumped into another couple when they made it to the small queue at the entrance of the restaurant.

“Sorry!” Oliver apologized right away with a sheepish smile.

“Oh!” Felicity gasped in surprise when she recognized the man and the woman she had met in the elevator the night before.

“No problem,” the woman assured them with a smile, her demeanor much warmer than Felicity remembered.

“I think we’re all in a hurry to get to breakfast!” Her companion added, winking. “I know I need to make up for the calories I burned last night!”

“Richard!” The woman giggled, tapping him on his chest. She turned to Oliver and Felicity, blushing. “Don’t listen to him, he likes to tease me.”

“Oh, my sweet apple pie, I’m sure they know exactly what I’m talking about. Right, miss?” The man continued, winking at Felicity. “Looks like you ladies both had what you wanted last night.”

Felicity stared at them in disbelief, her mouth agape, vaguely aware of Oliver, who was glancing curiously at her.

“Yeah… I mean… I guess so,” she finally mumbled. *I swear to God if they had sex all night long while I played pajama party…*

The couple was called by a hostess, and as they were walking away, the woman turned around, looking at Felicity. She mouthed a “thank you”, wiggling her eyebrows, just as Richard pinched her butt. The high pitched giggle startled a few people around her, including Oliver who winced at the sound.

“Do you know these people?” He asked her, his eyes still on the couple that was walking away.
“... it’s a long story,” she grumbled, feeling slightly jealous. She was young, she had a hot guy and Richard had been the one getting lucky!

They were called by a hostess and led to their own table, and Felicity barely had the time to sit down before Oliver pressed her.

“So, what did he mean about you getting what you wanted last night?”

“Ugh,” she groaned, squeezing her eyes shut as she remembered her small encounter. Begrudgingly, she told Oliver about what she had said out loud, and the apparent boost of confidence it had given Richard. A Boost of confidence that had lasted until they made it back to their bedroom, apparently.

Oliver perked an eyebrow, smirking. “... your hunk?”

“It’s what my mom called you,” she exclaimed, embarrassed. She grabbed the menu, forcing herself to focus on her breakfast.

“Your mom thinks I’m a hunk?” He grinned, obviously flattered.

Wrong choice, Felicity.

“My hunk,” she corrected, pinching her lips and smoothing her napkin, keeping her eyes low.

“Even better.”

She tried to bite back a smile at the pride in his voice, glancing at him. He was leaning on his hand, his elbow resting on the table, looking at her. There was something about the light in the room, that made his eyes so incredibly blue and joyful that her knees would have probably wobbled hadn’t she been sitting.

Their breakfast was a nice callback to all the ones they had shared during their business trip so many months ago and it amused her that she could guess what kind of food he would order. He still grimaced when he saw her drowning her pancakes in syrup, but this time kept silent. Let it be known that Oliver Queen is indeed a quick learner.

They spent most of their meal talking about everything and anything, just enjoying each other’s company. He told her about his favorite movie, she told him about her dream to go to a Bon Jovi concert. They shared about their lives, their hopes and also plans for QC in the future. Felicity felt a small pinch in her heart at the mention of the company, knowing she probably wouldn’t be a part of that future.

Once they were done, Felicity paid for their meal - despite Oliver’s vigorous objections. She didn’t budge, refusing to let him pay again. It wasn’t much about the price of the food, she was more than aware that what they had ordered was worth peanuts to someone like him. No, it was about principle. He wasn’t going to pay for everything just because his family was wealthy.

She went to the bathroom after their meal, grateful for her emergency make-up. She put on some concealer under her eyes and a bit of mascara, using her chapstick as gloss. She didn’t linger, knowing Oliver was waiting for her in the small bar area. When she walked back inside the room, she was surprised to see him talking with a brunette with long legs and a tiny skirt. She couldn’t see the woman’s face, her hair hanging low, but couldn’t miss how uncomfortable Oliver looked. She pondered leaving him to handle what was apparently a delicate situation - and also trying to ignore the feeling that it was probably one of his old flings - or going to his rescue.

She eventually made up her mind, stepping closer to them, gritting her teeth when she heard what the
brunette was saying.

“Here is my phone number, don’t hesitate. I had a lot of fun with Tommy last time, I’m sure you’re just as entertaining.”

“Yeah… I’ll give it to Tommy. I’m sure he’ll call you if he has time,” Oliver coughed awkwardly, his hand rubbing the back of his skull.

The young woman giggled, putting her hand over his arm. “Or you can keep it for yourself.”

“Sorry it took me so long,” Felicity said cheerfully as she joined them. She couldn’t miss the look of utter relief on Oliver’s face as he stepped closer to her, almost using her body as a shield. If she had felt a surge of jealousy when she had seen the woman putting her hands on him, she couldn’t help but be amused by his behavior. One would think the woman was a serial killer, not just a girl hitting on him.

“Oh,” the brunette looked at them. “I see. Well, it was good seeing you, Ollie.”

“Yep. Likewise…”

“Samantha.”

“Samantha,” Oliver repeated dutifully.

Felicity watched the young woman walk away, trying to keep her laughter at bay. She eventually turned to face Oliver who was staring at his shoes, a light blush creeping over his cheeks.

“So…” she trailed off.

“I swear I didn’t ask for her phone number!” Oliver said, raising his hands in defense.

“I know. I heard you,” Felicity laughed, shaking her head. “It’s fine, Oliver. Or should I say… Ollie?”

He grimaced. “I don’t like it when you call me Ollie.”

“Good. I don’t like it either. Ollie was a douche,” she winked, linking their arms.

“Hey!”

“But Oliver is my hunk,” she smirked.

He chuckled as they made their way out of the restaurant. “I like being your hunk. Just know that I will deny it if you ever tell anyone else.”

They spent the few hours they had left shopping in the galleries. Felicity helped him pick a souvenir for Thea, knowing that if she didn’t step in, the poor girl would probably end up with a teddy bear. Oliver’s reluctance concerning his sister growing up was a little something endearing and slightly ridiculous that amused her to no ends. A simple necklace with a couple of silver dices did the trick.

“You’re sure she’s going to like it?” He asked her for what seemed the hundredth time.
"Yes!" She groaned. "Honestly, it’s just a souvenir, not a birthday present. How do you even manage when you have to buy her something by yourself?"

"I… don’t."

"You don’t manage?" She asked, frowning.

"No. I mean I don’t buy her… stuff. I’ve always had someone doing it for me,” he mumbled.

"... You mean Laurel? Or an assistant?"

Oliver winced. "Yes."

"Oh."

It shouldn’t have surprised her, after all. When she had met him, Oliver was nothing but a party boy who never had to care for anything. Everything had always been handed to him on a silver platter.

“Well. I can promise you she will love it. Especially since you picked it yourself,” she reassured him with a smile.

“How is she even going to know?"

“Seeing your face will be enough. You look more nervous than I did when I met your mother,” Felicity laughed.

Putting his arm across her shoulders, he leaned in to kiss her temple. “Thank you for your help.”

She smiled at him, her hand reaching for the one draped over her shoulder, entwining their fingers.

He suddenly stopped in front of a typical souvenir shop, pointing at a puzzle representing the Bellagio at night. “I need to get you a souvenir as well.”

“Oh no. Puzzles and I do not get along,” she shook her head. “I don’t know if it’s because of my bad eyesight but…”

“I’ll help you do it! I used to make puzzles all the time with Thea!” He pleaded, a huge grin on his face.

“Maybe you should buy it for her, then?"

“But you are the one obsessed with the fountains and also… I think it would be really good for my ego to be able to outsmart you for once.”

She glared at him, not bothering to reply.

“Come on! We’ll do it together!” He pleaded, his eyes shining.

Pinching her lips, she huffed out a small laugh. “... Fine.” That damn man and his damn eyes...

As Oliver was waiting for a clerk to get her puzzle, she grabbed a keychain, quickly paying for it. If Oliver wanted to get her a souvenir, then she was getting one for him as well. She was waiting at the entrance of the shop when he walked up to her, proudly holding the box. She giggled, handing him his own little souvenir, wrapped in a paper bag.

He looked at her curiously. “Did you just buy this?”
“Yup. You get me a souvenir, I get you one.”

He rolled his eyes, unwrapping his gift. He smiled once he saw the small red pen hanging from the keychain.

“Just like the one you dropped the day we met,” he remembered, his eyes softening.

“Well, mine didn’t have ‘what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas’ on it and was bigger... but other than that... yeah, it’s pretty similar.”

He leaned in, pressing a quick peck on her lips. “I love it. Thank you.”

“It’s just a keychain, you know,” she laughed. “You don’t even have to use it.”

“Tsk, tsk. I will put it on my keys as soon as I’m home,” he promised.

They eventually had to make their way back to their rooms, Oliver volunteering to wake up Sara and Tommy.

As soon as they stepped inside the plane, Sara and Tommy both fell into seats, closing the curtains of the small window and getting ready for a nap. Oliver and Felicity shared a look then went all the way back to the plane, sitting in two seats side-by-side.

Felicity started fidgeting while they waited for the plane to take off, while Oliver kicked off his shoes, getting comfortable. She still didn’t like the whole take-off and landing process and her foot started to tap nervously.

“C’me here,” Oliver whispered as his arm reached around her shoulders. He nudged her towards his chest, and she let herself relax in his embrace, his hand tracing soothing circles on her back. He pressed a kiss on the top of her head, reaching for the curtain and closing it.

“Last time we were in this position, I fell asleep on you,” she noted quietly.

“Yup. I had to carry you to bed.”

“Please tell me I didn’t drool on you.”

His chest vibrated with a deep chuckle. “I don’t think so. At least, I didn’t notice.”

“It was the second night in a row that I fell asleep on you.”

“No need to remind me. My ego is taking it bad enough as it is.”

She giggled. “Well, maybe you’ll have to make sure I stay awake next time.”

“Is that a challenge, Miss Smoak?” he mumbled in her hair.

She hummed. “Depends if you’re up to it, Mister Queen.”

The rest of the flight was quiet, Sara and Tommy sleeping for most of it. As the plane was taking them back to Starling, she was surprised to find out how much a part of her dreaded it. The weekend had been almost like a dream and she wasn’t exactly ready to wake up.
There was no more hand holding when they made their way to the parking lot.

“Sara, are you going to be OK driving?” Oliver asked her as they approached their cars.

“Yeah, don’t worry. That nap did wonders,” she answered with a big smile.

“Awesome. Tommy, give me your keys.”

“Nah, I’m fine, dude.”

“Seriously, give me your keys.”

“Ollie, I’m OK. I’m wide awake.” Tommy patted his best friend on his back.

Oliver looked at him square in the eyes. “Sara will drop you. I’m driving Felicity home. Give me your keys.”

“But… there are enough seats for the three of us,” Tommy said, confused.

“Haven’t you played third wheel enough as it is?”

Tommy opened his mouth, then closed it like a fish out of water. “But dude… that’s my car.”

“I know,” Oliver answered, wiggling his fingers.

“Damn you!” Tommy cursed as he fished inside his pocket, handing the keys.

Felicity stifled a giggle at the pout on Tommy’s face. She noticed a few bruises on his jaw and hairline, a direct result of their small encounter in her bathroom a few hours earlier.

Oliver winked at her as he went to load their luggage in the trunk. Sara hugged her while Tommy awkwardly waved, apparently still wary of her.

“Don’t forget my farewell party!” Sara chirped as she slipped behind the wheel of her small car. “Come on, Merlyn. Get your ass in the car.”

“This was probably Tommy’s worst trip to Las Vegas,” Felicity laughed as she sat in the car.

“Probably,” Oliver grinned. “He’ll get over it, don’t worry.”

The way back home was short, and soon enough, Oliver was parking the car in front of her building.

“Well… here we are,” she said, her hands resting over her lap, unsure of what to do next.

Oliver smiled at her. “Come on. Let me walk you to the door, at least.”

Oliver grabbed her luggage while she was fishing for her key and they quickly made their way to the main entrance door.

Picking up her luggage, Felicity took a deep breath. “I guess I’ll see you… hum… when are you coming back from your boat trip?”

“I’ll be back on Tuesday, probably late in the morning or in the afternoon,” he smiled, shoving his
hands in his pockets.

“On Tuesday, then,” she nodded. “That’s good. I have tomorrow off anyway so…”

“Yes. If anything happens, you can text me. I’m not sure I’ll have a good signal but…”

“Will do!” She pinched her lips nervously, fidgeting with her keys. Why was it suddenly so awkward between them? They had slept in the same bed, for God’s sake, surely they could handle this kind of situation!

Oliver stared at her for a few seconds. Suddenly, he took the luggage from her hand, putting it down on the floor. He gently pushed her into the corner of the door until her back hit the glass surface, her feet automatically reaching for the last step, gaining ten inches and ending up almost as tall as him. His hand curled around her neck as he leaned in, kissing her lips softly. She sighed in contentment, resting her arms on his shoulders. They had kissed on the plane, and more than once, but it still felt like it had been ages. This was what she needed. The simplicity. Kissing Oliver was as natural as breathing. When they were just following their natural inclinations, there was no awkwardness. Holding back, masking their feelings, fighting their attraction,... it was just going against their nature. When they caved in, when they just let themselves be… it was perfection.

When they finally parted, she was out of breath and she noted - with a deep satisfaction - that he was just as affected as she was. Smirking, she pecked his lips, her fingers grazing the back of his skull. She was rewarded by the small groan that escaped him as his hands gripped her hips.

“I really have to go,” he whispered, resting his forehead against hers.

“I know,” she murmured back.

“I don’t want to.”

She smiled. “Thea is waiting for you.”

This seemed to force him into action. He took a deep breath, cradling her face between his hands, his thumbs caressing her cheeks. He pressed one last kiss on her lips, lingering.

He eventually took a step back, letting his hands drop by his sides. “I’ll see you on Tuesday.”

Felicity nodded, bending to pick up her luggage. She watched him walking back to the car, then opened the door. With one last wave, he started the engine and pulled back into the traffic. Sighing deeply, she closed the door, walking up the flight of stairs leading to her apartment.

As soon as she walked in, she kicked off her shoes, not even bothering to unpack. Picking up her laptop, she made herself comfortable on the sofa, a stack of paper and a pen near her. She bit her lips, unsure of herself. Was it really the right decision? Was it worth the risk? She didn’t want to leave QC… and she sure as hell didn’t want to leave Oliver.

Of course, she knew ‘leaving’ him would only lead to actually being in a real relationship with him. But it still felt bitter-sweet to have to close an important chapter of her life in order to do so. Working at QC had been an incredible experience. She had met friends there, and also… a man she was very much in love with. The thought of Oliver brought a smile to her lips. Their weekend had been perfect. And she wanted more of those. She wanted weekends and weekdays. She wanted dates and dinners and breakfasts in bed. She wanted everything with him, not just sharing one part of his life.

_Time to look for another job, Smoak._
One hour and thirty minutes later, she was setting her laptop aside, groaning in frustration. The only job openings she could find were low-level IT. As in very low-level, helpdesk kind of IT. The last thing she wanted was to get stuck into a job that clearly didn’t fit her qualifications. Being an assistant had already been a hard pill to swallow, because it was miles away from the degree she had worked so hard for. But at least it offered challenges and perspectives. She had had the opportunity to get her hands onto new and diverse projects, even if it was frustrating to only be a small part of them.

Sighing deeply, she still wrote down a few promising companies in the area, planning on sending them her resume nonetheless. Maybe they would keep her application in mind for a future opportunity?

She was about to grab her phone to order a pizza when a small knock on her door startled her. Standing up, she padded her way across the room, quickly glancing through the peephole. Grinning, she opened the door.

“Dig!” She welcomed him, inviting him in.

“Felicity,” he smiled. “I wasn’t sure you’d be back yet. I was on my way to Big Belly Burger, fancy joining me?”

There was nothing like greasy food to lift someone’s mood and she nodded enthusiastically at the idea. Grabbing her purse, putting her shoes back on, she followed him outside, locking her door.

She told him most of the weekend on their way to the restaurant - apart from the… intimate parts, obviously. They were seated and waiting for their food when she eventually stopped talking.

“So all in all… you had a great weekend?” Dig asked, taking a sip of water.

“Yup” she nodded.

“Why does it feel like something is bothering you, then?” Dig asked, his eyes searching hers.

Smiling, Felicity shook her head. “Damn you and your observation skills.”

“Hey! Those observation skills saved my life at some point!” He laughed, “but don’t try to change topics. Come on.”

Taking a deep breath, she fiddled with her straw. “I am looking for another job.”

Raising his eyebrows, he breathed, “wow. Did something bad happen…?”

“No. Nothing bad. It’s just that Oliver and I are…” she trailed off, unsure of the correct word. Was there even a way to explain what Oliver and her were to each other? Technically, they weren’t even a couple. Yet.

“Yeah… I’ve noticed. I honestly wondered how long it would take for you guys to cave in. It took you much longer than I thought.”

She glared at him. “Nothing has exactly really happened but… I don’t want to tempt the devil. I think it’s time for me. That job was always temporary and now might be the best time. I mean Isabel is gone, QC is stabilizing again, Moira is going to be VP… Oliver can handle things now.”
“No position inside the company, right?”

“Nope. Not at the moment. I already asked HR. So did Oliver.”

“Have you asked Tommy? Maybe Merlyn Global could hire you?”

Felicity winced. “I don’t really want Oliver to ask his best friend… I want to be hired because of what I can do.”

Dig chuckled. “Proud and stubborn, as always.”

“Seriously, I want to earn my position. If really I have no other choice then… maybe. But only as last resort.”

“Not to mention, Tommy Merlyn probably doesn’t love you very much right now,” Dig laughed.

She pinched her lips, her eyes twinkling as she remembered the scene in the hotel bathroom. “That might be the understatement of the year.”

As their waitress brought their food, the conversation turned to the baseball game Dig went to see with his nephew. Andy Jr. was 4 and had lost his father years ago. When Dig had gotten back from Afghanistan, his brother had helped him find a job in a security company, working as a bodyguard like himself. Unfortunately, it had ended up in the death of one of the brothers during a shooting at a birthday party. A lone shooter had crashed the party, wreaking havoc with a AK47. Dig had done his job, shoving his client in a car and sending them away to safety. He had stayed to help, unable to leave innocents behind.

That was actually how Dig had met Oliver, who was attending the party with Laurel. The two of them had been trapped outside, hiding behind bushes. Dig had opened a window, helping them both to safety. He had then given them his car keys so they could leave. Apart from a twisted ankle for Laurel, they had both made it out unscathed. About ten young adults hadn’t been that lucky and a few dozens had been injured.

Oliver had tried to find out who had helped them escape a few days later, only to discover that Dig had been fired because he hadn’t stayed with his client until the end. As Moira and Robert had gotten worried about his safety and pressured him to have a bodyguard, he had insisted they’d hire Dig, who eventually moved to the security department of QC after about a year.

Ever since that day, Dig had tried to be as much of a father figure as he could for his nephew and a strong loyalty had formed between him and Oliver. Dig had always known that underneath the rich playboy persona, there was a worthy man, with good values. It had just taken a bit of time for that man to come to life.

It was already past 10PM when they made it back to their building. It had been a while since she and Dig had been able to share a moment and truth be told, she had missed it. There was something so solid and familiar in their relationship that it made everything easy. He truly was one of the best things QC had brought her - apart from Oliver obviously. It was the first time in her life when she actually was making real friends, people she could spend time with. They were extremely different, whether it was Dig, Sara or Oliver, but the bond was there. It had grown organically, each accepting the other for who they were. She had little to no doubts that these relationship could go on despite the fact that they wouldn’t work in the same building anymore.
When she walked into QC on Tuesday morning, after a very lazy Monday spent exchanging emails with Oliver and taking care of house chores, it was with a new boost of energy. Oliver was coming back later that day, and no matter how cliché it sounded, she was missing him like crazy. Technically, they had only spent two days apart but it already seemed way too much to her. She had slept with his hoodie - the one he had given her in her hotel room, which she planned to never give back - only to wake up disoriented because he wasn’t by her side.

Since they had taken two days off, the amount of emails and messages awaiting her was tremendous and it took her most of the morning to sort them. She had barely caught up when the ding of the elevator made her raise her head, grinning like a fool at the idea of finally seeing him again.

She did her best to hide her disappointment when she saw Denis Lewis stepping out, a stern look on his face. She frowned, trying her best to keep a professional smile upon her face.

“Mister Lewis,” she welcomed him. “I’m sorry but Mister Queen is…”

“I know,” he cut her off, not meeting her eyes. “You need to get to Walter’s office right now, Miss Smoak.”

“Hum… what?” She asked, taken off guard. Why does Walter Steele need me? Has Isabel done something?

“Mrs Queen is there as well. I suggest we don’t keep them waiting,” he added, his fingers drumming on her desk.

She gulped, sensing that whatever this was about… it wasn’t good.

Chapter End Notes

...

*protects face from toilet brush*

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim and tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don't be shy come say hi! (no toilet brush allowed, though)
OK guys... here we go... Take a deep breath and dig in.

Special thanks to pidanka and mysticadetectivepanda, they both do an amazing job BTS.

Song: Battlefield - Lea Michele

"Battlefield"

It's easy to fall in love
But it's so hard to break somebody's heart
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield
Once lust has turned to dust and all that's left's held breath
Forgotten who we first met
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield

We both know it's coming
Does illusion count for something we hide?
The surface tension's gotta break, one drop is all it takes to flood out this lie

You and I
We have to let each other go
We keep holding on but we both know
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield
Peace will come when one of us puts down the gun

Be strong for both of us
No please, don't run, don't run
Eye to eye, we face our fears unarmed on the battlefield

We seemed like a good idea
We seemed like a good idea

No blood will spill if we both get out now
Still it's hard to put the fire out
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield
Feelings are shifting like the tide
And I think too much about the future
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield

We both know it's coming
Does illusion count for something we hide?
The surface tension's gotta break, one drop is all it takes to flood out this lie

You and I
We have to let each other go
We keep holding on but we both know
What seemed like a good idea has turned into a battlefield

Peace will come when one of us puts down the gun
Be strong for both of us
No please, don't run, don't run
Eye to eye, we face our fears unarmed on the battlefield

We seemed like a good idea
We seemed like a good idea
We seemed like a good idea

“You know… I think I’m actually going to miss this boat,” Thea said, leaning on the ship’s railing, the wind making a mess of her hair.

He smiled, offering his face to the sun. After two days of sailing, they were heading back to Starling. They had been lucky with the weather: bright and sunny for the most of their trip.

“You used to hate the fishing parties,” Oliver remembered. He could almost see his little sister with her pigtails, her face screwing in disgust at the sight of the worms they used as bait. Tommy and he had had way too much fun, teasing the hell out of her, until Robert Queen had scolded them, forcing them on said-worm duty. Tommy had been green in the face for the rest of their day.

Thea snapped her fingers. “So did you.”

“True. Dad used to say that I would eventually enjoy them but… it never happened,” Oliver laughed.

Thea didn’t answer, taking a seat next to him. Both siblings fell back into a comfortable silence, enjoying the salty air and the sound of the waves hitting the boat.

“I miss him, you know,” Thea eventually murmured, so low that Oliver almost didn’t hear her.

“I miss him, too.”

“You do?”

“Well… yes, of course,” Oliver replied, frowning. Despite how damaged their relationship had been, Robert Queen was his father. He had always been a part of Oliver’s life and deep down, Oliver had never doubted he could always rely on him somehow.

“It’s just that… you and mom seem so… assured. It almost feels like his death made you stronger, while I don’t feel stronger at all.”

“Thea…” Oliver took a deep breath. “When dad died, mom and I had to step up. We didn’t really have a choice. He left us with a responsibility and a goal. That’s what helped us look ahead. But I
miss him everyday. I always try to do my best but there isn’t a single day where I don’t wonder if he
would approve of my choices. Mom and I… we just want to make sure we are still strong for you.
You lost your father way too young and we don’t want you to have to take on any other burden.”

“But you lost him too, Ollie. I’m not a baby anymore. While you and mom are busy taking over at
QC, I’m alone at home and sometimes I feel like I’m the only one mourning him.”

“Thea…” Oliver shook his head, smiling. “You’ll always be my baby sister. And I will always try to
protect you. I couldn’t spare you the pain of losing dad, and by working so hard, I am trying to make
sure our company will outlive him and that one day, if you want to, you’ll be able to play a part in it
as well. It’s my way to make sure there is always a part of him somewhere.”

“I’m not sure I want to work at QC. I mean I barely saw dad before, I barely see you and mom…”
she trailed off, her eyes fixing the horizon.

“Then it’s all good. I don’t want you to feel like you have to.”

“Really?” Thea asked, surprised. “I mean… everyone keeps asking me what kind of department I’d
see myself in and stuff.”

“Let everyone ask you and assume whatever the hell they want. If you want to study fashion design
or music or literature, I’ll be fine with it. And if mom has a problem with that, I’ll deal with her.”

“I don’t even know what I want to do, to be honest,” Thea grumbled.

“You still have a couple of years to figure that one out,” Oliver laughed. “Let’s make a deal. If by the
time you have to leave for college, you still don’t know what you want to study, you’ll work as an
intern at the company. That will make mom happy, it will give you a good idea of what the working
life looks like and I…”

“And you?”

“I’ll get to boss you around,” Oliver smirked, folding his hands behind his head. “Win-win, really!”

Grabbing a cushion, Thea hit him square in the face.

“Hey!” Oliver exclaimed. “It’s a great plan! Even if you don’t end up working at QC, you’ll still
have had the chance to get to know the company a bit better!”

“Sure,” she snorted. “As if you wouldn’t take that opportunity to turn me into your assistant to get
you coffee or something.”

Oliver laughed. “Oh believe me… I can’t even remember what it’s like to have a standard assistant. I
actually bring coffee to mine. You’d be lucky to be my PA.”

Thea smiled. “Felicity, right? I heard mom talk about her. She seemed very fond of her… not as
much as you, though…”

“What?” Oliver tried to brush it off, the tips of his ears heating up.

“Oh, come on. Tommy ‘xoxo-gossip-girl’ Merlyn already spilled the beans on how my brother was
apparently love-sick with his charming secretary. He also seemed to approve very much, by the way.
So… when do I get the chance to meet the lucky girl?” Thea asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

“I’m actually the lucky one in that story. And we’re not really… together-together. Yet,” Oliver
grinned. Suddenly, he couldn’t wait for his little sister to meet Felicity. He couldn’t know for sure if the two would get on well but Felicity’s presence in his sister’s life could only be beneficial. She knew what it was like to grow up without a father, she was also incredibly smart and hard-working. Having someone who had to fight to get where she was, against all odds, would balance the privileged experiences of the people Thea grew up with.

“So… tell me about her.” Thea nudged him with a small smile. “We still have a couple of hours.”

“She’s so smart, Thea. The smartest person I have ever met.”

Laughing, his sister looked at him in surprise. “OK…I wasn’t expecting that to come up first.”

“She is!” Oliver defended himself. “She got her Master’s degree at MIT while working two part-time jobs. She is so hard-working and loyal and she has a habit to ramble nervously at the most inappropriate times.”

“Was it because of her that you and Laurel…” Thea trailed off.

“No. Not at all. Laurel and I weren’t made for each other, Thea. It took me a while to figure that out and I got carried away with the engagement. I should have never agreed to it, I already knew things wouldn’t work out between us, but once dad died, it just seemed… something easy and simple that everyone expected to happen.”

It was the middle of the afternoon when Oliver dropped Thea back at the mansion. The two days they had spent together had allowed them to reconnect, despite the change in their relationship. Thea wasn’t a child anymore, but she still wasn’t a grown-up yet. His duties as a big brother hadn’t gone away: they had just evolved. He was glad they had been able to share those moments, away from everything. But he also couldn’t deny he was more than impatient to get back to his girl… God, he had missed her.

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“Mrs Queen wants to see me?” Felicity asked, her voice wavering with the dreadful feeling she could feel creeping up on her. She could sense something was wrong, but Mr Lewis wasn’t giving her any clue.

“Yes,” he only nodded as he led her down the hall of Walter’s office. He knocked on the door and opened it for her. Taking a deep breath, she walked in, surprised to see Mr Lewis was following her. *If the head of Public Relations is here, I’m probably not fired. They’d have called HR instead.* I The thought did little to comfort her though, as she saw the stern looks on Mrs Queen and Mr Steel.

Moira Queen got up from the small couch, reaching for her hand, a tight smile on her face. Her eyes were soft nonetheless, as if she was trying to reassure her.

“What is going on?” Felicity asked, stunned as Walter greeted her.

“Miss Smoak, would you please sit down?” Walter invited her to join them around the small conference table in his office.
Felicity obediently sat down, resting her shaking hands on the table, waiting for someone to speak up. Moira took place right beside her while both men stood on the other side.

“Miss Smoak, seeing that you seem quite… surprised by this little meeting, I assume you haven’t had the chance to catch up with the latest tabloids?”

Frowning, she glanced at Mr Lewis, who was typing on a laptop, avoiding her eyes. “Hum… no. I don’t really check them to begin with and I’ve spent the entire morning catching up on emails. Why?”

Walter nodded his head. “I assumed so. Well, to make it short… it appears that someone took pictures of your… private trip to Las Vegas.”

Felicity felt like her stomach had dropped to her feet as she made sense of Walter’s words. Pictures… Pictures? Private?

“Wha… what?” she asked in disbelief. “Who… how?!”

Moira put a hand over hers, squeezing it reassuringly. “Pictures of you and Oliver. We don’t know who it is coming from. Our team has tried to get to the source but they said they bought the pictures from a non-professional.”

Denis turned the laptop around, where an article said “Billionaire playboy Oliver Queen walking in his father’s footsteps in Vegas”, over a picture of them at the pool, with Oliver kissing the corner of her lips, his hand lingering on her hip. There were also other pictures, from inside a casino where she was laughing against his shoulder, or one with Oliver gazing at her while she was frowning at her phone. The pictures weren’t explicit at all but were so full of intimacy that no one would ever believe they were just business partners or even friends. Being so exposed made her feel uncomfortable and almost… violated.

With a shaky hand, Felicity pulled the laptop towards her.

“Dear, I don’t think you need to read the rest,” Moira told her softly.

Felicity shook her head, knowing that if it was out there, she probably should find out exactly what it was about.

“Oliver Queen, heir to the Queen Consolidated company, seems to be having quite the weekend in Sin City with this lovely blonde. Last we heard, Oliver was engaged to Miss Laurel Lance but it seems like he might have wanted one last weekend of debauchery before tying the knot. According to our sources, his companion is non-other than his secretary. It seems like the apple never falls far from the tree as Robert Queen, Oliver’s father who passed away a few months ago, was also caught up in an affair with one of his employees, which almost cost their family the leadership of the company. Let’s just hope the poor girl knows how Queen men are when it comes to the fairer sex.”

There were other pictures showing them holding hands or gazing at each other. All in all… there was little doubt concerning the nature of their relationship.

Gulping, she stopped reading, pushing the laptop away.

“We tried to get in touch with Oliver but-”

Felicity interrupted Denis. “his battery died. He should be here this afternoon, though.”

“Alright… we will deal with him later, then. I am positive he will agree that an official statement
confirming he and Miss Lance broke off the engagement two months ago would be a good start.”

“Don’t worry, we will make sure everything calms down,” Moira smiled at her, patting her hand.

Blinking back the angry tears that burned her eyes, Felicity nodded. How could she have been stupid enough to let that happen? She had been so carried away by him, by their feelings, that she had never even thought that in a city like Vegas, someone could recognize them and would literally stalk them, taking pictures for a profit. What had been a wonderful weekend had just turned into something cheap and shameful.

“Mrs Queen, I’m sorry…” she started to apologize, realizing her actions were dragging the Queen family into yet another scandal.

“Oh dear. No,” Moira gently cut her off, throwing a glare at Denis. “What you and Oliver do in your spare time is nobody’s business. Walter and I have absolutely nothing to say concerning the quality of your work or your commitment to this company and the same goes for Oliver. I am so sorry that you were thrown to the wolves that way because of both my son’s and my late husband’s former antics.”

Felicity nodded, a trembling smile on her lips, touched by the matriarch’s support.

“Denis, can you make sure the calls to Oliver’s office are diverted today?” Walter asked. “I think Miss Smoak will have enough on her plate as it is.”

“Sure. Of course.”

Felicity stood up, smoothing her dress. “I should probably get back to work then. Should I tell Oliver he needs to stop by once he gets back or…?”

“That would be lovely, dear. Moira and I will be working here the entire afternoon, anyway.”

“Miss Smoak, we all think that the best thing might be to distance yourself from Oliver for a while - professionally speaking, I mean. As you know, I will officially be taking over as VP in about two weeks. I know that you were hoping for a job more in line with your qualifications, but the position as my executive assistant is yours if you want it.”

“Oh,” Felicity replied, taken aback by the unexpected offer. “I… I honestly don’t know what to say.”

“Of course. Just think about it, let me know by Friday?” Moira smiled warmly.

“Yes… yes, I will. Thank you,” Felicity answered, her hand rubbing her forehead. This was a lot to take in in just a few minutes. She needed a bit of space to think by herself and clear her head.

She sighed with relief once she got back to her floor, welcoming the familiar walls. It was her domain, a place she had control over. Her hands still trembling, she sat down at her desk, staring at the black screen of her computer for God knows how long. She kept seeing these awful pictures again and again, remembering the article. “Poor girl… his secretary… debauchery…” A bitter taste in her mouth had her reaching for her bottle of water, taking slow sips, trying to calm the beating of her heart. She felt so… exposed, in the vilest way. It was her intimacy that was plastered across some lame tabloid website.
She breathed in deeply, forcing herself to focus on one thing at a time.

Moira Queen’s offer, to begin with. She wasn’t exactly sure how being moved from Oliver’s office to his mother’s could exactly muffle the scandal, but it sure was better than to keep working for him. Although she couldn’t deny that the idea of working for Moira Queen while -potentially- dating her son made her nervous and slightly uncomfortable. Yet, she couldn’t deny it would make a decent back-up plan.

Understanding her mind was too preoccupied to do anything productive, she decided to take her lunch break. She grabbed her purse, already planning on getting the cafeteria’s chocolate cake for dessert. The restaurant was rather empty when she arrived, which wasn’t surprising since it was still early. Once she had paid for her food, she sat down at an empty table, getting her Computers And Technology magazine from her handbag. There was nothing like a relaxing read to get your mind off of your problems, after all. She was so absorbed by an article about a revolutionary processor that she didn’t even notice the room starting to fill up and people sitting next to her. Her food was almost cold by the time she was done, and she pushed her platter on the side, grabbing her chocolate cake, already licking her lips at the sight of the caramel frosting that was covering the top. She caught one of her table partners staring at her and looked at him in offense. Had he never seen a girl eating chocolate cake?

The guy was probably barely older than she was and he blushed under her stare, averting his eyes. And that’s when she realized he wasn’t the only one staring. People around the room were openly looking at her, whispering behind their hands. Felicity felt like she had just gone back in time. High school time, to be specific. Her eyes travelled across the room, her fork hanging in mid-air.

“Mind if we sit?” A cheerful voice asked.

Felicity pinched her lips at the sound. That voice… that annoying, bitchy, arrogant voice… She’d recognize it anywhere.

Mandy didn’t wait for a reply and she took the seat right across Felicity, Mark following like a puppy and sitting by her side.

“You look great, today. Did you enjoy the sun this weekend?” Mandy asked innocently. “You sure seemed to, from what we saw.”

Felicity put down her fork, not trusting herself with any kind of potential weapon. “What do you want?”

“Nothing,” Mandy shrugged. “Just making small talk. I mean… we sure seem to have something in common, now.”

“At least you were classy enough to avoid the tabloids,” Mark snorted, filling Felicity with the need to strangle him with his bowtie. “Vegas, can you believe it? Although… everybody knows that everything that comes from Vegas is… cheap.”

“And easy,” Mandy completed.

Felicity gulped, breathing deeply through her nose. “We both know nothing happened between you and Oliver in that hotel room. Even with him half-drunk, you didn’t have your way.”

The other blonde paled, anger flashing through her eyes. “It’s called self-esteem. You should try it.”

“You wouldn’t know self-esteem even if it hit you on the head with one of your sparkly high heels,” Felicity hissed.
“Yet… I’m not the one who kept her job by sleeping with her boss. So tell me.. Did it start when Robert died? Did you comfort the heir to the empire?”

The words hit Felicity with such force that she felt the air leave her lungs. “You bitch!”

Mandy leaned in, whispering, “I’d rather be a bitch than a slut with a holier than thou attitude.”

“And we all thought you were blackmailing him,” Mark laughed. “While you were just giving him head. And probably good one since you outlasted all the ones before you. At least his previous secretaries knew when to leave.”

“I’d never thought you’d be his type,” Mandy said pensively, tapping her chin.

As more and more people started to pay attention to their conversation, Felicity became aware that she was the center of attention. They had kept their voices down but it probably didn’t take a genius to figure out what it was about. The mean, vengeful look on both of their faces finally made her snap out of the shock the verbal attack had left her in.

Standing up, she calmly put her magazine back in her purse, putting her chair back. “You are just extremely bitter that Oliver never took a look at you, except for when he was looking for an easy lay. And you,” she added, looking at Mark, “your time here is winding down. No one trusts Isabel’s former puppet. Enjoy the health-care while you still have it. The two of you, I mean.”

She was about to turn around when she stopped herself, holding a finger in mid-air. “Oh. And while we’re at the friendly advice exchanging part, I would hide better my short-lived career in the porn industry, Mandy. And Mark…giving confidential financial information about your last employer in exchange for money? Tsk, tsk. That’s several years in prison. I’d be careful, if I were you. That kind of information could spread like a wildfire.”

Both blinked, their faces paling.

Leaning over the table, Felicity glared at them, smirking. “If it’s online, I can find it. You should remember that in the future.”

Holding her head high, she walked out of the cafeteria, gritting her teeth as she heard the not-so-subtle whispering.

“That’s why she got the job, you think?”

“Obviously, she never had any qualifications for it.”

“I know Oliver once told Mr Steele that she couldn’t even make a cup of coffee.”

“Isn’t she supposed to be smart?”

“Smart or… talented. In a certain area.”

“Now watch them move her to another service for a position she didn’t even apply for.”

“Exactly what they did with Isabel.”

It was only when she was in the elevator, alone, that she let the mask fall, her lips trembling. Her
hand was gripping her purse handle so hard, she could feel her nails biting her skin. She kept her eyes firmly on the elevator display, even when someone else entered it. She nodded her head curtly in greeting, counting the floors, setting her mind on the numbers. *Come on, come on. 16th floor. 16th. You just have to make it to 16.*

As soon as the doors opened, she jumped out of the elevator, almost running to her desk, where she threw her handbag. She made a beeline to the bathroom, locking the door behind her. Breathing deeply through her nose, she put her hands on each side of the sink. She was pale, her face tense and her eyes shining with unshed tears. She shook her head, gulping. She wouldn’t cry. She. Would. Not. Cry. She had done nothing to be ashamed of. She had fallen in love with the man she was working for, way after she had proved her worth. She had always been professional, hadn’t benefited from any kind of advantage due to their close relationship. All those people talking… they knew nothing. They didn’t know how much of herself she had given to this job, to this company. How she had put herself at risk. They didn’t know… and they probably didn’t care. All they saw was the scandal, the dirty headlines. Felicity Smoak was better than that. And she was going to prove it to herself.

Turning on the tap, she took off her glasses, dampening her cheeks, letting the cool liquid calm her. She wasn’t going to crumble. She needed a plan.

She tightened her ponytail, put her glasses back and threw one last glance at the mirror before stepping out. Her steps were resolute and as soon as she sat down at her desk, she started the computer. Remembering the names of a few companies she had selected a couple of days ago, she called each of their HR -being held on the line for far too long to her taste. All only confirmed what she knew: no suitable position for someone as qualified as she was.

She was just about to take a break when her attention got caught by a new company settling down in Starling City. She quickly read a few articles, her interest piqued. Biting her lips, she opened a drawer, rummaging through it. Fishing in a box full of notes and documents, she quickly found what she was looking for: an innocent-looking business card.

She stared at the small piece of paper in her hand for what seemed like forever, unsure of what to do. *Now what?*

***

“Mister Queen!”

Oliver locked his jaw in frustration. He was crossing the entrance hall of Queen Consolidated, making his way to the elevators, when one of the receptionists had hailed him.

“Yes?” He turned around, placing a formal smile on his face.

The young red-head blushed as she walked to him. “I’m sorry, Mister Queen, but Mister Steele asked for you to get to his office immediately upon your arrival.”

“... what?” Oliver frowned, caught off guard. Since when did Walter summon him in his office?

“I’m sorry, he didn’t say why, Mister Queen,” the young woman shrugged. “But I would assume it’s because of... you know.”
“Actually… no I don’t.”

The receptionist threw a few nervous glances around her, twitching her hands. “You know… the tabloids.”

Oliver stared at her for a second, completely at a loss. He eventually shook his head. “I still don’t, but I’ll head to Walter’s office right away. Can you inform him I’m on my way?”

He didn’t wait for her reply, rushing to get through the elevator doors that were just closing. He groaned as he saw the occupant.

“Mandy,” he greeted her politely.

“Oliver,” she answered back, keeping her eyes stubbornly on the file she was holding against her chest.

He glanced at her curiously, taken aback by her unusual behavior and slightly relieved by her lack of flirtiness. He really wasn’t in the mood to push back her advances.

She reached her floor before him, mumbling a “have a good day.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows as the doors closed once more, leaving him alone. He didn’t have much time to wonder about Mandy and her strange antics before he was reaching Walter’s floor. He was in his office a few seconds later, his steps big and hurried. Whatever this was, it probably wasn’t good news. Had the tabloids dug up some new scandal involving his father? Had Isabel mentioned the way she had been coaxed into resignation?

He waved at Walter’s secretary who didn’t even have the time to let him through. He knocked on the door, and entered as soon as he got invited in. He was surprised to see his mother at the small conference table, as well as Macy Grey and Denis Lewis.

“Hum… hi,” he said, confused by the unexpected meeting “can someone tell me what is going on?”

“Oliver.” His mother motioned to the chair next to hers. “Sit down. We need to talk.”

They showed him the articles and the pictures, his mother patting his thigh in comfort while he was too shocked to speak.

It honestly felt as if something was crashing inside of him. On the one hand… he would never be able to deny that there was something close to… relief at the idea that his relationship with Felicity was out in the open. No hiding, no secret, no affair. But the overwhelming feeling was one of powerless. His private life was being torn apart by complete strangers, turned into a game, the girl he loved merely a pawn. He wanted to rush downstairs, to get to her, to see how she was handling things but his mother forced him to sit back down. The first thing he needed to do was help them handle the situation. That was the best way to help and protect Felicity. He agreed to the statement concerning his brief engagement, mentally cursing himself that he hadn’t done it sooner. Things had gone much smoother than he had thought with Laurel. He had expected her to come back to him, bargain, or make things more complicated in a way. Instead, she had stayed away. They hadn’t talked to each other, or even seen each other ever since that night in the library that had put a final closure to their relationship. He had been so caught up in his burgeoning romance with Felicity, putting his relationship with Laurel in the past, that he had completely forgotten that nothing official had been done concerning the engagement.
It was indeed more than time to fix it. At least, Felicity wouldn’t be seen as a homewrecker.

They all agreed that Felicity couldn’t keep working directly for him. She had to be moved away. Moira was more than willing to take her as her own personal assistant, hoping that working for the Queen Matriarch would at least offer her a small protection. Show that Moira Queen approved of Felicity and her relationship with her son, and trusted her as a loyal employee of the company as well. It wasn’t ideal of course, because such a high position was always supposed to go through a very selective process and HR had already been busy interviewing some candidates from within QC. Giving the job to Felicity would probably raise a few objections but it was the least of two evils.

Oliver wasn’t left with much choice but to agree, feeling as if something crucial was slipping away from him. It was ridiculous, obviously. Felicity wouldn’t have worked for him much longer and he knew he would have had to let her go at some point. But he was so used to her, so used to leaning on her, relying on her judgment... he felt a bit of fear at the idea that his most trusted partner wouldn’t be with him much longer.

But then… there would be nothing holding them back anymore. He would lose her as a partner, but gain her as something much, much more important and precious. The circumstances were less than ideal, and sure there might be some talk but with the protection of his last name, he was confident no one would dare to speak up to her.

The article and the pictures put him in a blind rage. The words implied were so disgusting, so vile that it made his stomach churn. It was far from the first time that he had made the tabloids headlines, and he had never cared in the slightest - the immature part of him even laughing it off, enjoying the attention - but this time… this time they were using her. Because of who he was, Felicity’s life was becoming a circus, for all to gawk at. He had never hated his name any more than he did at that moment. His name, his past, his behavior, his reputation: Felicity had been thrown to the wolves because of him. He had to make it right, somehow. His mother was right, he had to keep his head cool. Their plan was as good as could be: informing the public that he hadn’t been engaged to Laurel Lance in months, way before he entered a relationship with Felicity; move her to another position where he wouldn’t be her direct boss anymore; keep things neutral and professional for a while, until gossips eventually die while Felicity proves to everyone that her position is more than earned - which she had been doing ever since she had started to work for QC, anyway.

Yes. They could fix this.

He was feeling much more collected when he walked down to his own office. The legal department was already taking charge of the situation, trying to find a loophole that could offer the possibility of legal action against the tabloid and the photographer. Las Vegas laws regarding pictures were much more strict than in the rest of the country - including pictures taken inside a casino, for instance. There was little chance that any lawsuit could be successful but everyone had agreed that showing Oliver taking a stand, condemning firmly, would only prove how that relationship was different from all his other affairs. It would show that this relationship was serious, not just a fling.

He pulled the door so hard that it banged against the wall, the sound echoing through the empty staircase. He shrugged it off, his feet already carrying him towards her desk, his eyes fixed on her. She didn’t move an inch at his arrival, as if she had not noticed him. But he knew her well enough to recognize the tension in her shoulders and the way her fingers had paused for a second over the keyboard.
“Felicity…” he breathed.

She pinched her lips, putting a smile on her face. “Hi, Oliver.”

“I just got out of Walter’s office. We’re gonna fix this. I promise you… we’re gonna fix this,” he said as he sat down on her desk, next to her.

“It’s OK, Oliver,” she shrugged. “We should have known it was bound to happen.”

He frowned, not having expected her to be so calm and rational about it. She probably had had time to cool off a bit as well, gather her thoughts. Which would only make the rest of the conversation easier. HR were writing her a new contract as they spoke, and knowing her like he did, he was aware she would be a bit uncomfortable at the idea of working for his mother. But it was the best solution, for everyone involved.

“I’m still sorry about it. I know you didn’t want to go to Vegas in the first place and-”

She cut him off. “I don’t regret it. We had a lovely time. Besides… it’s as much my fault as it is yours if those pictures came out.”

She stood up, walking towards the printer. She picked up a couple of sheets, handing one to him “I did some research, wondering how you wouldn’t have spotted a paparazzi. I mean, no offense, but you’re pretty used to them.”

Oliver stared at her for a second, the paper hanging limply from his hand, trying to gather his thoughts. Trust Felicity to set her mind on the mysterious part of the news leak.

“I… I don’t know. I guess I was too caught up with you?”

“So was I. I didn’t even notice my ex following us around,” she snorted, rolling her eyes.

“… what?!?” Oliver asked, doubting he heard her right.

“I might have… looked for information. I found a bank transfer from the website to Cooper. It could be a gigantic coincidence but…” she huffed out a humorless laugh. “He probably did some research about you. Then finding out you were the heir to a Fortune 500 company… tabloids love their juicy affairs, don’t they? Easy way to make money.”

Oliver looked at the paper she had handed him, with a screenshot of a bank transfer dated on Monday morning.

“So Cooper is the one who took those pics and sold us out?”

“Him or a friend of his… who knows? But he’s behind it, that’s for sure.”

“Wow,” Oliver murmured, staring into emptiness. That was some tasteless move, even by that guy’s standards. How could have Felicity loved a man like that? Had he always been that way or did he turn wrong somewhere along the way?

“He wasn’t like that at first, you know,” she explained softly, probably understanding his silence. “It started innocently enough. In the end, he was convinced his PhD was more important than my Master’s and I believe he thinks I… betrayed him. That’s when this ugly part of himself showed up.”

“Wow,” was all Oliver could say again. He shook his head, knowing there wasn’t much they could do about Cooper Seldon for the moment.
“HR is going to drop off a new contract for you. My mom told you about it, I believe?”

“To be her PA, you mean?”

“Yes, I know it’s not ideal, but at least you won’t be working directly for me, and being my mom’s PA will at least give you some kind of protection.”

She snorted. “Yeah, right…”

“I’m serious. Gossips travel fast, and probably everyone who works here already knows about it.”

“Yes, they do, Oliver.” She glared at him. Something dropped in the pit of his stomach at what he saw in her eyes. Hurt. Anger. Resolution.

He was about to talk when she interrupted him. “Do you really think that because the Queen Matriarch would be my direct boss, suddenly everyone is going to forget about it? Because they won’t. And I can guarantee you that they might keep it quiet in front of you, or your mother, but they sure as hell won’t hold back in front of me.”

“Has anyone told you anything?” Oliver asked, feeling his anger rising. If someone dared to taunt her about those pictures...

“Oh of course, Oliver!” she exclaimed, throwing her hands in the air. “Of course, people have been talking, what… in what world do you live?!”

“I’m… I… I’m sorry. I didn’t know,” he stuttered.

“It’s not any more your fault than it is mine, we have already established that,” she snapped.

“But once people will know how serious it is between us, they…”

“They will think I was moved to your mother’s office, without earning my place once more shall I add, in an attempt to sweep the issue under the rug.”

“Felicity… We just need a bit of patience. And… to grit our teeth for a little bit.”

She smiled sadly, nodding slightly. “That’s what you don’t understand, Oliver. I am the one who is going to have to grit her teeth. And I don’t want to. I don’t deserve to. I shouldn’t have to. I want to work in a company where I am valued. Where I can make a difference. Where that fucking degree I worked so hard to get is actually worth something. I will always be seen as your affair and wherever I end up it will always be because of you.”

“What?! No! The board members, the executives know your value!”

“And they don’t care if that value is wasted, Oliver. I’m just the girl enamoured with her boss. My loyalty, my hard work… for most of those people, it all comes back to this: I was doing it for you. It’s time I do it for me.”

“I… I don’t follow you, here,” Oliver said, confused. He knew that the outstanding work Felicity had accomplished had very little to do with him or her feelings for him: she was a hard worker, had always been and always would be.

“Oliver… I came up with the cogeneration plan. I helped you get Mr Backstone’s support. I found the way to get Isabel out of QC. Yet not a single board member, not a single executive once thought that I deserved to work in my field. That I would be valuable there. I am in the marketing
department, coming up with ideas for the Applied Sciences department, launching them in a complete new, innovative direction and yet… once I need a job fitting my qualifications… they can’t find any. I deserve better.”

“Of course, you do! I’d force them, if I could! You know that!”

“I know. But if you did, it would only be you pressuring colleagues to hire your girlfriend. Not forcing them to admit that I could be a fantastic asset. And I would be. I am not being cocky but I finally know my worth. And it’s not being gossiped about while I bring coffee to white-collars.”

There was such a certainty in her voice that it sent a shiver of fear down Oliver’s spine. She was escaping. She was running away. He was losing her, he could feel it deep down his heart.

“What… what do you mean exactly, Felicity?” he asked, needing her to say the words.

She took a deep breath, handing him the single sheet of paper she was still holding in her shaking hands. “This is my resignation letter. Tomorrow is going to be my last day. I’ll make sure everything is in order for my successor.”

“No.” He shook his head. “No!”

“Yes, Oliver. It’s the only way if… if there is a chance for us to become something. And even if there isn’t… I still have to go. For me.”

“But where? I could ask Tommy, he adores you, he could find a job for you!”

“I already found one, Oliver. They are expecting me as soon as possible. Thursday, if possible.” she said quietly “all you have to do is accept my resignation and write me references so everything is in order with both HR.”

“How could you have found one yet? It’s hardly been hours!”

“Palmer Tech is opening a branch in Starling. Ray Palmer offered me the job of Technical Advisor. I would be handling one of their new eco-friendly projects from start to finish.”

It felt like someone had punched him in the guts. Palmer… the guy who hadn’t left her side at the reception months ago at the Queen Mansion. The one who had asked for an appointment with him, only to try to steal her away from him…

“Palmer?” he spit. “You’re going to work for Palmer?!”

“Yes, I am,” she frowned, obviously taken aback by his tone. Her hand reached for his arm as her eyes searched his own. “Ray and I have a common vision concerning new green technology, and a similar mindset, yet with complementary skills. It’s a fantastic opportunity for me, Oliver.” She smiled, pausing “And it couldn’t have come up at a better time.”

He stood up from her desk, pacing, his hands ruffling his hair over and over again in frustration. “You can’t… you can’t do that!”

“I can’t?” she asked calmly, her tone now much sharper. “I can’t?”

“The guy has been trying to get inside your pants ever since that night at the Mansion!”

“Excuse me?!” she raised her voice, crossing her arms on her chest as she faced him.

“Oh, come on! He barely left your side then all he did during our meeting was talk about your
abilities, if your contract was long-term—"

She interrupted him, her eyes flaring with anger. “And when I told him I wasn’t going to leave my position, he backed off, handing me his business card and I never heard from him again!” she yelled the last words, “I am the one who eventually reached out to him, not the other way around!”

“I still don’t trust him!” Oliver shouted back. “What if he was so willing to hire you because he read that article?!”

Felicity paled at his words. “... you’re not serious, are you?”

Putting his hands on his hips, Oliver took several deep breaths, willing to calm himself. “No. I didn’t mean it that way. But it still doesn’t change the fact that I do not trust him.”

“Then trust me! Trust me, Oliver!” she pleaded. “Why are you so worried about me working with him?!”

“Because I can’t imagine a man spending so much time with you and not fal-” he caught himself at the last second, biting his lip so hard he drew blood. Now was not the time.

“And not...?” she trailed off, her voice wavering.

“And not...” he tried to come up with something - anything really- that could avoid him trouble, “and not try something with you.”

Yeah… probably not your best, there.

“Try something with me?” she hissed. “Try something with me?! So what are you going to do, throw a temper tantrum every time I’ll get to work with another male? It’s not because you have the habit of trying something with all your secretaries,” she grimaced in disgust. "That all men act the same!"

“Hey! I’m not the only one who has a pattern when it comes to boss-employee relationships!” he shouted defensively.

She gasped, taking a step backwards. He saw the pain his words had caused and a part of him wanted nothing more than to take them back. But he was feeling so powerless in this whole situation. It was almost as if she didn’t even want to try to fight for them. She had made her decision in a matter of hours, walking away from what they had built. She was running away, like she had run away from Vegas, from MIT and Boston. He had to make her see his point of view, he had to make her understand that walking away was not the right solution for them. He couldn’t just stand there and let her slip away from him.

“Do you really mean that?” she eventually asked him, narrowing her eyes.

He sighed deeply because despite all the anger, the frustration and the fear… he could never stand to hurt her. In any way.

“I didn’t mean it that way, Felicity. I just feel like you’re running away instead of fighting for me. For us.”

“I can’t fight for us if I don’t fight for myself, first. I would eventually resent you, Oliver,” she explained slowly. “Today only proved that... you and I are not equal in this situation. We won’t work out if I always feel inferior to you.”
“Felicity… you are so far from being inferior. How can you even believe it for one second?”

“It’s because I am, Oliver. I am dependent. You are my boss. Your name is on the top of the building. I will always have to answer to you. It’s… it’s not healthy. However our relationship ends up.”

“You know I see you as my partner, not my employee. You’re making a decision in a spur of a moment. Just… give us a bit of time to figure it out?”

“My mind is made up, Oliver. I just need a reference letter.”

“I’m sorry… I can’t do that.” Oliver shook his head. “I won’t.”

She was going too fast… way too fast. They needed to take a breath and figure things out together. As a couple. As a team. All he needed was a couple of days to make her see his point of view. He would respect her wish in the end, but he deserved a voice in the matter… didn’t he?

“Oliver,” she warned him.

“I’m serious, Felicity! Give us a couple of days at the very least!”

“I can’t! Ray’s candidate for the job pulled out at the last second for some family issues. It’s a unique opportunity! I can’t have them on hold!”

“Surely they don’t expect you to walk away like that! Their HR probably know of formal notice?!?”

“I can walk out of this office whenever I want to, Oliver. I made sure a clause was added to my contract.”

“It was implied that it was for a job inside this company!”

“Then instead of playing on your phone that day, you should have had Sara add that bit as well!” She picked up her purse, turning off her computer. “Listen… I think we both should take the night to cool off a bit. Today has been exhausting. We’ll talk tomorrow.”

He stood there, watching her gather her things, desperately trying to find a way to make her stay.

“Oliver… don’t make me use this clause to end my contract. Please,” she eventually told him before walking to the elevator.

“I need you,” he said quietly, watching her walking away from him.

“No, you don’t,” she answered, her back facing him as she waited for her elevator. “Not anymore, at least. You found your own way months ago, Oliver.”

As she entered the elevator, he caught a glimpse of her face. There was sadness, and pain, but also resolution. She had made up her mind. There was nothing he could do to talk her out of it.

He was still standing in her office when, five minutes later, an out of breath intern from the HR ran towards him.

“Mister Queen. Here is the new contract for Miss Smoak. I’ve been told to deliver it to you directly.”
“Thank you,” Oliver replied automatically, grabbing the file. He didn’t even pay attention to the employee walking away, his eyes fixed on the contract that would never be used.

She was leaving.

Chapter End Notes

So... things are speeding up on one aspect... but Oliver is having a hard time dealing with that. It will be explained more in the next few chapters but I felt like... Oliver also has issues. We see on the show, he tends to be very controlling. I kept that, + the fact that he always had everything handed to him on a platter, as opposed to Felicity who’s had a rougher life. AT some point, those very different life experiences were bound to clash.

Don't worry. It won't last very long, just enough to get two very important scenes between Felicity/Moira and Felicity/Tommy ;)

A few random things: I know a lot of people don't like Ray. I decided to keep the good part of him, the one who saw right away Felicity's worth and put her in a position where she can shine. We're over 40 chapters so no, no love triangle, no other love interest. He's there as business partner, as a boss - a very understanding one, which is something that is canon. Hope it makes you feel better about it ;)

I hope you liked Felicity taking a stand and putting her future first. Don't worry, Oliver will come around ;)

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don't be shy, come say hi!
Hi guys!

So, this chapter is dealing with the fallout of chapter 42. We dig a bit more into Oliver's thoughts, and we get some interesting point of views from Moira and Tommy.

Song: Wild World - Mr Big (originally Cat Stevens but I love Mr Big's version so freaking much)

Big, big thank you to my beta, mysticaldetectivepanda (who made sure I didn't have a plot pant instead of a plotted plan which kinda changes the whole meaning XD) as well as pidanka, my delta

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Wild World"

La...la...la...la...la

Now that I've lost everything to you
You say you wanna start something new
And it's breaking my heart you're leaving
   Baby I'm grieving

And if you wanna leave take good care
Hope you have a lot of nice things to wear
   A lot of nice things turn bad out there

   Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
   It's hard to get by just upon a smile
   Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
   I'll always remember you like a child girl

You know I've seen a lot of what the world can do
   And it's breaking my heart in two
   'Cause I never want to see you sad, girl
   Don't be a bad girl

But if you wanna leave take good care
Hope you make a lot of nice friends out there
   Just remember there's a lot of bad and beware

   Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
   It's hard to get by just upon a smile
   Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world
   And I'll always remember you like a child girl
“Oliver?” His mother’s voice reached through his clouded thoughts. He was sitting in Felicity’s chair, staring out the window. The sun was slowly setting on the city, the light soft and comforting… a direct opposite of how he was feeling. Everything had happened so fast, it was almost as if he’d been a spectator of the events. He hadn’t had time to process anything. One minute he was happy and the next one, the world was crashing at his feet. He knew it wasn’t the worst thing that had happened to him recently, but it truly felt like the last straw. The one person who had helped him keep it together was leaving. There was nothing he could do to make her stay and it terrified him.

“Mmmh?” he hummed, turning around.

“Oh, honey,” Moira said as soon as she saw his face. “What happened?”

“She quit. Felicity…” he cleared his throat. “She quit. She accepted a job at another company this afternoon.”

“Oh. That’s a surprise. What kind of position is it?”

“Technical Advisor for Palmer Tech.”

“Palmer Tech?” Moira asked, frowning. “Aren’t they based on the East Coast?”

“They’re opening up a new branch here, in Starling City.”

“It does make sense. Starling is Ray’s hometown as well, after all. Why are you so mopey? Isn’t that a great opportunity for her?”

“... It is. I just wish she would have fought harder instead of… giving up,” he mumbled, keeping his eyes on the floor.

Moira rested her hip against the desk. “It is a position that is clearly more in her field. Isn’t that good?”

Oliver groaned, rubbing his eyes. “She could have gotten something similar here, eventually. Or even better, you know that. I mean if things had followed their natural course…”
“I do not know her as well as you do, Oliver,” his mother smiled reassuringly at him, patting his hand. “But what I do know is that she deserves to follow her dreams. She also deserves to make a name for herself.”

“Not you, too!” he sighed, frustrated. “Since when being associated with a Queen is such a bad thing?”

“You can’t understand, honey. You’re a man.”

“Are you implying I’m some kind of a misogynist?” Oliver asked, offended at the thought. He had always seen Felicity as his equal… and more often than not, as superior.

“No,” Moira laughed. “I see you as a young, privileged man.”

“I’m privileged mostly because of your part of the family and dad’s name. I don’t see how you can exactly fault me for that!”

“Exactly. The wealth, the connections… it all comes from the Dearden side. Yet I’m only seen as Mrs Moira Queen, widow of Mister Robert Queen. My family built this company as much as your father did. I worked as hard as he did until you were born. The partnership with Merlyn Global was built up by Rebecca and I, mostly. But now… I’m just a former housewife.”

“I don’t see you as one. Neither does Walter.”

“And you don’t see Felicity as your mistress or your secretary. But is it fair to ask of her to have every single one of her achievements tied to her connection to you? Doesn’t she have the right to shine on her own?”

“Of course. I want the best for her. If I could give her the world, I would, mom. I wouldn’t hesitate one second.”

“She doesn’t want you to give it to her. She wants to earn it by herself.”

“But—”

Moira cut him off. “Your father gave you this position because you were his son. Can you honestly tell me that you don’t feel much more proud of yourself now that you actually worked for it? You didn’t even want the VP position when he died. You wanted to earn it.”

Oliver opened his mouth, then closed it, trying to process his mother’s words. “The difference is… Felicity has already earned her place here. I hadn’t when dad died. It’s… it’s not the same.”

“Are you sure the main problem isn’t you?” Moira asked softly. “Aren’t you simply afraid of not being able to rely on her anymore? You two became quite the team over the last few months. I won’t deny that it has been an absolute joy to see you so passionate about your work. I know Felicity played a huge part in that. She made you realize the value of working for something, the utter satisfaction you get when you have to fight your way through and succeed despite the odds. She succeeded where your father and I failed.”

“I won’t be able to… be there for her in that new company. I won’t be able to protect her. When she started working for me, there had been… sneaky whispers, insinuations. I defended her. I can’t do that if she doesn’t work here anymore.”

Moira stayed silent for a second, then asked him, “Oliver, do you remember the fight you had with your father when he wanted you to go to Princeton instead of Stanford?”
Frowning, Oliver looked at his mother, wondering what his college had to do with anything. “Yeah…”

“Why do you think he didn’t let you go to another college?”

“Because he had this whole perfect picture of the Queens all going to Princeton, generation after generation,” he snorted, still remembering the fight like it was yesterday. Robert had given him little choice, either Princeton or being cut off.

“No. He wanted you to go there because in Princeton… he could protect you. He knew the professors. He knew the chancellor. Your father had connections everywhere on the campus, Oliver. If you were straying a bit too far, he would have known and been able to put you back on the right path. If you were struggling somewhere, he would have been told and he could have helped you.”

“What?” Oliver breathed, astounded.

“You are so very much like your father in many ways. You need to control the things you care about. It scares you when that control slips away. It’s our fault. We raised you with this idea that you would have to run an empire we created, that it was your responsibility to take care of it. Don’t let that damage your relationship with her.”

“I… I know that. I just feel like I’m losing her,” he whispered.

“Because you are, in a way. And you’re letting that pain blind you. But this is not the end of your story. It’s only the beginning. It’s a fresh, healthy start, for the both of you.”

“I just don’t know what I’m supposed to do. It’s like I’m giving up.”

“You are not giving up. You are letting her choose her own path. You have to let her go, Oliver. You won’t lose her.”

“How do you know that? I mean… this guy… Palmer,” he spit the name despite his best intentions. “He speaks her language. While most of the time I’m at a loss. She said so herself, they have a lot in common. Much more than we do.”

“My son. Jealous,” Moira laughed lightly. “I thought I’d never see the day.”

“It’s not funny,” he protested. If even his own mother was diminishing his feelings…

“I’m sorry. You’re right. It’s not. I see the way you look at her and I know there is a deep love in there,” Moira patted his heart, “but I also see the way she looks at you. And what I see is a woman in love. You can’t hold her back because you’re afraid to lose her. You need to let her go so she can come back to you. That’s how you will stop doubting yourself.”

Oliver nodded, lost in thoughts. Moira squeezed his knee in reassurance before adjusting her purse on her shoulder.

“Do you want me to wait for you?”

“No.” He offered her a small smile. “I have a reference letter to write. I’ll go home when I’m done.”

***
Felicity sighed deeply as she finally closed the door of her apartment. She carelessly dropped her purse, stepping out of her shoes and making a beeline to what she fancily called “her wine cellar” - in reality, a small shelf underneath the counter. She grabbed the first bottle of wine she could reach, a glass from the cabinet and after battling with the corkscrew, poured herself a generous amount of the scarlet liquid. Savoring her first sip, she leaned against the counter, untying her ponytail and running her hand through her locks, massaging her sore skull.

Well. Talk about a shitty day.

She let out a dry laugh, thinking how she had woken up, a big smile on her face, giddy at the idea of seeing Oliver. And then everything had crashed down. Tomorrow was going to be her last day, her relationship -if she could still call it that- with Oliver had taken a huge blow, and her period had just started. Taking a big gulp of wine, she put the glass down, her mind set on a nice, very hot shower. She needed to relax or she would never be able to sleep. The words she had exchanged with Oliver were still playing in her mind and they hurt her just as much as when she had heard them first. She couldn’t comprehend his behavior, nor the reason why he was so opposed to her leaving Queen Consolidated. Oliver, who had always been so understanding and supportive, now seemed stubborn and unwilling to see the reality of the situation. How could he expect her to work everyday in a company where she was the latest crispy gossip? Where it felt like whatever she could do, she would always be tied down by him?

She wasn’t running. She was protecting herself, moving on from something that wasn’t working - something that would have probably never worked. No matter how delicious the scenario had seemed to be, being in a real relationship with him and a more balanced partnership at the company - it wouldn’t have worked out in the end. Being Oliver Queen’s girlfriend would diminish all of her accomplishments. She would have either been favored because of their connection, or been denied recognition for her success. She had been so wrapped up in him that she had forgotten how things were in the real world.

When she had found the business card Ray had given her months ago, she had hesitated, not used to call in any favor or seek any kind of advantage. But she had taken a chance and the opportunity Ray had offered her was incredible.

Not only would she work in Star City, but also in something much closer to her field. It wasn’t exactly IT, more technology-oriented. She could get her hands dirty, be involved in innovative projects. It was a dream come true.

Or it would have been if only Oliver had seen things the same way. She knew he was probably still processing, caught up in the scandal. She had needed time to cool off as well. She didn’t really blame him for his sanguine reaction, thinking everything would eventually be fine with her just changing offices. She was hoping they could talk about everything more calmly, and didn’t doubt he would eventually understand her point of view. The threat of using the clause of her contract had merely been there to remind him of their original arrangement. She didn’t want to use it, and was more than hoping that Oliver wouldn’t force her to. She wasn’t sure their relationship could recover from that.

Willing to give Oliver the night to think about everything, she still couldn’t help herself and kept glancing at her phone, hoping to get a text from him.

Once her glass was empty, she padded her way to the bathroom, her muscles aching, craving hot water. She had been so tense that her neck and back were killing her. A long shower, followed by a few episodes of Dr Who would probably help her relax.
She stayed in the shower until the hot water ran out. Putting on a pair of sweatpants and Oliver’s hoodie, she reheated the leftovers she had from yesterday’s takeout, sighing in contentment when she sat down on the couch. She clicked on the remote control, fully intending on enjoying the night. With one last glance at her phone, she resolutely put it screen down on her couch.

Tomorrow was another day. The start of a new chapter. That was what she needed to focus her energy on.

The sun was bright when she woke up the next day. She was up early, so she decided to walk to the office to enjoy the gorgeous weather. Not to mention, a bit of exercise wouldn’t hurt. Surprisingly enough, she had slept quite well, at least until 5AM. She had lingered in her bed, staring at the ceiling, a part of her dreading the day, another part looking forward to the chance to clear the air with Oliver.

The sunny weather always made people upbeat and she was no exception. By the time she had made it to Queen Consolidated, she was smiling, her mood much better than when she had left her apartment. Whatever would happen today, she was on the right path. She was moving forward. And that was a good thing.

Once she was back at her desk, she saw right away that the calls were still being diverted. She sighed in relief, knowing her last day was going to be more than busy. Being able to focus on tying up loose ends and finishing files for Oliver was going to make things much easier.

Sitting down, she rubbed her hands, grabbing a notepad and listing all the things she was supposed to accomplish. Between finishing reports, sorting Oliver’s emails and messages, as well as leaving notes for her successor, she realized that the day was going to be long. Good thing she was there early.

First things first, she figured that she should make sure the archive room was as clearly organized as possible. When she walked into the room, switching on the light, she felt a pinch in her heart when her eyes landed on the small table against a wall. Pictures flashed through her mind of that fateful afternoon where everything had changed between her and Oliver. The way he had pushed her against that very table, his hands slowly reaching underneath her skirt, his ragged breathing in her ear, the taste of his skin, his lips, his mouth,... the rough fabric of his pants against her naked thighs and how hard he had gripped her, guiding her movements, nibbling on her neck…

She shook her head, her heart already beating faster. So not the time. So not the time.

She quickly got lost in her work, as usual. Once she was sure every file was at the right place and that the index was up to date as well, she sighed in relief, admiring her handywork. It was only then that she realized that it was almost 11 and... still no sight of Oliver. Frowning, she walked to her desk, checking her phone. Maybe he had been held up somewhere or a last-minute meeting had happened. She bit her lips when she saw she had no new message and the only emails she had gotten were spam.

As hours went by, she grew more and more nervous. She held back several times from reaching out and calling him - if he wanted to pout like a 5 year-old, then so be it. But she also needed her references and she wasn’t even sure if he had let the HR know that today was her last day. Unsure of what to do, she decided on procrastinating until the last minute. If he didn’t show up by the end of
the day, she’d stop by the HR floor and let them know she wouldn’t be there tomorrow. She swallowed the tears that were threatening to spill, so mad that he would just let her deal with everything instead of handling things with her like an adult. That he wouldn’t even try to make things work between them. That he would prefer to avoid her and make things difficult for her here, at QC, but also for her new job.

She had told him she needed her references and that it couldn’t wait. Yet… here she was, all alone in their office while he was probably busy pouting in his room. Like the spoiled brat he used to be.

“He is so getting a piece of my mind,” she groaned in frustration when the clock passed 4PM, her hands slamming on her desk.

She was just about to go to Ms Grey’s office herself when the elevator finally pinged. She sighed, rolling her eyes, but her relief was short-lived. A young intern, named Jonathan if she remembered correctly, grinned widely when he saw her, only to have his smile fade from his face as he took in her less than pleased expression. She pinched her lips, mentally cursing herself. It wasn’t the poor guy’s fault.

Placing a smile on her face, she welcomed him. “Hi. What can I do for you?”

“Hum.” He handed her a yellow file. “I was told that you needed these documents ASAP. It took us a bit of time, our server crashed and then the printers were not working anymore. I hope it’s not too late?”

Felicity frowned, opening the file. “I didn’t ask for anything…”

She paused when she saw which service it was coming from. HR. A copy of her resignation letter, with a stamp ‘approved’ and a signature, as well as several documents concerning the rest of her wages and legal documents proving no notice was necessary, as well as the typical farewell letter. Last, but not least, was the reference letter she had asked Oliver to write. She tore her eyes off the document, gulping, closing the file. So… he had indeed informed HR.

“Thank you. Right on time,” she smiled shakily.

Jonathan nodded his head enthusiastically as he made his way back to the elevator, wishing her a good day.

When she was sure he was gone, she reopened the file, her hand reaching out for the letter Oliver had written.

“Please, tell me you took this seriously,” she whispered to herself, rubbing her forehead.

Her eyes quickly travelled through words, some sentences catching her attention.

“... if you expect her to be a dutiful employee who will do as she is told, you are probably setting yourself up for disappointment. Miss Smoak is one of the brightest persons who has ever worked for this company and you will be extremely lucky to have her innovative mind in your ranks. She thinks outside the box and doesn’t settle for anything less than the very best, inspiring people around her to do the same…”

“... her biggest assets are her dedication and instincts. Some of the brightest ideas this company has had these last months were directly coming from her, whether it was in marketing or another department...”
“... real partnership... “

“... Miss Smoak gives herself 110% to her work. She will be the most loyal and hard-working employee you will ever have, constantly challenging others and herself....”

“... with great regrets that we are letting her go...”

“... has inspired me personally...”

“... managed to leave her mark in just the few months she has worked here...”

“... hope that you will appreciate her value and let her shine like she is supposed to...”

“... destined to great things and I wish her the very best in her new career...”

“... hiring her has been the best decision I have ever made...”

Felicity put the letter down on her desk, taking off her glasses as her eyes got teary. This… this wasn’t references.

It was a love letter.

It suddenly dawned on her that she would never sit in that chair ever again after today. She would never see Oliver through the glass again, ruffling his hair whenever he was frustrated with a report. No more teasing looks and winks when he was on the phone. No more bickering over the fax machine. No more lattes in the morning and pastries when he felt like he had something to apologize for.

She laughed, remembering a particularly cranky day about a month ago. She had been in a bad mood, dealing with cramps and Oliver had been completely lost, wondering what he had done wrong. He had even called Dig in despair, unable to take the tension anymore. When she had gotten back from her lunch break, Oliver was waiting for her with her favorite chocolate cake, a small hesitant smile on his lips. She had stopped, chuckling at his kicked-puppy face, tempted to pat his head in reward.

Her first day seemed like a lifetime ago, so many things having changed. Herself included. She was so much stronger and more confident, miles away from the hesitant young girl who had freshly arrived from Boston, desperate enough to take the first job she could find. She now knew her worth and was ready to fight for it. All she hoped for was that Oliver would be by her side. Because he had inspired her as much as the other way around. He had been the one trusting her, encouraging her constantly. He had helped her grow and turn into the woman she was. And even if they wouldn’t work together anymore, she wanted him to be a part of the next chapters in her life.

She had a feeling he wouldn’t show up today, but didn’t feel as heartbroken as she had in the morning. He probably needed a bit of time to accept the change and the way he had handled everything for her concerning the paperwork was enough for now. He was still by her side.

She wouldn’t wait for him for ages, though. Giving him a day was OK but she definitely wouldn’t be the one to make the first step.

Giving one last look inside her drawers, she made sure she hadn't forgotten anything personal. She
was just about to turn off the computer when the sound of high heels clicking on the marble floor made her raise her head.

“Mrs Queen?” she asked in surprise as she saw Moira walking towards her with a small smile.

“Miss Smoak. I was hoping I could catch you before you left.”

Felicity stood up as Moira stopped in front of her desk. “Is there something…”

Moira cut her off, waving her hand dismissively. “No, no. Don’t worry. It is merely a friendly visit.”

“Alright…” Felicity breathed, wondering what it was all about.

Moira threw a quick glance into her son’s office, shaking her head. “He didn’t come, did he?”

“No,” Felicity confirmed, shrugging.

“Please… don’t be too mad at him. I don’t think he was ready to say goodbye.”

“I’m not really saying goodbye,” Felicity explained, frowning her eyes. “I mean, I am leaving the company but… I don’t plan on…”

“I know that. I believe he knows it too but… he always hated goodbyes. I think he had high hopes for you inside this company. I am so sorry we couldn’t work it out before… before everything happened.”

“Well… I am not going to deny that I was really hoping I could have stayed here longer and eventually get a position that fits my skills…”

“He tried, you know. Truth be told… if my late husband hadn’t left the company in such a fragile state due to his decisions concerning Isabel… things would have been much easier. Everyone was wary and you paid the price for that.”

“Which is why I don’t really have a choice. I have to go somewhere else and… start afresh,” Felicity said with a small smile. “I am sorry I didn’t get the chance to tell you about my decision to turn down your offer. Everything happened so fast…”

“There is nothing to apologize for. That was a back-up plan but you deserve much more.” Moira took a deep breath. “Oliver’s name will always overshadow your accomplishments or rewards inside this building. It’s not fair to you. You made the right choice. Business is not a fair world for women.”

“Thank you,” Felicity said, surprised and touched. To know that the Queen Matriarch was on her side was reassuring her, the final proof that she was making the right decision.

“I just wanted to let you know that whatever happens at Palmer Tech or… even between you and my son… you will always be welcomed here as long as this name will be on top of that building. Never hesitate if you need anything. Whether it’s me or Walter, if you ever need references or a job, or a recommendation… the door will always be open for you. We owe you a lot and I don’t forget my debts.”

Nodding, Felicity blinked her eyes, feeling the emotions growing inside of her. This was it. She was leaving.

Moira smiled warmly, going around the desk. She softly put her hands on Felicity’s shoulders, meeting her eyes “You are a strong woman. Much stronger than I was at your age. I can not thank
you enough for what you have done here, professionally. And… for what you have done to Oliver. My son became a strong, responsible man in these last few months, and I know that you played a part in that.”

Felicity gulped, feeling a knot in her throat.

“Please, give him a chance to apologize for his… lack of maturity this last couple of days. He will come around and realize you made the right decision. It wasn’t the easy one, but it was the right one. For yourself and also for the both of you. Down the road… it will pay off.”

“Thank you,” Felicity murmured, her voice trembling.

With one last smile, Moira left her office, the sound of her heels echoing in the empty space for what seemed like minutes after she was gone.

The next morning, Felicity was standing on the pavement, holding her phone. She checked the address one last time in the email Ray had sent her, making sure she was at the right place. The building was brand new - actually so new that a few windows were still missing on the far right side.

"Felicity!" she heard Ray's cheerful voice reach her and she sighed in relief.

"Ray!" she turned around, welcoming him with a smile.

"I know what you think... it's not finished yet," he started right away. "Don't worry, it's just the upper floors in the wing that will be used for conferences. Everything else is in order."

"I was mostly afraid I got confused and ended up at the wrong address to be honest," she laughed nervously.

"Come on. Let me show you around and introduce you to your team," Ray grinned, guiding her towards the entrance door. "You're quite lucky though. We had to wear hard hats up until this Monday."

The building itself was much smaller than QC, which wasn't really surprising since it was a brand new branch, while Queen Consolidated had its headquarters in Starling City. She was slightly nervous when they finally reached the department she was supposed to work for - the Research and Technology Division. So far, she didn't have many details concerning her job, apart from the fact that she would be a link between the team and Ray, as well as the other executives. Fortunately, Ray took the time to introduce her to everyone, explaining the projects they were currently working for. With her MIT background, he had decided that the best project for her would be to work on their innovative watch - which could hopefully, in a nearby future, replace a phone or even a small computer. The team in charge of that project was extremely diversified, but small. Two forty-something men with Star Wars T-shirts (already a plus) and three women in their thirties, as well as Felicity who would be the youngest. As usual.

"And this is Daniela," Ray finally introduced her to a young woman with short purple hair. "She will be your assistant. She is a genius with organization and paperwork. If you ever need anything, whether it's about HR, healthcare, the latest gossip or how to fill in your taxes... she knows what to do."

"Assistant?" Felicity asked, raising her eyebrows.
"Well, yes. I need your brains to focus on that watch and nothing else," Ray laughed. "The other members of the team might have to split their work between two or three projects, and you might get other people as well, but you and Daniela will be attached to this one exclusively. It's the best way to make sure each project gets the best skills, but that we don't lose data on the way."

Felicity smiled at Daniela, shaking her hand. "Sounds good."

Their work space was an open floor, where everything was accessible for every employee. There were several separated offices where they could work privately. Felicity's office was the biggest one, with a gorgeous view over the bay. It was very bright and modern, even more than in QC. Apart from her desk, there was a small designer sofa and an oval table with 6 chairs. The walls were empty.

_A tiny bit too modern for me, I'd say._

Daniela's office was just at the entrance of hers and they were slightly separated from the others by a few green plants, creating a more intimate space.

"I figured I'd give you the rest of the week to get to know everyone, get your hands dirty on the prototypes, per say. Then I'd like a report by the end of next week on the improvements we could make, so I can present it to our board. I know there is an issue with the battery, but we have a team of engineers working on that. They'll probably pop in tomorrow to let you know about it."

"That sounds... great," Felicity laughed nervously, caught in the whirlwind. Everything was so new and had happened so fast that she had a mild case of whiplash.

"Don't worry. I don't expect miracles from you. Just get comfortable with the product, tell me what you think of it, what we could do better. For now, that's mostly all I ask of you." Ray pressed her arm reassuringly. "Now, if you'll excuse me, my fiancée is waiting for me. Can't have the lady wait too long for her lunch."

Surprised, Felicity checked her watch, her jaw dropping when she saw it was indeed past noon. "Oh... wow."

"Time flies, right?" Daniela asked her. "I know that deli on the corner, they make the best roasted chicken sandwich ever. Wanna join me?"

Felicity nodded, following her through the building, trying to remember the way to her office. QC had been extremely easy, all she needed to do was take the executive elevator and remember the floor number. This building was smaller in height but more complicated, with wings and shortcuts.

"So, the important stuff you have to know," Daniela said as soon as they sat down on a bench in the park near PT, their sandwiches in hand. "The guys, Ronald and Billy. Geeks. The ultimate definition of geeks. They're nice but they do suffer from severe sexism until you've proven your worth. So just shut them up as soon as you can and they'll leave with their tails between their legs. Nancy, that's the blonde girl, she's nice. Loves cats, though. Mary, brunette with short hair? Her thing is design. She might get obsessed with it but if you listen to her every now and then, she'll be happy. Just watch out a bit for Carly, brunette with long hair and glasses. She doesn't like that project and will probably eventually be transferred somewhere else. You might have to push her so she does her part."

"Wow," Felicity said, her chicken sandwich hanging halfway from her mouth, thinking she might
have found someone who talked faster than she did. "OK. What about you?"

"Me? I'm employee of the month," Daniela winked, taking a sip of Dr Pepper.

They spent their lunch hour talking on the bench, realizing that, apart from being the youngest members of the team, they also had quite a lot in common. Daniela had grown up without her dad, who had passed away when she was a child. She loved Dr Who and X-Files, and had an unhealthy obsession for Jon Bon Jovi.

As soon as they got back to the office, Daniela took care of everything related to HR, including taking a flattering picture of Felicity for her badge, which almost turned into a modeling session. That allowed her to spend the afternoon getting familiar with the other employees, as well as the project.

It was only when everyone was starting to leave that she realized it was already 4PM. She was supposed to stay until 5, but Ray had explained that she could arrive earlier - and leave earlier as well.

Once her colleagues were gone, Felicity set up her computer and email inbox, using the codes Daniela had left for her on her desk. Making a mental note to bring flowers to brighten the place a bit - and possibly a few pillows or decorations -, she read through the HR file that held her badge and all important information concerning healthcare. The documents were very standard and she quickly put them in the back of a drawer, knowing she'd probably never need them.

"What I'm gonna need though... is furniture," she thought out loud, looking at the sparsely furnished room. She needed shelves, cabinets, maybe a small table near the sofa... or no sofa at all, she thought. That thing looks even more uncomfortable than Oliver's.

Oliver. She had thought of him throughout the day, at the most random times. When she had to scribble a few notes on a post-it for instance, reminding her of the amount of times she had done that for him.

She had forced herself to not glance at her phone but had eventually caved in, and seeing no new messages or calls had made her smile flicker. His silence was hurting. She would have loved to share her first day with him, tell him about her own office, the new people she got to meet, that brand new project that made her giddy with excitement just thinking about it. He was the one person she wanted to share everything with and he had pulled away from her.

Remembering Moira's words, she decided she'd give him a few days to get his shit together. What they had was too good to have him act like a petulant child.

The next week happened in a blur. Her job was getting more and more exciting each day, and she was getting to know her team better and better. Daniela had been right about Ronald and Billy. Once she had fixed one of their mistakes, quoting Star Trek while doing so, they had behaved like sheep.

She hadn't gone to Sara's farewell party, being way too exhausted by her work. She had stopped at her place after 5, though, helping her get everything ready. She had left before the first guests had arrived, after a very tearful hug. Sara had tried to persuade her to stay, saying that Oliver was supposed to show up, but the thought had only convinced her other wise. He still hadn't tried to reach out to her and the hurt she had felt the first days was slowly turning into resentment and bitterness.
On Thursday, she presented her first report to Ray who was impressed by her suggestions. To say that she was happy in her new function was an understatement. She felt like she mattered, like she was useful. She had missed that feeling so much over the last few months.

When she arrived back at her place that day, she was surprised to see a familiar silhouette waiting on the steps.

"Tommy?" she asked in surprise.

"Miss Felicity," he grinned widely, standing up. "I thought you'd never show up!"

"No offense but... what are you doing here?"

Tommy's grin slowly slipped from his face as he rubbed the back of his head. "Well... I'm here to make things right between you and Oliver."

"Excuse me?" she snorted, raising her eyebrows. *Tommy Merlyn, couple therapist. Who would have thought?*

"Listen, I know everything that happened. I know he kinda acted like a dick. I told him so, by the way, so don't feel like you have to tell him when he finally gets his head out of his ass."

"Duly noted. But what exactly do you think you can do about it?"

"Felicity... just give him a bit of time. Please. He'll come around."

"It's not as if I left him to go halfway across the world, Tommy!" She threw her arms in the air in frustration. "I took a job, one that seems to be like a dream, by the way, and he reacted as if I... had run away with another man and kidnapped his dog!"

Tommy winced. "I know. Like I told you... a dick. And believe me, he is much more unhappy than you. He is so mopey. Thea told me he watched Bridget Jones last night. Bridget Jones, Felicity. I mean... give him a few more weeks and he'll turn gay."

"A lot of straight men enjoy Bridget Jones, you know." Felicity crossed her arms on her chest, battling a smile. "And I'm also pretty sure people don't 'turn' gay."

"Not straight men like Oliver Queen. He likes Die Hard!"

"What do you want me to do? Send him a few DVDs?"

"Just... don't write him off yet. Give him another chance. He knows he's being unfair."

"Then... maybe he should just tell me instead of sending his best friend!" Felicity groaned, frustrated. "I swear to God he acts like we were still in high school!"

"Technically, he didn't send me. And... he doesn't really know how to handle all of this," Tommy added, waving his hand in the air.

"All of what?"

"You. Him. Felicity... he's crazy in love with you. Don't give up on him," Tommy pleaded, joining his hands.

"He's the one who should be telling me this."
"I know. He will. Once he stops pouting, that is."

She huffed out a laugh, shaking her head. "It's been over a week, Tommy. He didn't even try to find out how my first day at work was."

Her voice wavered on the last words, remembering how abandoned she had felt.

Tommy pinched his lips. "He asked Dig. And Sara. And I know from a very reliable source that he picked up his phone to call you at least twenty times."

"Dig and Sara didn't need him to care. I did."

"I agree. Listen, I'm the first one to say that Oliver is far from perfect. But don't doubt his feelings for you. I think he might have gotten scared and confused and is now probably ashamed. Just be patient with him. Please. He's not very experienced in this area."

Felicity observed him quietly for a moment. "Why... why are you here, Tommy? I mean... surely it's not just because you suddenly feel the need to start a career as a relationship counselor, right?"

Tommy laughed, shoving his hands in his pockets. "I'd be a great relationship counselor. But no. He's my best friend. He's an ass but... he's been my best friend ever since I can remember."

"Why is he acting like this, though. I don't... I don't understand."

"I don't think Oliver ever realized that one day you might leave. For a while now... it was you and him in his head. And seeing you leave QC... probably scared the shit out of him that maybe... you might find someone better too."

"So he decided to ignore me?"

"So he decided that he couldn't face seeing you pack your things and leave his office. Then he realized he hadn't been there when you needed him and felt ashamed of himself. He feels like he failed you. He wanted to be the one to find a solution and he hasn't."

"I'm a grown-up. I found a solution by myself."

"I know. It was still a hard pill to swallow for him. His name, his wealth... his entire life has been made easier because of that. Girls, parties,... anything he wanted really. But then you... you're the one person he wants to give the world to and he can't. It was quite the wake-up call."

"I never wanted him to give me anything. I never expected him to hand me everything on a silver platter."

"He was raised thinking that it was how things worked. So was I, actually. And I can tell you this: it's not that easy to face the reality of your own limits. And those limits didn't affect him as much as they affected you. You're his weakness, Miss Smoak." Tommy winked, back to playfulness.

Sighing deeply, Felicity adjusted the handle of her purse on her shoulder. "Tell him that there is one way to fix this. And Bridget Jones won't help. It involves growing a pair, apologizing and possibly a potted plant."
Sooo... Yep... dick move Oliver. Not talking to her for a week, pouting like a child. There is also a lot of shame playing and tons of confusing feelings. We'll dig into that in the next chapters, but the next one will already explain a lot, because our boy is going to apologize.

If you're wondering about the smut, the make up, please don't ask... Just make sure you don't miss next chapter ;)
(you can still ask, though, I love comments O_O)

Find me on twitter @pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don't be shy, come say hi!
Hi guys!

OK, fair warning: this is clearly NSFW and the rating goes up from M to E.

Huge thank you to pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda because this chapter was a big challenge for me and they both made sure it was as perfect as can be O_O

Song Marvin Gaye - Charlie Puth and Meghan Trainor

Enough with the notes, here comes the sex.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Marvin Gaye"

Let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
You got the healing that I want
Just like they say it in the song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on

We got this king size to ourselves
Don't have to share with no one else
Don't keep your secrets to yourself
It's kama sutra show and tell (yeah)
  Woah
  There's loving in your eyes
  That pulls me closer
  (Ooh it pulls me closer)
  It's so subtle
  (It's so subtle)
  I'm in trouble
  (I'm in trouble)
  But I'd love to be in trouble with you

Let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
You got the healing that I want
Just like they say it in the song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
You got to give it up to me
I'm screaming mercy, mercy please
Just like they say it in the song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on

[Meghan Trainor:]
And when you leave me all alone
I'm like a stray without a home
I'm like a dog without a bone
I just want you for my own
I got to have you babe
   Woah
There's loving in your eyes
   That pulls me closer
   (Ooh it pulls me closer)
   It's so subtle
   (It's so subtle)
   I'm in trouble
   (I'm in trouble)
But I'd rather be in trouble with you

Let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
Ooh, baby I got that healing that you want, yeah
   Like they say it in the songs
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on

Let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
You got the healing that I want
Just like they say it in the song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on, babe
   You got to give it up to me
   I'm screaming mercy, mercy please
   Just like they say it in the song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
   Just like they say it in a song
Until the dawn, let's Marvin Gaye and get it on
   Oooh

On Friday morning, Felicity made a decision. After her talk with Tommy the previous day, she wasn’t willing to let things stagnate any longer. If Oliver wasn’t mature enough to come talk to her, she would go to him. Whatever was going to happen between them, there were a few things she needed to get off her chest.

Suffice to say, she was in warrior mode when she arrived at work. Her team had a hard time keeping up with her speed talk and she eventually locked herself in her own office, figuring that maybe it was better to let them work on their side while she focused on the battery problem. The engineers had come up with a few solutions, but their ideas would also bring issues with stability. By the end of the day, her ponytail was a mess of epic proportions, she had managed to spill a few drops of coffee on her summer dress and her nail polish was looking like a Picasso painting. Yet, she was still full of a bubbling energy and it was almost with regret that she had to call it a day. Her colleagues had already gone home and she was the last one in the office. She turned off the lights on her way out, noticing that the building was mostly empty. It was, after all, Friday, and people usually didn’t linger at work before a weekend.
It was already 4:30 when she pushed open the doors of PT, her eyes watering at the still blinding light. It was a bright summer day and after staying indoors for so long, she felt like a vampire walking into daylight.

She was still blinking, trying to find her sunglasses in her purse, while holding her tote bag in a delicate balance on the tip of her fingers, when she bumped into something solid.

“Sorry” she winced, waving apologetically.

“I believe that’s my line.”

She stopped rummaging through her bag at the sound of his voice. Oliver.

Her mouth opened in the shape of an O as she tried to gather her bearings. No matter how much she had wanted to see him and tell him a few - heated - words, she didn’t expect to stumble upon him outside of PT.

He smiled shyly, shifting on his feet, the sun playing in his hair and making his eyes so blue that her mouth watered. How was she even supposed to form words when he was looking like this? He was wearing a worn out pair of jeans and a white T-shirt, hands shoved in his pockets, making him look like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

“Oliver?” she finally managed to say “what… what are you doing here? And by here, I also mean… now?”

He grimaced, his eyes leaving hers and settling on a wall behind her “I have come here every day this week, actually. I just… left every time.”

She frowned “I'll comment on the creepy side of that later. What do you want?”

No matter how pleased she was to see him, how her heart felt like it was about to burst, she didn’t want to get her hopes up.

“To Apologize. For once” he answered calmly “Felicity… I’m sorry. I was… I was a dick.”

“Yes, you were” she agreed, putting her sunglasses on her nose and shoving the other ones in their case “what I’d like to know is why. Why, Oliver?”

“You just made that decision and… I’m not saying you didn’t have the right to, just that I felt… excluded. I always saw us a team. The dream team, even. I knew it wouldn’t last forever, but in my mind… it was always going to be us against the world, in a way. I wanted to find a solution for you and for us but you didn’t want any of it.”

Felicity sighed “I wasn’t rejecting you, Oliver. I have always fought my own battles. I have always found a way myself. I’ve never counted on anyone to help me.”

“Anyone or… any man?” he asked softly.

The question caught her off guard as she rubbed her forehead in confusion. Was there some truth to that? What he had told her the week before, about her running away like she always did… was it a coping mechanism? Leave them before they leave you or let you down?

“Listen, Felicity, I am not trying to put the blame for my behavior on you. I acted poorly” he explained “but you asked me why I behaved that way. And it felt like… you didn’t trust me to find a solution or protect you and… It was like you were slipping through my fingers or didn’t think you
could count on me.”

Felicity shook her head, trying to clear her own thoughts “I… That’s what I do, Oliver. I fight for myself. But I wasn’t running away from you. I was running away from the situation. Because I’ve been there and it hurts. And it’s like hitting a wall over and over again. I couldn’t stay for you. I would have resented you.”

“I finally understood that. My mom had to help me, though.”

“I read the reference letter you wrote…”

“I meant every single word of it.”

“And then your mother told me you probably couldn’t face the idea of seeing me pack my things. Is that true?”

Oliver bowed his head in shame “I didn’t want you to think that I would ever stand between you and your career. I will always support you. But the idea of going to the office, knowing that would be the last time I’d see you through that wall glass… do you know that around 2PM, the sun is right behind you and it gives your hair the most golden highlights I have ever seen? Or when your day is done, you always put your keyboard in the exact same place? When you’re mad at me, which happens about once a day at the very least, you chew so hard on that pen of yours, I always worry you might hurt yourself. But I can’t take my eyes off your lips anyway. Well… I guess I should use the past tense” he laughed nervously “whenever there was something wrong going on… All I needed to do was take a look at you and… everything would fall back into place. You changed everything, Felicity. It only took you a few months and… you changed my entire life. The boss I was, the man I was. I wanted to give back a little bit of what you gave me. I couldn’t see myself ever leading this company without you by my side. It was like I was failing you and you are the one person that I never want to fail. Because you never failed me. Please, forgive me.”

“Wow” Felicity breathed “wow.” The man knows how to apologize that’s for sure.

“Is… is that a good wow, or a bad wow?” Oliver asked, gulping.

“It’s a… good wow” she nodded enthusiastically “that was a good speech. That was a very good speech.”

Oliver sighed in relief but she stopped him with a hand on his chest “don’t think you’re off the hook yet.”

“I know. I’ll do whatever it takes for you to forgive me. I promise you I will never act like a…”

“A dick” she prompted with an innocent smile.

Oliver gritted his teeth but his playful eyes gave him away “like a dick again. Well, no… it might happen again. I’m still learning. But I promise you it won’t take me 10 days to apologize ever again. I now know that I hurt you and… I thought you would be mostly mad at me. With good reason. I should have been there, I should have asked you about your first day, your first week... Please give me a chance to be there for all the other ones.”

She observed him, a lump in her throat. On the one hand, she knew she had the right to be mad and to make him crawl… on the other one… she had missed him. So much. And after such a speech, how could she stay mad at him? Oliver had been the perfect boyfriend, could she really give him a hard time over his one and only failure? Especially after such a heartfelt apology?
“If I could go back to last Tuesday and re-do it, I would” he eventually said, her silence obviously making him fidgety.

She smiled, her mind made up. Life was too short. They would need to talk about it because a lot of issues had been brought up, and not only on his part. But for now... for now, she wanted to be with him. And that was all that mattered.

“Oh, really? Be my guest, then.”

“Yes” he nodded vigorously, clearing his throat “I understand and I support you, Felicity. Even though seeing you go is even tougher than that time when the Starling City Rockets lost in the last second to a very unfair-”

“Last Tuesday, Oliver” she cut him off, hiding her laugh behind her hand.

“Yes” he grinned “my bad. Here is your reference letter. Also feel free to tell Palmer-”

“Ray” she interrupted him once more, a wide grin on her face.

He huffed out a breathy laugh, the one he seemed to only reserve for her and she felt her walls crumbling. Or rather, whatever was left of them.

“Right. Feel free to tell Ray that I will personally kick his butt if he doesn’t treat you the way you deserve to be. Or ask Dig to kick his butt, because he’s on my side for that.”

“Oh, really?” she chuckled “you do know that Ray is my boss, now, right?”

“Yes. And I hope he knows how irreplaceable you are. It took me too long to figure it out.”

“Oh, Oliver…” she whispered, feeling her heart swell.

“I mean, literally. Your successor is dreadful” Oliver deadpanned.

She hit him on the chest, groaning “You little…”

“Shhh” he placed a finger on her lips “we’re at last Tuesday, remember? Technically I am still your boss.”

She glared at him, trying to keep her face stern but failing miserably. He was there, with her and everything felt right.

“So, where was I?” Oliver continued “Oh, yes. Here is your reference letter. Please don’t steal post-it pads on your way out, it drives me insane when employees do that.”

“You have my word.”

“Good.”

“I’m taking the stapler, though.”

“Sneaky little thing, aren’t you?” he grinned widely, a few wrinkles appearing on the corner of his eyes.

“Staplers make good weapons, I’ll have you know” she stated, remembering the day when she had thought he was an intruder and had grabbed the stapler on her desk to protect herself.
“Since I want nothing more than to know that you are safe and sound, I’ll let that one go.”

“Also a dozen pens.”

“… I’ll let those go, too. Because they make me think of your lips and I really like your lips.”

“And—"

“Miss Smoak” he scolded her “I am trying to give a boss-employee speech, here.”

“My bad. Keep going, Mister Queen.”

“I was about to ask you if you needed a hand packing, actually.”

“Nope, I’m all good. Modern woman, remember?” she chirped, straightening her shoulders proudly.

“True. So, have a good first day at your new job. Try not to impress them too much.”

“Thank you. I’ll do my best” she said seriously, nodding her head. He stepped away from her, reaching behind a small bench. He picked up something that looked like a pot and she giggled once she saw what he was holding in his hands.

“A fern?!”

“Yes. The traditional “have-a-good-first-day-at-work” fern.”

She perked an eyebrow at him. He pinched his lips “Fine. Tommy might have mentioned the need for a potted plant.”

“And you picked a fern, out of all the plants?” she laughed out loud.

“… Ferns are very strong plants. They don’t need a lot of light to survive and I didn’t know what your office looked like” he explained, holding the plant protectively.

She eyed him suspiciously “Is that the only reason? Tommy mentioned Bridget Jones… you didn’t also watch How To Lose A Guy In Ten Days, now did you?”

The familiar blush creeping up his cheeks was the only answer she needed.

“Thea made me” Oliver eventually mumbled “she said it would help me. Although, now that I think of it, maybe it was a lie and she just wanted to watch that movie.”

“You think?” Felicity grinned, reaching for the potted plant “but thank you. I love it.”

Oliver smiled, his body relaxing “so now that we’ve established that you are not my employee anymore…”

“…yes?” she breathed, her interest piqued.

“Would you like to go to dinner with me?”

“Now?” she asked, confused, glancing at her watch “it’s not even 5.”

“Well… no. Not now, specifically. Although we could get coffee?” he said hopefully “I could drive you back home, if you want me to.”
“I was planning on walking, actually” she winced “my legs have been killing me and walking usually helps.”

“Oh” Oliver’s smile dropped of his face “Sure. I mean… I totally understand. Another time, maybe?”

Felicity laughed, shaking her head “I didn’t mean that I didn’t want that coffee, just that I’d rather walk. You’re more than welcome to join me, Oliver.”

“Oh. Oh, good! So you’re OK with a date? I mean, I didn’t want to imply that… that you had to say yes on the date because we weren’t working together anymore or that…”

Raising her eyebrows, Felicity put a hand on his arm “Yes. I’d love to have dinner with you. Maybe not right now, though. But if the offer for the coffee still stands despite the walk, I’d like that too.”

“Yeah” he grinned.

“Did we just reverse roles, though?”

“Yup” Oliver nodded “we totally did.”

“I have to give you credit, trying to understand ramblings like that is no piece of cake.”

“To be fair, I’ve had months of practice.”

While Felicity went back to her office to put the fern on her desk - the sight might have made her smile way too wide for such a simple plant -, Oliver went to get their drinks in the small coffee shop across the road. He handed her a caramel frappuccino, taking the tote bag out of her hand and carrying it for her. Seeing Oliver Queen proudly holding a tote bag saying “Talk nerdy to me” made her crack a smile.

Where are the paparazzi now?!

The walk back to her apartment took about thirty minutes, and mostly because they took their time. They walked leisurely and Felicity told him about the team she was working with, the new people she got to meet and all the challenges she was facing. As soon as he was done with his coffee, Oliver grabbed her hand, linking their fingers, and didn’t let go until they arrived at her building. Her heart started to beat faster and faster the closer they got to her apartment. She was becoming more and more aware of him, of his body close to hers, of his thumb stroking the back of her hand, her mind already coming up with a dozen other potential places he could stroke just like that. It dawned on her that, indeed, Oliver was no longer her boss. There was literally nothing that could hold them back anymore.

Thank God it’s Friday and I don’t have to wake up early tomorrow.

She searched for her keys once they were at her building entrance, mentally cursing herself for the lack of order going on in her purse. Oliver shifted on his feet uncomfortably for a few seconds until he seemed to eventually make up his mind, leaning towards her. She felt her eyes flutter but noticed he didn’t go all the way. Reaching on her toes, she closed the gap between their lips, her breathing catching in her throat. The kiss was over way too soon to her liking as Oliver pulled away, pinching his lips.

“... would you be OK for tomorrow night? For dinner, I mean?” he eventually asked as she fished her keys out of her handbag, wondering what had bitten him all of a sudden.
“... Hum. Yes. That’s fine.”

“OK. Good. I’ll pick you up at 7?”

*I’ll pick you up at 7? He wasn’t coming up? He wasn’t coming up?!*

“That’s perfect but…”

“But?” he asked, wary, his hands back in his pockets.

“Aren’t you coming up?” she squeaked, the longing in her voice making her feel mortified. *So, OK I am horny and very sexually frustrated. So what?!*

“I don’t want you to think that-”

“That what?”

“That I’m trying to jump you or something. If you first want us to date, that’s fine. I can wait.”

*Are you fucking kidding me right now? Since when does Oliver Queen behave like a gentleman? Where is the man who dry-humped me in a hotel room?! I want that man… I want him real bad right now!*

“Well… I can’t” she gritted through her teeth “we’ve been stuck on the foreplay step for weeks, Oliver. Weeks. I… I need you. I need you to just-”

His lips on hers interrupted her words. They completely made her forget what she wanted to say because holy shit, Oliver wasn’t holding back. It was a battle of tongues and teeth, his hunger as clear as hers as they both gripped each other, their bodies desperate to get closer and closer to each other. The taste of his mouth made her moan deeply, the sound muffled by his lips. It seemed to push him over the edge as his hands gripped her tightly, pulling her against him and she felt his arousal already pressing against her stomach, growing harder through the fabric of their clothes, as if one kiss with her was enough to turn him on. They eventually parted, already out of breath. His pupils were so dilated that his eyes almost seemed black.

Dazzled by him, not trusting herself, she handed him the keys. He nodded, opening the entrance door, pulling her after him. They walked up the stairs in record time, Felicity giggling at their eagerness. They were almost at the top of the stairs when Oliver stopped her, pressing her against the wall.

His mouth against hers, he whispered “I missed that sound. I missed it so much.”

His lip grazed her bottom lip, making her whimper, scratching his arm, feeling the tense muscle of his bicep underneath her hand. He reached underneath the flowy skirt of her dress in retaliation, his palm travelling north of her thigh until his fingers could graze her ass through her panties. Looking at him cheekily, she bent her leg, raising it until her knee reached his hip, bringing her core right against his strong thigh. He kept his eyes on hers for a few more seconds before letting the tip of a finger tease the hem of her underwear, lightly slipping underneath it.

Using as much leverage as she could, she brought her mouth to his, eager to taste him. His tongue invaded her mouth, licking and toying with her, taking no prisoners.

“Our need to get to your apartment” he breathed against her mouth “I’m not going to hold much longer.”
She nodded enthusiastically. *Yes. Oh yes.*

She put her leg back down, grabbing his hand and making a beeline to her door. It was only then that she remembered he was the one with the keys. She was about to turn around when his hands on her hips stopped her. He pushed her against the door, his chest against her back, his mouth pressing a kiss on the back of her neck. She felt him, hard, against her backside and unconsciously rolled her hips. He tensed for a second, his hands holding her so tightly that she was probably going to have bruises. He then pressed back, grinding against her ass. His breath against her neck was hot, ragged.

She became painfully aware of her breasts, squeezed against the door, her nipples hard and borderline aching. She was already so turned on, unable to bring herself to care who might stumble upon them. They were in the hallway and all she could think about was that she was already so wet that he could take her from behind and she wouldn’t complain. He could just open his jeans, push her panties aside, thrust inside her… and she wouldn’t mind. Oliver must have sensed how aroused she was, because one of his hands reached to the front of her legs, slipping underneath her skirt. His mouth nibbled on the tender skin between her neck and shoulder, his hips rolling onto her backside, rubbing against her. His hand travelled between her legs, cupping her through the fabric of her underwear. Once his fingers came in touch with the dampness there, he bit down hard on her shoulder, groaning. She whimpered, her own hand gripping his forearm, pressing him closer. His fingers traced her outer lips through her panties and she squealed when he grazed over her clit.

“Oliver” she whispered “please… please…”

He hummed, licking the lobe of her ear, his finger tracing circles over and over again, teasing her clit mercilessly, sending flashes of pleasure to her core. She was already almost there. She wanted him so badly, she wanted him inside her, but the orgasm was so close, she couldn’t bring herself to move.

“Are you close?” he murmured in her ear “you’re so fucking wet.”

“Yes. Please, yes” she begged, not caring if anyone found them.

She put the one hand that wasn’t holding him against the door, her nails digging in the wood when he rubbed harder against her, his fingers lightly pinching her clit then going back to a circle motion.

“I’m… I’m going… Oliver… I need…”

“What do you need?”

“You. I need you.”

She whimpered and almost cried when his hand left her. He pushed her aside, unlocking her door and shoved her in front of him. He closed the door behind them, locking it and putting on the safety chain as well.

She was about to literally jump him when he stopped her and asked her in rough voice “your phone, Felicity.”

He fished out his own from his back pocket, turning it off. She watched him, wondering why in the world he would think about phones while she had that amazing orgasm just a few seconds away when he violently unplugged the wires from the doorbell. Seeing her lack of reaction, he grabbed her purse.

She finally managed to form words “what… what are you doing?”

“We’re not getting interrupted today, Felicity. Once we start, I’m not stopping until you’ve come.
Around my cock preferably but I’ll be honest with you. I don’t think I’m going to last long, so my fingers might have to do” he told her crudely as he turned her phone down as well, throwing it on the small table near her door.

“Do you want to put a sock on my door knob while you’re at it?” she deadpanned, putting her glasses down as well. For a man who wasn’t going to hold much longer, he sure was keeping a cool head.

“I’d say yes but I’m on my last legs” he said as he took off his shirt and kicked off his shoes “there’s no way I can wait any longer.”

The view of his torso made her salivate and her fingers hooked over his belt, pulling him towards her. Her lips found his, in a messy, sloppy kiss. She guided him to her room, bumping in furniture along the way, both unable to let the other one go long enough to watch where they were going. Oliver laughed at her loud cursing when her hip knocked a basket off a shelf.

He stopped her, pressing her against the wall, kissing her as if his life depended on it, his hand slipping underneath her panties, squeezing her ass, pulling her flush against him. She cupped him through the fabric of his jeans, making him hiss and push his hips against her hand, encouraging her. Unfastening his belt, she popped open the buttons, reaching for his cock.

He stopped her “Felicity. I meant it. I’m really, really hanging on a string, there.”

“So am I” she breathed “I was this close, Oliver. This close.”

He lowered a strap of her dress, his mouth travelling over her breasts. She grazed his lower stomach, feeling a deep, unsatisfied ache growing inside her core. Oh… how she wanted him.

“Oliver. Bed.”

He nodded, grabbing her ass and lifting her, walking the few steps leading to her bedroom. He dropped her on the bed, following right away, his tongue teasing a nipple through her bra, his hand slipping underneath her panties, lightly tapping on her clit as if he was trying to bring it back to life.

*No need, Oliver, no need at all.*

Her legs fell open on each side of his hips, craving as much contact as possible. Scratching his skull, she peppered kisses on the top of his head, her hips rolling against his hand, spurring him on.

“Please tell me you have a condom” he groaned, raising his eyes.

She whined, her relief so close “yes… yes… bedstand.”

He knelt back between her spread thighs, shoving the skirt of her dress around her hips, his hands gripping her panties and sliding them down her legs while she reached for the box of condoms, handing one to him before throwing the box on the floor.

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“Please” she begged, not caring that she was still mostly dressed, and so was he. She wanted him inside her. She needed it. She shoved his jeans down his hips while he opened the foil package with his teeth. He slapped her hands away, lowering his underwear and her heart skipped a beat at the sight of his cock, hard, long and thick. The head was a crimson color that made her mouth water and Oliver let out a sigh of relief when he was finally freed from its confinement. He stroked it once, twice, his eyes travelling between her open thighs. Seeing him touch himself while looking at her so intimately turned her on violently and she plopped back against the pillows, bending her knees, spreading herself even more for him, the ache in her core growing, dying to feel him inside of her.
He let out a strangled moan at the sight, his hands almost shaking as he sheathed himself. Slipping his arms underneath her thighs, he pulled her closer to him. Taking a hold of his now covered cock, he rubbed it against her sex, tapping her clit, then slipping it down to her opening.

She moaned loudly, her eyes glued to what he was doing. He repeated the motion a few times, making her whimper every time his cock would go back to her clit, rubbing against it. Oliver's breathing was getting as short and ragged as hers, one of his hands reaching for her breast, taking the small mound of flesh, massaging it, his thumb flicking over her nipple.

“Are you ready?” he asked, his voice deep and throaty.

“Oh yes. Please. Please” she cried out, trying to pull him over her, desperate to feel his body covering hers. He followed her lead, resting his weight on one forearm, settling between her open thighs. He pressed a soft kiss on her lips before resting his forehead against hers as his hand took a hold of his cock, guiding it to her opening, pushing in.

“Oh God. Oh God” she whimpered, feeling him stretching her. He kept pressing in slowly, letting her feel every inch of his length taking possession of her. Once he was fully seated inside of her, he dropped his head against her shoulder, breathing deeply, his mouth pressing open kisses on her neck. Her eyes were wide open, adjusting to the feeling of having him inside her. She knew he was big, but she didn’t know it would feel so different… so full.

Oliver raised his head, staring into her eyes. In his, she saw desire, hunger, need... but also so much wonder and tenderness. She smiled, pressing a soft kiss on his lips. For a second, the desperation, the longing were forgotten, the hurried frenzy of their bodies craving each other silenced. They were finally together and it was as beautiful as she had thought it would be.

But as their kiss deepened, the initial burn was quickly replaced by another kind of burn. One that was dying for him to move.

“Oliver…” she coaxed him, moaning against his mouth, her hand reaching down to press down on his ass.

He groaned, his hand reaching and grabbing hers, putting it over her head and holding it tightly, entwining their fingers. He seemed to have understood what she wanted though, because he suddenly pulled out, leaving only the tip of his cock inside her, then pushed back in slowly, his face nestling in the crook of her neck.

“Fuck… you’re so tight… I don’t want to hurt you” he breathed in her ear.

“You’re not… oh God you’re not hurting me” she moaned, encouraging him “come on, Oliver. Come on.”

The next thrust was much harder, making her eyes roll to the back of her head. She had never been able to climax solely from penetration but it was feeling so good, having him so deep inside of her, his body moving hard against hers, that she was quickly getting there.

The bed was creaking, Oliver’s moves more and more hurried as he thrust inside her and the sound only peaked her arousal more. She could hear him grunting above her, the effort making his breathing labored. He was laving her neck, his stubble burning her skin, pushing into her, filling her, stretching her. All she was aware of was him. His body above hers, inside hers, the smell of his skin, the rough material of his jeans irritating her inner thighs as he thrust into her over and over again… the obscene sounds he was making in her ear, making her understand he was completely losing control… she had never felt more aroused in her life, and she couldn’t stop moaning, keening as the
wave she was riding took her higher and higher.

“Felicity, I need you to come, baby” he moaned as his hips sped up, setting up a punishing rhythm, his hand still holding hers over her head “spread your legs a bit more.”

She automatically did as told, no longer in charge of her own body, and the next thrust brought his pelvic bone right against her clit, making her see stars.

“Oh… oh… Oh yes” she chanted, squeezing her eyes shut, her hand gripping his even harder “there, Oliver, right there… right… right… there.”

Her climax was building up much faster now, and every time he pushed into her, he would press right against her clit. All she needed was the right thrust, deep and hard and she would…

“Yes… yesyesyesyes” she shouted, her back arching “Oliver… don’t stop, please, please don’t stop. I’m right there, I’m…”

Oliver groaned, his thrusts hard and fast, losing any rhythm “Felicity, come for me, baby. I want to feel you.”

His voice was so desperate, and the sound of his panting in her ear, the feel of his stubble against her skin were suddenly too much.

He angled his hips up, pushing in deeper and it was enough to send her flying over the edge, her mouth wide open in a soundless scream. The only sound able to escape her throat was a long strangled moan as the orgasm crashed through her, her nails digging into the back of his hand, oblivious to the fact that she was probably hurting him, only able to focus on how Oliver was fucking her through her climax, and holy shit that was the best feeling in the world. Her walls clamping down on his thick cock, milking it, was the most satisfying thing ever.

“Oh fuck…” Oliver moaned miserably “fuck, yes… I can feel you… oh fuck.”

He came with a groan, slamming into her one last time, pressing himself impossibly close to her, his hips still moving slightly, sending little shivers up her oversensitive clit.

His body dropped suddenly over hers, squeezing the air out of her lungs. She untied her hand from his, slowly caressing his back and neck, kissing his shoulder while he was catching his breath, his face buried in the crook of her neck. He eventually shifted and she keened, not wanting him to leave her.

“Please, stay.”

He let out a long, deep, satisfied sigh, pressing a small kiss on her shoulder. He eventually pulled out, making her whimper at the loss. All that was left was this deep, aching satisfaction lingering low in her belly, her core finally sated. For now.

“I’m too heavy” he grumbled as he rolled onto his back, still panting. She followed him, snuggling on his chest and he pressed a small kiss on the top of her head. It suddenly dawned on her that they were still mostly dressed. The sound of her giggle made Oliver look at her.

“We didn’t even take our clothes off” she explained.

He grinned at her and seeing him so relaxed, so carefree, was almost enough to get her ready for round 2. His eyes were shining, his face peaceful as he gazed down at her.
“I’ll be right back” he pecked her nose, shifting her on the bed as he stood up and walked to her bathroom, probably to discard the condom. Her legs feeling like jello, she stayed on the bed, waiting for him. When he came back, he had readjusted his jeans, but left the top buttons open, the belt gone. He laid on his side, facing her, their heads sharing the same pillow. He smiled at her, his fingers reaching for whatever was left of her ponytail, putting a few strands behind her ear.

“So… that happened” she said somehow shyly.

“Yup” he whispered, leaning in to lightly kiss her lips “You OK?”

She grinned widely “More than OK.”

His eyes shuttered close as he murmured “good.”

She pinched her lips, amused, as she saw his face relaxing as he drifted into sleep. Her fingers grazed his jaw, and the little moan that escaped him made her heart flutter. Round 2 would have to wait.

She was about to sit up, planning on freshening up a bit, when he held her hand back.

“Where are you going?” he whispered sleepily, his eyes still closed. He pulled her against him, tucking her head underneath his chin, wrapping her in his arms. She smiled, pressing a kiss over his heart, snuggling into his chest, listening to the beat of his heart.

She eventually slipped out of his arms, unable to stay still. Her body was buzzing with energy and she was craving a nice, warm shower. She got rid of her clothes in record time, not lingering in the bathroom any longer than necessary. Oliver was still sleeping when she went to get fresh underwear, tiptoeing out of the room in just a pair of panties.

Picking up his shirt near the entrance door, she put it on, his scent still clinging to the fabric. Suddenly starving, she grabbed a yogurt and a banana, wondering if she should wait for Oliver to wake up or order some food right now. Unsure of what he would want, she decided to give him another half hour. If he wasn’t awake by then… she’d have to take matters in her own hands. Possibly literally.

Hopefully literally.

She squirmed on her chair, pressing her thighs together. How could she already want him again? Especially when she could still feel the aftershocks of her orgasm, her lower belly having turned into what seemed like cotton wool. Truth be told, she knew sex with him would be good. How could it have been any other way with the small glimpses she had had? She had thought it would sate her hunger… but it had done the opposite. She craved so much more, his hands over her, his mouth, his...

She whimpered at the thought, glancing towards the door of her bedroom, which was still ajar. She needed to set her brain on something else. Something that didn’t involve the Greek god lying in her bed.

When Oliver woke up, about 20 minutes later, she was chewing on a pen, analyzing a report Mary had sent her. She heard some muffled sounds coming from her bedroom, then the door of her bathroom closing and the water running. He finally padded into her living room, his hair still damp, his jeans hanging low on his hips. Barefoot.

She gulped at the vision, already unconsciously closing her laptop, her mind now set on something
very, very different than possible designs for a revolutionary watch.

He smiled at her, rubbing his eyes as he leaned to kiss her softly on the lips. Much to her dismay, he didn’t linger, grabbing his phone and taking a seat next to her instead. She pouted, seeing round 2 escaping her once more.

“I’m starving” he told her, his voice deep “Knowing you like I do… I’m going to assume you don’t have anything to eat in your fridge?”

Felicity pinched her lips in fake offense “I have yogurts.”

Oliver rolled his eyes, putting his hand on her thigh “what do you want to eat?”

“I don’t know. Italian sounds good” she shrugged “pizza?”

While Oliver made a quick call to order their food, she forced herself to finish reading her report.

“40 minutes” he eventually said, hanging up.

“Good” she smiled as he stood up, walking to her fridge. He fished out two yogurts, poured himself a glass of water and grabbed the spoon she had used as he sat back down next to her.

She left a few notes for Mary, saving everything in a separate file and shutting down her computer. Oliver was finishing his second yogurt, observing her.

“You were not supposed to see that. It’s confidential” she scolded him.

“Maybe you shouldn’t open this kind of file when I’m right next to you then” he licked his spoon clean, his eyes laughing.

His arm circled her waist and he pulled her across his lap, his mouth already searching for that tender spot underneath her ear.

“Oliver…” she breathed, knowing this wasn’t a good idea. They didn’t have time for that, no matter how much she wanted to.

“Mmmhh” he hummed distractingly, his tongue peeking out, making her breath hitch.

“Food is going to be here in thirty minutes.”

“I’m having my appetizer, if you don’t mind.”

Felicity chuckled “are you comparing me to garlic bread?”

“Would it convince you to take this to the bedroom?” he raised his head, meeting her eyes, a hopeful smile on his lips.

She shook her head in denial.

He groaned, dropping his forehead against her shoulder “I could do great things in thirty minutes, you know.”

“Oh, really?” she asked, her heart already beating faster, and she pressed herself closer to him.

“Yeah.”
“I have a very analytical mind, as you know. I need proof. And data. A lot of data” she whispered, her hand travelling down his back, her teeth finding his ear lobe.

He raised his head, a lazy smile stretching his lips. He suddenly stood up, settling her on the table, stepping between her legs. He helped her get rid of her t-shirt, his eyes darkening when he saw her nipples already erect, seeking his attention. Lowering his head, he pressed an open-mouthed kiss on an areola, his tongue flicking the hard little bud. Felicity arched her back, pressing his face against her chest. One hand on her back and the other on the table for leverage, he gently guided her until she was lying down, hissing when the cold surface hit her skin.

“Shhh” he soothed her, sucking hard on her nipple while his hand massaged the other breast. He delicately bit the tender flesh, sending a rush of heat directly down to her core. She rolled her hips, whimpering in frustration when all she met was air. He wasn’t close enough. She needed to feel him… she needed more contact.

Her feet dug into the back of his thighs, trying to bring him closer to her. He huffed out a small laugh at her unsuccessful attempts, shaking his head “patience…”

His mouth trailed to her other breast, his tongue circling her nipple, pulling it into his mouth, his teeth slightly grazing it. He reached out for her hand, guiding it over the breast he had just abandoned, gently coaxing her.

Felicity raised her head with wide eyes, staring at him, her mouth slightly open, panting. His eyes were warm, full of promises and tenderness. There was no judgement, no expectation in his gaze and she felt hypnotized, her hand reacting to his eyes more than to her brain. She massaged the small mound of flesh, surprised to feel it heavier, her arousal making her more sensitive. Oliver briefly closed his eyes, opening his mouth over her nipple, sucking it, his cheeks hollowing. She hissed, the pressure being borderline to pain but he never crossed the bridge, keeping her on edge. He finally let go with a small pop and blew over the sensitive skin, bringing goosebumps all over her chest. Her finger flicked her nipple and his eyes darkened as he watched her, his mouth reaching for her neck and the feel of his rough stubble there made her tilt her head, a small moan escaping her lips.

Oliver’s hand travelled down her chest, circling her belly button and stroking the skin of her stomach before reaching the hem of her panties. Her fresh panties that she had put on less than one hour ago… and they were already damp with her arousal. The slightest touch from this man was enough to send her into a frenzy, a whimpering mess of pure, unadulterated lust.

His mouth covered hers as his fingers slipped underneath the cotton of her underwear, stroking her clit on their way. She let out a strangled cry, gripping his hair.

With anybody else, she would have felt ashamed, her body betraying her and caving in so easily, but there was nothing shameful between them. It was beautiful, it was pure… it was them.

His middle finger wedged itself between her outer lips, sliding downwards, and upwards, and downwards again, grazing her opening then going back up to tease her swollen clit, spreading the wetness. Her hips were moving on their own accord, and she honestly couldn’t tell what she was craving more. Him rubbing her clit more firmly or burying his finger inside her. He made the decision for her as he suddenly pressed against her opening, slipping the tip of his finger inside of her, the palm of his hand grinding down on her clit.

“Oh God…” she breathed against his mouth, her nails biting the skin of his shoulder. He thrust his finger deeper, pressing her upper wall, then retreated again, spreading the wetness over her clit. His lips travelled down her throat, then to the valley between her breasts, his finger torturing her, circling her bundle of nerves over and over again, avoiding direct contact.
“Oliver… stop… stop teasing” she panted.

He raised his eyes, looking at her. He then sat back down on his chair, his hand leaving her.

“What…” she whimpered at the loss of contact “Oliver what are you doing?”

“I’m about to eat my appetizer” he smiled mischievously, his hand slipping underneath her panties, gripping the upper hem from underneath and holding them to the side, exposing her to his hungry eyes. She instinctively closed her legs, capturing his wrist.

“Shhh” he whispered, kissing her knee, his thumb grazing her clit. She gulped, trying to relax, trying to let go and just enjoy but there was a tension slowly taking over. This… this was very intimate. She wasn’t sure she was ready for it.

Oliver sucked on the flesh above her knee, hard, and she knew he was going to leave a mark. Knowing she was going to have a hickey should have made her mad. Instead, it turned her on. She was going to have hickeys, and beard burn and swollen lips and she was loving it. Sex with Oliver was wild, crazy and so, so, so good. It made her relax a bit, enough for Oliver to nudge her thighs open with his face, peppering small kisses on the tender skin.

“You OK?” he asked, taking a hold of her thigh.

“Yeah” she mumbled “just… I’m not really used to… I mean…”

He smiled at her softly, stroking her leg reassuringly “we don’t have to do it. I’d really like to. But we don’t have to.”

“What if… what if you don’t like it?” she squeaked, her face burning with embarrassment.

Oliver raised his eyebrows “what?!”

“Yes. It’s intimate. That’s why I want to do it with you” he murmured, resting his cheek on her thigh, gazing at her “you don’t want to?”

She groaned, squeezing her eyes shut. Did she want to? It was supposed to be mind-blowingly good but her one and only experience had been… mostly awkward.

“Talk to me, Felicity. What is holding you back?” he murmured.

“I’m just… I’ve never really… I mean… I tried once but…” she mumbled “he… he didn’t like it. And I didn’t like it very much either.”

Oliver frowned and she saw a flicker of anger in his eyes.

“I’m sorry, I ruined-” she apologized, cursing herself for ruining the mood, already sitting up, resting on her elbows.

Oliver shook his head, keeping his eyes on hers as he slowly brought a hand to her sex, his fingers playing with her folds. She sighed, a part of her relieved that they were back to a more familiar territory. He pressed two fingers to her entrance, slowly entering her, crooking them so they would rub at her upper wall. His thumb circled her clit and the combined sensations caused a new gush of wetness to coat his hand. His gaze locked to hers, he slowly removed his fingers and brought them to his mouth, licking them clean of her juices.
Her breath caught in her throat at the pure erotism of what he was doing and her elbows gave out underneath her, making her drop on the table, her head hitting the wood with a loud thump. She lowered her eyes just when Oliver’s lips started to kiss her inner thigh, inches away from her now aching core. He opened his mouth, letting his tongue play against her flesh, circling, lapping, stroking. He was mimicking what he wanted to do to her clit, she suddenly realized. The idea of his warm, wet tongue, tracing lazy patterns over her clitoris, his hands gripping her thighs, spreading them open, spreading her open to his mouth… She whimpered with need, her hand reaching for his head, pushing it against the apex of her thighs, until she felt his hot breath against her wet folds. She didn’t have time to question herself when he slipped her panties off and gently blew over her sex, his hand pushing her thigh up, holding it against her stomach while the other one was pressed down on the table, spreading her open for him. Yet, this time she didn’t feel embarrassed or awkward, the need having taken over. She could feel his stubble scratching her skin, there, between her legs, and the sensation was so deliciously forbidden, so wanton that it liberated a part of herself she didn’t even know existed. Stretching her arms above her head, she gripped the opposite edge of the table, her foot resting on Oliver’s shoulder.

The first stroke of his tongue made her keen, her back arching from the table. He licked from her entrance to her clit, playing leisurely with it with the flat of his tongue, bringing a finger to her opening and thrusting, deep.

She moaned loudly as he added a second finger, filling her, stroking her walls while his mouth closed on her clit, his tongue flickering against the bundle of nerves, suckling hard and letting it go. The pressure in her belly was building, building so fast that she knew it wouldn’t take much to send her flying over the edge and when he started licking her clit like it was an ice-cream cone, she lost whatever composure she had left, her thighs closing on his head, one hand reaching down, gripping his hair.

“O… Oliver… I think… I’m going to...” she cried out, knowing she was dripping wet, knowing the orgasm was right there and God help her but it was going to be a strong one, her toes were curling, her legs tightening and Oliver wouldn’t stop, his tongue, his devilish tongue going up and down her clit over and over again.

She could hear him groan and grunt, his mouth eating her like he could never get enough and she was there, she was right there until suddenly his teeth grazed her clit, just barely but it was enough to bring that tiny pinch of pain that pushed her over the edge.

“Oh yes… oh yes!” she shouted, her body crashing into a mind-blowing orgasm, her hips jerking in his hands, her head snapping up from the table. She panted, watching him press a few kisses over her thighs, letting her breathing calm down. She saw his hand disappear and the groan of satisfaction that escaped him was enough to let her know he was touching himself. Knowing he was that turned on by her own pleasure made her whimper, scrambling to sit up, leaning on her elbows.

Oliver locked eyes with her, not trying to hide the movement of his arm underneath the table, his breathing ragged. He bit on her inner thigh, wincing as his own pleasure grew and the idea that he would come without her, that she wouldn’t feel him, that he wouldn’t find his pleasure inside her made her keen with longing.

“Oliver, please. I want you inside me. Please” she moaned, pulling on to his arms.

His eyes darkened, his arm slowing down “Felicity I won’t be able to hold back-”

“I don’t care. I need you inside” she begged, feeling her walls clamping down on emptiness, desperate for his length to stretch her “condom. Purse.”
He grabbed her purse, shoving the contents on the table beside her until he found the little square package. He tore it down, rolled the condom on his cock and Felicity didn’t even have the time to blink before he was sliding her down to the edge of the table, already pushing inside of her, his jaw tense.

He groaned once he was fully inside and her mouth fell open, welcoming the now familiar burning feeling. He was holding one of her thighs, keeping her spread open for him, for his thrusts. He wasn’t tender. He was rough, filling her, slamming hard and deep and despite that, or thanks to that she honestly didn’t know anymore, she felt her orgasm building up again. The way he was gritting his teeth, the veins in his neck bulging out, a sheen of sweat covering his body, moving so hard against her that the table was shifting with each thrust…

She gasped after a particularly hard thrust, chanting his name as she felt her release building, knowing he was close and might not be able to wait for her pleasure.

He must have recognized the signs because he moaned “fuck… Felicity… you’re close, baby?”

“Yes” she cried “Oliver yes… don’t stop, please don’t stop…” she begged him, her hand reaching down to her clit, unable to stop herself. She needed to come. She needed him to make her come.

She rubbed herself furiously, Oliver’s eyes glued to her fingers “shit… baby… that’s it. Touch yourself.”

He grabbed her leg, straightening it to rest over his shoulder, his hand reaching out for her breast, palming the mound of flesh, pinching her nipple “Does it feel good?” he panted, still moving relentlessly inside her “Almost there?”

“Yes… yesyesyes” she mewled, squeezing her eyes shut. She couldn't believe it... she was going to come again as if her body hadn't been utterly satisfied a couple of minutes ago.

Her moans grew louder and louder, his words turning her on like crazy, encouraging her. She flicked her clit repeatedly, circling it while he kept on thrusting, pushing himself into her as far as he could, groaning with pleasure every time he would bottom out.

“Oh God Oliver... it's... I'm going to come” she cried out in awe as the wave was building, building, the tension in her core growing tighter and tighter with his every move.

Until someone knocked on her door “Pizza delivery for Miss Smoak!”

She looked at Oliver, opening her eyes wide. He shook his head, gritting his teeth, his hips still moving furiously, his cock still pushing inside her as if no one was just standing a few feet away from them. She saw in his eyes that he wasn’t going to stop. He was going to fuck her on that table until they both climaxed, no matter who could hear them.

She let out a strangled whimper and he covered her mouth with his hand and the action was so… raw and primitive that suddenly it didn’t matter anymore. She was going to come, hard, while someone was waiting at her door. Even with his hand covering her mouth, she could hear her stifled cries, unable to stop them as her pleasure built. Suddenly, the wave was back, the tension in her lower belly getting tighter and tighter and with a long muffled wail, she came, her teeth biting his palm, her orgasm so intense it brought tears to her eyes.

“Pizza!” the delivery boy knocked again, this time louder.

Oliver squeezed his eyes shut when her walls squeezed his cock, milking him, her body craving something that damn condom wouldn’t let her have. One, two thrusts later and he grunted his
release, his hand slipping from her mouth.

She shouted to the door “One minute!” while Oliver pulled out of her, discarding the condom and adjusting his jeans back, picking up his wallet. Out of breath, his face red and his hair completely disheveled, he opened the door, blocking it with his foot so she wouldn’t be exposed. She could hear the delivery boy rambling about how he tried to ring the bell several times but no one answered and a nice old lady was kind enough to let him in and guide him to the right apartment. She pinched her lips, snorting as she remembered Oliver’s little stunt with the wires of her bell.

She was lying on the table, unable to move a finger, a deep feeling of satisfaction transforming her muscles into jello. That had been… that had been incredible. Her legs were still shaking, her heart beating wildly while she tried to catch her breath.

Oliver closed the door, dropping the pizza box on the table. He plopped down on a chair next to he and nestled his cheek against her stomach, his eyes gazing up at her, his heavy breathing cooling her damp skin, making her shiver.

“I don’t think I’ll ever be able to walk again” she giggled, her hand lightly stroking his face.

He grinned, kissing the palm of her hand “only fair. You almost killed me, there.”

“I hope you gave the guy a good tip?”

“I gave him a hundred, told him to keep the change.”

“Wow. An almost peep show and a hundred!”

“And I thought I got lucky…”

She slapped the back of his head “Hey!”

“Sorry” he smirked, kissing the soft skin underneath her breast “you’re right: you actually got more lucky than I did.”

Laughing, she went back to stroking his hair, knowing she should move, because she was lying completely naked on her dining table and that was probably the most unhygienic thing she had ever done. Yet, she felt completely at ease, unable to bring herself to even care. Oliver’s face was pillowed on her stomach and he was humming with satisfaction, under her hand. She had waited so long for a moment like this that she was in no hurry to move.

*That’s what sanitizers are for, anyway.*

By the time they were finally able to move, their pizza was cold. They ended up eating it spread out on her couch, Oliver’s feet propped up on her coffee table while her legs were over his lap. The view of her colored toe nails made him laugh and he confessed that every time she would wear open shoes, he would check to see if the nail polish matched the one on her hands.

“What can I stay the night?” he asked her after taking a long sip of water.

“Duh” she answered, snorting “If you even consider leaving me alone tonight after all of that…”

He chuckled, his fingers stroking her calf. It brought sparks of desire but the hunger had been
satisfied enough for her to be able to ignore them. For now, she thought with a small smile.

“I should call someone and ask them to drop off some stuff for me, then.”

“Do you have someone who does that?” she asked, perking an eyebrow. *Rich people…*

“Well… yes. I mean I can ask Raisa to pack my stuff, then a driver to bring them here” he shrugged.

“Then make sure Raisa packs enough clothes for you to last until Monday” Felicity chirped, wiggling her toes.

“Deal” he winked at her.

Chapter End Notes

*takes deep breath*

OK so... what did you think of it? It's my first real smut scene (... or scenes... actually let's say chapter), so I hope I did it justice.
Oh, and Oliver's apology? It was cute, wasn't it? I thought it was cute...

Everything isn't solved between them, Felicity knows that, Oliver probably knows that too but for now, they are blissfully happy in the after-glow. And they know they will work it out together, as a couple.

PS: For those of you who loved Ugly Betty, you probably see the similarities in the arc. It totally echoes how Daniel and Betty parted ways and the very last scene oh the show. I'm talking about the talk and the apology, btw. Not what happens afterwards XD
Hi guys!!

First of all, thank you so much for the overwhelming response to last chapter. It is still a bit nerve-wracking to me to write and post smut and you've been very, very encouraging. I am so glad it was worth the wait and that you were as satisfied as Oliver and Felicity XD

Special thank you to pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda for their help. They always make sure things are as good as can be and I know they care about this story almost as much as I do.

That being said, I hope you read the title? Ok. So you probably guessed it's after the song by Hozier and clearly NSFW. SO if explicit sex isn't really your cup of tea, or if you've had enough with the previous chapter, just... know that you might have to skip quite a lot... Hum. This chapter is completely in Oliver's PoV, so it's a tiny bit raunchier in a way.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Take Me To Church"

My lover's got humour
She's the giggle at a funeral
Knows everybody’s disapproval
I should've worshipped her sooner

If the heavens ever did speak
She's the last true mouthpiece
Every Sunday's getting more bleak
A fresh poison each week

"We were born sick," you heard them say it

My church offers no absolutes
She tells me, "Worship in the bedroom."
The only heaven I'll be sent to
Is when I'm alone with you

I was born sick
But I love it
Command me to be well

Take me to church
I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife
Offer me that deathless death
Good God, let me give you my life

If I'm a pagan of the good times
My lover's the sunlight
To keep the Goddess on my side
She demands a sacrifice

Drain the whole sea
Get something shiny
Something meaty for the main course
That's a fine-looking high horse
What you got in the stable?
We've a lot of starving faithful

That looks tasty
That looks plenty
This is hungry work

Take me to church
I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife
Offer me that deathless death
Good God, let me give you my life

No Masters or Kings
When the Ritual begins
There is no sweeter innocence than our gentle sin

In the madness and soil of that sad earthly scene
Only then I am human
Only then I am clean

Take me to church
I'll worship like a dog at the shrine of your lies
I'll tell you my sins and you can sharpen your knife
Offer me that deathless death
Good God, let me give you my life

They didn’t even make it to the bed for round 3. Their first time had been hurried, slightly messy, both of them unable to take their hands off each other long enough to get properly undressed. The second time was supposed to be only for her but seeing her, spread out on her dining table, had been way too much for him. Her taste, her smell were intoxicating, inflaming his senses like never before. Seeing her come undone under his mouth had been too much for him. The sounds she made when she was aroused, when she was coming, were going straight to his dick. By the time she had climaxed, he had been painfully hard, his hand already trying to relieve the pressure. Had she not begged him to take her, he would have masturbated until relief, his eyes fixed on her breasts, her
shiny eyes, the lips she had bitten so hard.

She was vocal, but still holding back, which he hated. There was no reason to hold back between them. There was no room for shame, awkwardness, embarrassment. He wanted her to feel as free, as liberated as a woman can be. Not because it turned him on, but because she deserved to explore that passion that was burning through her veins. Because he could see her biting her lips, trying to keep quiet. Because sometimes her eyes would lower, unsure of herself. Making love with her was heaven on earth but the thoughts she inspired in him were sinful as hell. And he couldn’t wait to explore all of them and slowly, but surely, peel away her last little insecurities.

They hadn’t talked much about their past experiences but knowing some douche had made her uncomfortable with her own body, her own sexuality, had pissed him beyond words. How could a man have a woman like Felicity Smoak and not worship every single inch of her body was beyond him. She was made for love, for tender, slow love-making and rushed, rough sex that left you gasping for air... and with a few scratches on your shoulders.

Unfortunately, so far, the rushed sex had taken over. He wanted to savor her but there was something in her eyes that made him completely lose control. They had managed to keep their hands to themselves - well... mostly - until someone had dropped off a bag for him with clothes and toiletries. He had sat back down on the couch next to her, fully intending to watch the rest of their movie, then take her to bed and finally take his time with her delicious little body.

But Felicity had other plans in mind. It had started innocently enough when she had snuggled back into his arms, her head nestling on his shoulder. Then she had plastered little kisses all along his jaw, nibbling on his neck... A couple of minutes later, she was on her back, one of her feet pushing against the back of the couch, the other leg thrown over his shoulder as he was thrusting inside her, her nails scratching his back and her little whimpers of pleasure like music to his ears. Unable to hold back, he had slipped a hand between their bodies, already knowing she would get off much faster if her clitoris was stimulated. He had let go as soon as she had bit down on his shoulder to muffle her screams, trembling in her arms and mentally cursing his lack of stamina whenever she was concerned. Judging by the huge grin on Felicity’s face, she wasn’t exactly complaining but he had a reputation, for God’s sake. He wanted to rock her world, make her forget any man before him.

When they had finally managed to untangle themselves from the couch, he had let Felicity get ready for bed in her bathroom, giving her privacy. She was already half asleep when he had joined her in bed and seeing how exhausted she was had actually made him feel much better about his performance. He had snuggled behind her, kissing her shoulder softly, taking a deep breath, letting her green apple scent invade his senses. He had buried his face between her shoulder blades, holding her tightly against him and had fallen asleep in an instant.

The sun woke him up early. Felicity had shifted during her sleep and was now lying on her front, her arms disappearing underneath the pillow that she was cuddling, her face turned away from him. The curtains were letting the light in and a ray of sun was dancing across her back.

Raising his head, he quickly glanced at the alarm clock. 7:30. It was pretty early for a Saturday morning but they hadn’t stayed up that late. Felicity was still fast asleep, her breathing deep and slow. He sat up, stretching his arms above his head, and his sudden move brought the sheet down, exposing her back. She was only wearing a pair of panties and the view of her naked skin in the morning light was a thing of beauty. The ray of sunshine was playing on the small of her back, making her skin glow. His mouth watered, remembering how soft her skin was and he shifted down
on the bed, pressing himself close to her. His hand hovered over the sheet, which still covered her ass and legs, sliding down to her hip, his fingers grazing the soft skin of her side. His thumb stroked her waist and he smirked with satisfaction when a trail of goosebumps appeared, Felicity squirming slightly. Glancing at her, he saw she was still asleep and he slowly lowered his mouth to the hollow right above her ass. He pressed a soft kiss, then another, and another... his lips travelled north, deviating to the side as his arm still circled her waist. A small moan escaped her throat, her legs shifting against him when he pressed his cheek against her side, letting his stubble graze her skin. Smiling, he moved down the bed, wedging a leg between hers and, starting with the small of her back, kissed his way up her spine, making sure his chin was brushing against her skin.

Shifting her hair out of the way, he pressed an open mouth kiss between her neck and shoulder, sucking hard. He knew she was bound to end up with a hickey but the most primitive part of himself was pushing him to leave his mark on her body, like she had left hers on his.

He licked the lobe of her ear, his teeth pulling softly on the industrial piercing, while the hand that wasn’t supporting his weight travelled to her side, teasing her breast. She groaned, her eyes squeezing, her breathing hitching and he peppered small kisses across her neck, licking and nibbling, then blew on the skin he had dampened. He felt the shiver that went through her and the little whimper that escaped her. Hers hips shifted while her hand reached down, gripping his arm. She rubbed her face into the pillow, making the cutest little sound as she finally came to consciousness.

“Oliver?” she mumbled sleepily, turning her head to take a look at him.

“Were you expecting someone else?” he chuckled, kissing her cheek.

She grinned, her eyes still slightly unfocused. She tried to turn around but he didn’t let her. He still had a very interesting part of her body to explore and hadn’t allowed himself to do that when she was still asleep. Waking her up with kisses and teasing touches was one thing, but he had forced himself to stay above the waist - or at least above her ass.

“Stay like that,” he murmured, his hands pressing her back down on the mattress.

She frowned, observing him for a second, a question in her eyes. He smiled reassuringly, caressing her side. She eventually nodded, settling back on the pillow with a deep sigh.

Oliver kneeled up, one leg on each side of her hips, bringing his hands to her shoulders, massaging the flesh. She purred in pleasure, stretching her arms underneath her pillow.

His thumbs traced the outlines of her spine, travelling south until they reached her waist. He massaged the flesh, in awe with how tiny her waist was between his hands. He leaned down, biting softly on her shoulder, his hand slipping underneath her panties, gripping her ass, kneading the flesh. Felicity’s hips rolled back in response and he laughed at her impatience. Sitting back up, he shoved the sheet to the foot of the bed, lowering her underwear just past her ass.

“You have the most amazing ass I have ever seen, Miss Smoak” he said, admiring the view she was offering him, sprawled on her stomach, her round, firm backside showcased by the rolled white panties on the top of her thighs.

She giggled and he lightly spanked her in retaliation. He noticed her short intake of breath, the subtle way she raised her hips and he noted the information in the back of his mind. Apparently, his girlfriend wouldn’t be opposed to a little spanking...

But now was not the time to explore this kind of fantasy. He still had so much to discover, her body still too much of a mystery to him.
Getting more comfortable, he laid down, half of his legs hanging from the bed as he lowered his mouth on the tempting globes. He kissed, bit, licked and nibbled, his hand stroking the inside of her thighs, his thumb pressing soothing circles. Felicity started to squirm under his ministrations, one of her legs kicking back every time he would softly bite the tender flesh, little moans escaping her.

He was already half-hard, the smell of her skin enough to arouse him. He eventually slid her panties down her legs, and she rewarded him by parting them as soon as the underwear was out of the way. The scent of her arousal reached him and he closed his eyes, groaning. His fingers slipped between her thighs, finding her folds right away and he moaned when he felt how aroused she already was, his cock instantly becoming impossibly hard. His girl wanted him as much as he wanted her.

“Oh baby… you’re so ready for me,” he murmured, his finger tracing her outer lips, bumping against her clit. She gasped, rocking back against his hand, seeking more contact.

“Tsk, tsk.” He shook his head, keeping his touch light. He slowly circled the bundle of nerves, his nose brushing her side, his face buried in the small of her back.

“Oliver… please,” she breathed.

He was still holding one of her legs between his, restraining her movements. He brought two fingers at her entrance, pushing them in and the sensation made her trash around, forcing him to press down on her leg. Her walls clamped down on his fingers right away, reminding him of how tight she was. He crooked his fingers, trying to find that spongy spot inside her.

Felicity’s head suddenly snapped up from her pillow. “Oh God!”

*There you are.*

He rubbed the area, letting her strangled cries guide him, her hips now rocking impatiently and she must have found a good angle because all of a sudden she started grinding down on the mattress and a new rush of wetness covered his hand. One of her hands reached out, pushing back against the headboard, giving her leverage to thrust back against his fingers.

She was gasping loudly, mewling her pleasure, chasing her relief desperately. He was so turned on by the show she was offering him that he lowered his boxer briefs, letting his cock spring free, grinding down on the mattress, seeking friction. His breathing was starting to match her own, even if he knew he wouldn’t find his relief on her bed sheets. No. He would come inside her, inside her warmth and God help him but he would have to make her come again because Felicity climaxing around his cock was the best feeling in the world.

He could sense she was close by the way her hips were losing any kind of rhythm and how her moans were getting louder and louder. He brought up his thumb to graze over her clit and she keened.

“Oh my God… Oliver… Oliver… I’m so close… I’m so…” she grunted, the rest of her words muffled by her pillow.

He circled her clit over and over again, applying a little more pressure while his fingers were still pumping inside her, pressing on her G spot and suddenly her hips shot off the bed while a long cry escaped her lips. He left his fingers inside her, crazy with lust when he felt how she was clamping down on them, squeezing hard, knowing that soon enough, she would be milking his cock the same way.

He waited until her breathing slowed down, peppering kisses over her back. He eventually moved
his fingers, spreading her wetness over the tip of his dick and he moaned, wishing there would be nothing between them when he pushed himself inside her.

“Oh God… that was… that was…” Felicity mumbled, straightening her legs.

He crawled up her body until he could whisper in her ear, “one.”

She frowned, obviously confused, but she didn’t have the time to ask anything, his lips already on hers, his tongue finding hers, playing with it leisurely, drinking in the small sighs of pleasure that were escaping her.

Once again, she tried to turn around, but he stopped her, pressing his body down to hers.

“Are you good?” he murmured, his nose nuzzling her ear.

“Yeah,” she nodded. “But don’t you want to… you know?”

He grinned at her shyness. *Oh baby… you can do better than that with that dirty mouth of yours…*

He hummed in agreement, biting the lobe of her ear. “Do you want me inside you?”

“Yes. Yes. Please,” she whimpered, her eyes wide, trying to roll on her side.

He shook his head, smiling, keeping her from moving. Leaning in, he breathed in her ear. “I’m going to take you from behind.”

She froze suddenly and he paused, afraid he had said something wrong. Had he pushed her too far, too fast? His fears vanished when she relaxed back underneath him, a telltale blush now covering her face. Still, he didn’t want her to feel pressured into anything. Fear and shame didn’t have any place between the sheets. They were going by their own rules, at their own pace, creating their own ritual, one that was just for them, that would always be only for them.

“Do you want to?” he asked softly, pushing her hair back behind her ear.

She nodded, gulping, her hand gripping her pillow tight. “But how do you want me? I mean…”

“Stay like that. Let me take care of you,” he smiled, reaching for a pillow. He put his arm underneath her stomach, lifting her so he could slip it underneath her hips. He went to get a condom out of her drawer, taking off his boxers on the way, and put the foil square next to her. He kneeled back, resting on her upper thighs, one leg on each side of her hips.

He slipped his hands underneath her chest, while she pushed herself on her elbows. He cupped her breasts, noticing right away that her nipples were still hard. Massaging the small mounds of flesh, he saw how she bowed her head, her nails digging into her pillow, her breathing quickening once more.

*That’s it, baby. Let it come to you…*

His cock was hard, the head almost purple, a stark contrast with her creamy skin. It found its way between her ass cheeks and his hips moved by their own accord, lightly rocking, rubbing against the tender skin of her ass. Felicity tried to rotate her hips but the weight on her legs kept her from doing anything more than a small circle.

His eyes were glued to her backside, to his cock rubbing up and down, the friction so good but far from being enough, not when he knew how warm and tight she felt around him.

“Fuck….” she whispered as he pinched her nipples, his hips rocking faster against her ass. One hand
left her breasts, slipping down her body until it reached her folds. He rubbed her clit, being instantly rewarded by her breathless moan. She was soaking wet, and knowing he was the one who did that to her, that he was the one who made her so aroused... he felt a low burn starting at the base of his spine, knowing he needed to get inside her. Now.

He grabbed the condom, tearing it open with his teeth. He didn’t waste any time, covering himself and, lifting Felicity’s hips, he added a second pillow, angling her ass, keeping her legs closed between his thighs. Still kneeling behind her, he gripped his cock and found her entrance, pushing in, his other hand pressing down on her back. He groaned when he slid home, her closed legs making her even tighter.

She shivered as he filled her, hissing, “yessss... yeeessss.”

He took a deep breath, trying to calm his senses, then pulled out of her slowly. Seeing his cock glistening with her juices, feeling how her walls clenching down on him to keep him inside, the way he was holding her legs prisoner, the tension in her shoulders... it almost pushed him over the edge. Grabbing her ass cheeks, he thrust back in, this time not stopping until he was as deep as he could go. She was so warm around him, so slick and snug...

“God... oh God, Felicity,” he breathed, knowing he couldn’t go slow much longer. “Do you need me to rub your clit?”

She gasped loudly when he pressed down on her hips, finding a new angle.

“Felicity?” Oliver asked, gritting his teeth as he pushed himself inside her willing body, his hips already gaining a steady rhythm.

“No... I don’t need... keep... oh God Oliver just like that... keep going... just... just like...” she let out a long, strangled wail, letting him know he was hitting her g-spot.

All he could see was her, all he could hear was her, all he could feel was her. He threw his head back, his eyes staring at the ceiling, trying to slow the fire in his veins but he could still hear her whimpers, letting him know that he was doing good, that he was hitting just the right spots. A few deep breaths finally helped him gain control over his senses. His muscles were starting to protest his kneeling position, so he leaned over her, one hand still pushing down on her hips, making sure the angle wouldn’t change because the sounds that were coming out of her mouth were telling him that it was doing wonders for her, while the other one gripped the headboard. It gave him more leverage for his thrusts and he pushed back in forcefully, his hips slapping against her ass, the movement making her slide up on the mattress.

She buried her head in her pillow, trying to push back against his thrusts as much as she could and he could hear her muffled cries as she was reaching her climax, her walls starting to flutter around him. The bed was creaking loudly underneath them and he couldn’t bring himself to give a fuck. He was going to make her come, hard. All over his cock.

Suddenly, he couldn’t stand the idea of being deprived of her moans and cries and he softly grabbed her hair, gently pulling on it, coaxing her, and she didn’t resist, following his lead and raising her head from the pillow with a loud gasp.

“Oh... oh... ooooh... Oh my God...” she chanted, both of her hands pushing back on the headboard to give her more leverage, pushing back against his thrusting cock as hard as she could.

“Come on, baby.” he grunted, pressing himself into her harder. “Come all over me.”
She came with a shout, her walls clamping down on him, squeezing him like a fist. He gritted his teeth, the pressure growing in his balls. Abandoning her hair, he pressed the base of his cock, making sure he wouldn’t come right away. He wasn’t done with her.

“Two,” he breathed, panting, struggling to keep his own release at bay. Seeing his girlfriend come undone so hard wasn’t making things easy for him. Not at all.

He let her catch her breath, moving in and out of her slowly, taking the time to savor the way her walls were still fluttering with the aftershocks of her orgasm. He eventually pulled out of her, shifting on his knees so she could move her legs. She whimpered at the loss, but he nudged her thighs open with his knee and she obliged obediently.

“Spread your legs for me, baby,” he gently ordered while gripping her hips, lifting her body until she rested on her knees, legs spread on each side of his hips. He quickly got rid of the pillows, taking hold of his cock, pressing it against her entrance. She spread her legs wider when she felt him and the vision sent a flash of arousal down his spine. His hands on her thighs, he pulled her closer to meet his thrust, going all the way in and he grunted with satisfaction when he finally bottomed out. The position allowed for a deep penetration, and he knew that if he angled their hips right, his balls would slap against her clit. Pushing down between her shoulders, he filled her to the hilt, feeling his testicles rubbing against her folds and damn… that felt good for him too.

“Oliver… too much…I can’t,” she hissed.

Yes, baby… you can.

“Shhh… relax”, he soothed her, sitting back on his heels, his hands stroking her back reassuringly. He travelled down to her front, caressing the hyper-sensitive skin at the apex of her thighs.

“Give me your hand,” he asked her softly. She blindly threw her arm back and he caught her wrist, linking their fingers together. He guided her hand between her open legs, his own eyes closing when she brushed his balls.

“See? See how much you stretch around me?” he murmured as he pressed her hand down where their bodies were joined. “See what your body can do?”

Felicity shifted, raising on an elbow. He saw her head bowing down and he almost choked on his tongue… was she…

“Are you looking?” he croaked. Holy fuck. She is trying to kill me.

She didn't answer but the small movement of her hips was enough for him. She moved her hips forwards, his cock almost slipping out, then pushed back on it until he was fully inside her, his balls rubbing her clit. He heard her little whimper and she repeated the movement. Sliding up… pushing down… sliding up… pushing down… grinding on his balls…

He let her find her own rhythm, mesmerized by her, until she was supporting herself on both elbows again. The feeling of her ass slapping against his abs, seeing her literally fucking herself on his cock…

He gripped her hips, guiding her movements, making sure to grind his balls against her clit whenever he would thrust in.

And there it was, her breathless whimpering, the one that made his blood boil, the one that he already knew so well. She was climbing, getting close to her release, and he was right behind her, the pressure rising low in his spine, his movements speeding up despite his best efforts. Come on,
He could see she was on her last legs, her movements tired and uncoordinated, but she was still moving with him and it was just... so them. It wasn’t just a release they were chasing, it was a release **together**.

She must have reached a peak somehow because she suddenly straightened on her arms, arching her back, gasping, as she pushed back against him forcefully, moaning his name.

Her words spurred him on and he gave her what she wanted, thrusting hard and fast, making her mewl in pleasure. Knowing he was reaching his own climax, he straightened on his knees, one hand disappearing underneath her body, his fingers tapping against her clit repeatedly. That seemed to bring her to the edge and he suddenly felt a rush of warmth surround him, a quarter of second before she cried out her pleasure. He shut his eyes while she clamped down on his cock and he fucked her through her orgasm, his jaw locked, breathing heavily through his nose until he finally snapped.

She felt too good. He needed to come. His hands squeezing her waist, he thrust as deep as he could, coming with a shout, giving her all he had.

They both fell on their sides, completely spent. He barely had the strength to discard the condom, tying a knot and carelessly throwing it on the ground. He spooned her, as out of breath as she was.

“Three”, he finally managed to whisper.

It took Felicity a few seconds to register his words “... were you counting my orgasms?”

“Yup.”

She turned in his arms, facing him, a confused look on her face. “... why?”

“Ivy Town. The couple in the kitchen. You seemed completely in awe… and...” he trailed off when he saw the laughter in her eyes.

She stifled a giggled. “How long have you been planning this?!?”

“... a while,” he grinned. “My plan was to outdo big bad wolf with four but… you know how to bring me to my knees, Miss Smoak. We’ll try for four when hearing you moan stops making me instantly hard.” *Let’s hope it will happen before I turn fifty.*

She narrowed her eyes. “Are you sure you’re not just losing your touch?”

He slapped her ass playfully. “Watch you words, vixen.”

Felicity leaned in, kissing his jaw softly. “Thank you. For your dedication.”

“And my hard work.”

“And your hard work,” she nodded dutifully, snuggling into his chest.

He let his hands travel down her back, their hearts calming down. He could feel her breathing against his chest and it dawned on him how right everything felt. Her, him. Her apartment. Making love on a Saturday morning. Holding her in his arms. Cuddling in bed. He didn’t want to move. He couldn’t even fathom how he would ever want to move again.

And it wasn’t just the sex. Sure, the sex was amazing and she was so fucking responsive, to every move, every word that it was almost like she was in his head, knowing exactly what turned him on...
But the connection they shared went so much deeper. It was probably that connection that made the sex so mind-blowingly good, he thought with a smile, kissing the top of her head.

“Oliver?” she mumbled against his skin.

“Yeah?”

“Tommy said-”

He groaned. “Please tell me I misheard and you didn’t mention my best friend just after I gave you three orgasms.”

She chuckled. “I promise you the orgasms are not what made me think of my conversation with him.”

“Thank God.”

“So… He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named said something… that you saw us teaming up at QC. Is that why you didn’t want me to leave?”

He sighed, knowing that even if he had apologized, they still needed to talk about a certain number of things. Might as well start when they were in the after-glow, after all.

“I never planned for you to stay my assistant. Not even whenever I would step up. I don’t want you to think that for one second.”

“… OK,” she said, sounding intrigued.

“But he is right. Whenever I would think about our future, we were working together. As equals. I couldn’t see any success without you by my side.”

“But-”

“I know,” he hushed. “I know. We wouldn’t have really been equal. It wasn’t fair of me to think that because I was seeing us on the same footing, we would be in reality. I would always be your superior, and it could have caused tensions between us at some point. Your career is just starting, you need to find your own way to the top. I just wanted to help you find that way and…” he trailed off, knowing he was approaching dangerous territory.

“…and?” she nudged him.

“I kinda liked the picture of us, down the line, partners in life and partners in crime, in a way. It was pretty hard for me to realize that it would never happen. The only way I had been picturing myself leading QC eventually was if you were by my side, whether it was… head of Applied Sciences or VP or co-CEO.”

“You’re more ambitious than I am,” she laughed. “I never saw myself at the top. I just want to make a difference, leave a mark. I’m fine with staying in the shadows. I just don’t want to have to fight for anything else other than a fair chance to prove my worth.”

Oliver shook his head, grinning. “Felicity Smoak, you are destined for the light. Mark my words. I foresee great things for that bright brain of yours. QC will regret letting you go. And a part of me will always feel guilty that it is partly my fault. If I had taken my job more seriously… Isabel could have been avoided, you wouldn’t have been pushed aside under the assumption that you were just…” he scrambled, trying to find the right word.
“Another mistress of a Queen man that needed to be discreetly moved to another department,” she finished for him quietly.

He winced in shame. “... Well. Yes.”

She eventually raised her head, resting it over the pillow, meeting his eyes, a soft smile on her lips. “But then we would have never met. I would have still missed my interview but you wouldn’t have been looking for another assistant…”

“Are you telling me you’re glad I was a scoundrel?”

She burst out laughing. “A scoundrel?! Have you been reading Barbara Cartland this past week? Romcoms were not enough anymore?”

“Shut up,” he laughed, tickling her sides. She squealed, slapping his hands away. Had he not been so spent, he would have probably kept going, because the way she was wiggling her body could lead to some very, very interesting things… But they were still in their post-coital bliss and he wanted to enjoy their lazy morning snuggling session.

“What I meant is that… I don’t like thinking about all those girls, that’s for sure. But I’m not gonna deny that there are some perks.”

“Like what? Apart from the fact that it both put us in each other’s way?”

“Like mind-blowing orgasms. It’s a very, very nice perk.”

“I just want to make you feel good,” he smiled, his finger tracing the outline of her jaw. “And I love that look on your face.”

“What look? Messy hair, no make-up, probably some dried drool on the corner on my lips?” she snorted.

He leaned in, pressing his lips against hers “that ‘thoroughly well fucked’ look” he let his mouth travel down her throat, whispering against her skin “I love knowing I’m the one who put that look on your face. I’m the one who made you scream, and beg, and moan. I’m the one who got to see you gasping for air when you came. Hard. Do you have any idea how it feels to be inside you when you climax? You squeeze me so tight, like a fist, like you never want to let me go.”

She squirmed by his side, pressing her legs together, her breathing hitching. “Damn it, Oliver.”

He smirked. “That four orgasms goal might not be that hard to achieve, after all. Maybe I should just ramp up the dirty talk.”

“I don’t think I could do four” she shook her head “not even with you.”

“I like a challenge, Miss Smoak. And I’m dying to find out what exactly is your delicious little body capable of.”

“I’m serious. I don’t even know how you managed to get three out of me. I never orgasmed twice. And I usually have a hard time orgasming once, actually.”

He gazed at her, his finger bobbing her forehead. “That big brain of yours thinks too much?”

“I don’t know…” she trailed off, her eyes unfocused. “I guess so, now that I think about it. I would always think about… am I doing this right? Am I too loud? Am I loud enough? Should I touch
myself? Is he going to feel offended if I do? Is he going to be turned on?”

“With me too?” he asked softly, with no judgement. He wanted her to be able to freely express herself in every possible area - especially that one. It was important to him that the physical aspect of their relationship was as comfortable as can be for her. He had never felt that way before, this utter need to cherish a woman, to care for her, to worship her body like she was his own personal goddess, the one he’d be willing to sacrifice everything for.

“Sometimes,” she admitted, grimacing.

“It’s OK,” he reassured her, his hand stroking her hip. “You know you can always tell me when something feels off, right? No matter what we’re doing, if something bothers you or makes you uncomfortable or if you need my help to switch off your brain… you can always tell me. Or show me, if you prefer.”

She nodded, smiling.

“When did it happen? Last night, on your dining table?”

“Yes.” She bit her lips. “I just… I wasn’t sure I’d enjoy it and I was even less sure that you would enjoy it.”

“But you did enjoy it, right?”

She grinned widely, her eyes shining. “Yes. Very much.”

“I’ll never force you to do something that makes you uncomfortable. But… I don’t want you to deprive yourself of something because of some… douchebag who didn’t know how to treat you right.”

“Duly noted,” she yawned.

“Did I wear you out?” he winked, very much pleased with himself. Not that he would ever admit it but knowing he had rocked her world made him feel like beating his chest. Felicity sure knew how to revive the most primitive parts of himself. Knowing he was able to help her connect with her own sensuality, to let go of her inhibitions and be there to witness it all… Yup. Beating his chest.

“I was sleeping quite well when you decided to rudely interrupt my rest,” she whined, closing her eyes.

“Rudely? I was worshipping your body!” he exclaimed. *And hoping that would wake you up so we could start the day in the most satisfying way.*

“You barely kissed me”, she pouted.

“There isn’t an inch of your backside that I haven’t kissed.” *Or bitten. Or licked.*

She sleepily tried to bump his shoulder, her attempt so weak that it made him laugh.

“You know what I mean.”

“Yeah,” he whispered, pressing his mouth on hers. She sighed, melting in his arms, her body going lax against his. Their kiss was lazy, their tongues barely grazing at first and it was soft and tender, miles away from the passion that had taken over them a few moments earlier. It was like kissing an angel, or the sunlight, he didn’t know, but it warmed up his bones, making him feel more alive than
he ever had. He finally let go of her lips, pecking them one last time, lingering, breathing her in. She was already drifting back to sleep and he shifted, grabbing the sheet that was at the foot of the bed and covering them, pulling her into his arms as he settled on his back. She slid a leg between his, nesting her face in the crook of his neck, her hand lacing through his hair lazily. His last thought was that he was probably the luckiest man in the whole wide world.

Three hours later, he was standing in front of her fridge, frowning. Felicity was in the shower, and he had planned to make breakfast but quickly realized that she really lacked any… food. Apart from yogurts and a few fruits, that is. How she even survived on a daily basis was beyond him.

“There’s nothing in there,” he heard her say. He snapped his head, smiling as he took her in. She was wearing a white flowy summer dress with flower patterns that reached to the middle of her thighs. Two thin straps with the cutest tiny bows attracted his eyes and he wondered if he could untie them with his teeth or if they were sewn. He was already walking to her but she must have seen something in his eyes because she stepped back, holding out a hand.

“Oh, no, no, no. I’m starving. So you go get ready and then we’ll go out for brunch.”

He locked his jaw, knowing she was right and he was, after all, just as hungry as she was. He took a quick shower, getting dressed just as fast. He put a T-shirt on, slipping his phone and wallet into the back pockets of his cargo shorts.

“We could also stop at the farmers market on our way back” he told her as he walked into the living room “you know… so we wouldn’t have to go out again until Monday morning.”

She nodded distractedly, her attention focused on something she was holding in her hand. He frowned, observing her. She was apparently cleaning up the mess he had made last night when he had poured her purse contents on the table.

“Felicity? Something wrong?” he enquired, stepping behind her, his arms automatically slipping around her waist. His eyebrows raised to his hairline when he saw that she was holding a condom in her hand. Well… if she really wanted to, he wouldn’t mind a quickie. But the way she was biting her lips told him that wasn’t what she had in mind. He nudged her ear with his nose, trying to get her attention.

She licked her lips, turning around to face him, a small blush on her face. “I was thinking…”

“Yeah?” Maybe she does want that quickie...

She shook her head, stepping out of his embrace, walking to her secretary. So, no quickie then.

She rummaged through a box on the top shelf until she found an envelope, turning it between her hands.

“It’s… it’s some blood tests I had last january,” she explained, shrugging. “I mean… after the whole Cooper fiasco, I wanted to make sure he hadn’t played me on other fronts, you know. We always used a condom but… I wanted to make sure. Sometimes, things happen and…”

His heart skipped a beat, her explanation doing nothing to soothe his nerves. Did the bastard give her
some STD?!  
“Tests were all clear, Oliver, relax. I swear it looks like you’re about to faint,” she laughed nervously, walking to him. “I’m healthy as can be. Except sometimes a small lack of iron. But no big deal, I take pills whenever I feel a bit down and it fixes it.”  
“OK,” he finally said, shaking his head, trying to clear his thoughts. “I’m lost, there. So you didn’t catch anything, right?”  
She smiled, handing him two sheets of paper. “No. I didn’t. I just wanted to show you the results.”  
He took them automatically, his eyes going through lines and lines of complicated jargon and numbers. Negative, negative, negative.  
“Oh… that’s… that’s good.” *Is she talking about birth control? Does she want to stop using condoms?*  
He scratched the back of his neck, because no matter how much the idea of no rubber between them was appealing -and holy fucking God it really sounded like the best idea in the world-, he also didn’t want to jump to conclusion and pressure her. They could use condoms for as long as she wanted if she felt more protected.  
“I’m also on the pill. Have been since last month, actually,” she added, grabbing them from her purse, waving the box in front of his eyes. “And I haven’t been intimate with anyone since Cooper.”  
*Ok, she has to be talking about birth control. Right? Right.*  
He licked his lips, shifting on his feet. He smiled, huffing a small laugh. “Felicity, are you talking about birth control?”  
“Yes,” she replied, biting her lips, avoiding his eyes.  
“I don’t… I really don’t want to read too much into this but… do you want to stop using condoms?”  
She twisted her hands nervously, a small blush creeping up her chest. “Well… we don’t have to. And… no offense but… I’d rather you got yourself tested first because… I trust you but that doesn’t mean I trust every single one of your previous partners, or their previous partners, or… well you get the point. It’s just that… I hate having something between us. And we’re exclusive, right?”  
He grinned widely, putting the papers down on the table. He cradled her face, pressing a soft kiss on her lips before fishing his phone out of his pocket. “Of course we are. Just give me a minute, will you?”  
“What?” she asked, taken off guard. “I didn’t mean right now, Oliver. It can wait.”  
“Oh, no, no, no. You put the idea in my head, there’s no way I’m waiting any longer than necessary.” He held out a finger, quickly making a phone call to his doctor. Thanks to his last name, he was able to get an appointment for later in the afternoon. The idea of making love to her with no barrier between them… he wasn’t going to wait one second longer than necessary.  
Felicity was giggling behind her hands when he hung up. “Seriously, Oliver. Couldn’t it wait until Monday?”  
“No,” he mouthed.
“It usually takes about 24 hours to get results anyway, you know,” she teased him while they were making their way to a small café.

“Which is why it’s important to do it as soon as possible. Not to mention, it’s right next to the farmers market. I’ll go there, it won’t take long and you can buy some groceries for us. Win-win, really.” He winked, his arm thrown over her shoulders. He pecked her cheek, then gazed at her, counting the freckles on her nose. She was wearing her hair up, in a messy bun with a few stubborn strands grazing her neck and wasn’t wearing her glasses. Unable to resist, he kissed her ear, earning a laugh from her.

She playfully slapped his chest. “Oliver, we’re in the middle of the street.”

“Which is why we’re still both clothed,” he smirked as they arrived in front of the small café. It was almost 1PM and the only available table was outside, nestled against a wall of green plants. They both sat down, facing the street, Oliver’s arm on the back of her chair, his thumb caressing her bare arm. Once they had ordered their food, Felicity leaned against him, her hand rubbing his thigh, her head snuggling in the crook of his neck. His lips grazed her forehead as they both quietly observed the bystanders. The farmers market wasn’t far away and a lot of families were enjoying the sunshine. Oliver laughed at the vision of a father carrying a little girl on his shoulders, the bubbly little blonde rambling some non-sense about how raspberries were grown by fairies. The vision opened up a sudden ache in his chest, one that he had never felt before. He kept looking at the little family until they disappeared around the corner, knowing that one day… it would be him, carrying a blonde little girl on his shoulders. He wasn’t ready right now, and truth be told the thought wasn’t even exactly on his mind but… something was telling him that one day, down the line… he would get there. For the first time in his life, the thought of a future family didn’t scare the shit out of him. It was something he didn’t want right now because he still had so many things he wanted to achieve first, alone and in his relationship, but it was there, in a small part of his mind. A project, a long-term goal. Something he would one day approach. With her.

“Well… I guess that’s why you weren’t answering your door,” Dig’s voice reached through him, catching him off guard. He pushed back his day-dream to a small corner of his heart, knowing he would get back to it. Eventually.

“Dig!” Felicity beamed, leaving Oliver’s side, much to his dismay. It’s not exactly as if they had been caught on the act and he didn’t think Dig would be really shocked to see them together.

“I just stopped at your apartment to check if you wanted me to bring you something for brunch but I see you’re all set,” Dig smiled warmly. "Glad to see you managed to figure things out, by the way.”

“Yeah, we did.” Oliver grinned, gazing down at a blushing Felicity.

“We just ordered our food, you can join us if you want to?” she asked Dig, already pulling a chair out for him.

Dig snorted, vaguely waving between them. “Yeah… thanks but no thanks. I don’t think I’ll be able to stomach an omelet and all that lovey-dovey gazing.”

Felicity bit her lips. “I promise we’ll behave.”

“Nah. Enjoy your day. We’re still on for next week, right?”

“Yup,” she nodded. “I’ll let you know which day I can have off.”
“Perfect.” Dig turned to Oliver. “I’ll see on Monday, enjoy your weekend.”

“Thanks, Dig. You too,” Oliver answered, taking a sip of water as Dig walked to the take-out counter.

“Next week?” he asked, turning to Felicity.

“Big Belly Burger,” she grinned. “We’re going there for lunch. I know I can have one afternoon off but still don’t know when.”

Oliver narrowed his eyes. “Are you telling me you’re planning dates with my ex-bodyguard behind my back?”

“Yup.”

He sighed, shaking his head. “I can’t believe none of you even considered inviting me.”

“How the hell could we talk about you if you’re there?” she asked innocently, leaning back against him.

Grinning, he pressed a chaste kiss on her lips, lingering just a little bit longer than necessary. Just as he was pulling back, she chased his lips again and he caved in, unable to resist the temptation. His hand slowly caressing her arm, he nudged her lips open, tentatively stroking her tongue with his. He knew they were in public and had to keep things appropriate, but she tasted so good that he couldn’t bring himself to stop. A little make-out session surely couldn’t hurt.

Their breaths mingling, he took his time to savor her mouth, angling his head so he could deepen the kiss, quickly getting lost in her taste, her scent. She finally pulled away, rubbing their noses together, her hand gripping his wrist. He eventually let her go with one last peck on her lips.

They were still gazing at each other, a wide grin on their faces, when their waiter brought their food. They tore their eyes from each other as they arranged their plates on the table, Oliver forced to move his chair so they would have enough room to eat.

He was buttering a toast when something she had said earlier finally registered “wait… did you say you started the pill last month?”

Felicity paused, her fork in mid-air. “Hum… yes?”

“… just like that?” he insisted.

“After Tommy’s party, actually. I had a feeling… it might happen. Even if I was really in the “it can’t happen” mode… I wanted to be prepared, just in case.” She shrugged, shoving a mouthful of scrambled eggs in her mouth.

Oliver grinned, taking a bite of his toast. It had happened indeed. And she had been thinking about it for a while, just like him.

“And… no one ever since Cooper?”

She shook her head. “Huh-huh.”

Not even that Barry kid? The one he had been so jealous of, even before he started to realize his feelings for her? The one who had caused him to toss and turn in his bed that night after he had left her apartment to give them some privacy, his insides churning with jealousy, his traitorous mind...
coming up with pictures of them in her bed?

... Damn kid.

She sighed, probably understanding his smug smile. “Not even Barry.”

“I didn’t say anything,” he defended himself.

“Oliver, you’re smirking.”

“I’m not! My eggs are… too spicy, that’s all.”

She glared at him above the rim of her glass of apple juice. He smiled innocently, knowing it was probably best to keep quiet.

“Alright, Mister Queen. I’ll send these samples to the lab. You should get your results by Monday,” the doctor said, applying a small bandage on the inside of his elbow.

“Is there any way you could… speed up the process? I would be really, really grateful,” Oliver explained, sitting up.

“Is there an emergency?”

“No… not really.” Oliver winced. *Unless you consider dying to have bareback sex with your girlfriend an emergency, that is. Cause if you do, hell yes, it’s an emergency.*

“But I would rather not wait at all. So… is it possible to get those results sooner… like today?”

The white-haired man looked at him, his face neutral. “I could ask for a favor but this is the weekend, so the lab might charge you.”

“I’m sure you know that won’t be a problem at all, Doctor Grant,” Oliver smiled. Sometimes, being a billionaire had its perks.

“Should I email you the results, then? If something abnormal shows up, I will have to ask you to get an appointment, though.”

“Fair enough.”

Oliver was literally whistling when he made his way to the small market. Felicity had texted him, letting him know she was at the fruit station. He was mentally praying he would get the results today, so they could make sweet, slow, tender love beneath her sheets, nothing keeping them apart anymore. He was searching his memory, trying to remember if she had candles at her place they could use, when the sound of her laugh reached him. He stopped, stepping away from the customers. She was talking with an old lady who was wearing the most extravagant hat he had ever seen. A bright purple wide-brimmed hat with peacock feathers and a small plastic pineapple on the side, to be precise.
He stayed a few feet away, quietly observing her. The sun was bright, playing in her hair and he noticed her cheeks were a light pink color. He’d have to put some aloe vera on her skin when they’d get back home. She accepted a strawberry, biting in the fruit and he was close enough to see her little tongue peeking out, licking the juice. She closed her eyes and he almost could hear the moan she made, his eyes glued to her throat as she swallowed her bite. The vision inflamed him.

She didn’t even have the time to bite a second time before he was next to her, handing a bill to the clerk and taking a small basket of strawberries. She looked up at him in surprise when he grabbed her hand.

“Oliver! I have everything you asked. Bread, butter, eggs, deli meat, vegetables, chicken and… apparently strawberries as well. Good choice. They’re delicious,” she explained, finishing the fruit. “Do you want to taste one?”

The clerk nodded proudly. “The best strawberries you can find in Starling, that’s for sure!”

“Later,” he answered curtly. “Let’s go home.”

“But… I thought we could get flowers, too and we need cream! For the strawberries!”

Oliver pinched his lips, nodding as she bought a small jar of cream, literally itching to throw her over his shoulder like a caveman.

“What’s gotten into you?” she asked as he guided her through the small crowd, a hand on the small of her back.

You… you’ve gotten in my bloodstream. And my heart. And my soul.

“I just want to be with you,” he answered, keeping his eyes ahead of him, speeding up.

“Well… we are together right now, you know.”

“No… like that,” he gritted through his teeth.

She snapped her head, her eyes wide. “You mean…?”

“Yes,” he replied, relieved to see they were already on her street. She smiled at him, her steps speeding up as well and he grinned when he saw that she was as much in a hurry as he was.

“What happened between your appointment and this… impatience?”

“I saw you eating that damn fruit and… you’re so fucking hot, do you know that?”

She raised her eyebrows. “… The strawberry, really?”

He stopped in the middle of the street and kissed her, not caring who could see them. He kissed her hungrily, his tongue exploring every little corner of her mouth, licking her teeth, biting her lips and when they finally parted, her pupils were dilated, her lips an angry red. Seeing her already turned on pushed him over the edge, his cock hardening instantly.

Once they finally made it to her door, she was as breathless as he was, her hands shaking with anticipation. It took her three tries to finally unlock her door and they both stumbled into her apartment, Oliver kicking the door closed. Felicity toed out of her shoes, her back to him and he couldn’t resist, pressing his body against her, letting her feel how hard he already was. How hard she
His hands slipped underneath her skirt, reaching her waist, his thumb stroking her skin as she pressed back against him, rubbing her ass against his length. He slightly bit her ear, groaning, knowing she was doing it on purpose. His lips travelled down her neck, nibbling on her shoulder. He slipped a strap off her shoulder with his teeth, making the top of her breast appear. She wasn’t wearing a bra, which didn’t surprise him. He slipped a hand underneath the loose fabric of the bodice, cupping her breast; his fingers flicking the hard little nub, his mouth watering.

She threw her head back against his shoulder, leaning completely against him, trusting him to take care of her. He taunted the small mound of flesh, rewarded by the little moans that were already escaping her. Licking the lobe of her ear, he rolled his hips against her backside, creating a steady friction, already feeling the pleasure building up. He wasn’t going to last long at all if they kept this up.

He took a deep breath, willing himself to cool down, putting some space between their bodies. She whined at the loss of contact, pushing back against him, her hand covering his over her breast, encouraging him.

He moaned, unable to resist the temptation. “Felicity... we need to slow down…”

“Oh?” she breathed, guiding his other hand to the apex of her thighs, letting him feel the dampness between her legs.

“Oh, baby… you’re ready for me, already?”

She didn’t answer, just crooking her fingers into her underwear, pulling them down. He removed his hand, letting her shimmy out of her panties. They eventually dropped on the floor and seeing her standing in her living room, her dress still mostly on, but her panties around her feet, was probably one of the sexiest things he had ever seen.

He groaned in misery, his forehead dropping on her shoulder, his hands stiffening around her hips. “Felicity… you’re killing me. I swear to God, you’re killing me.”

She eventually stepped out of her underwear, turning to face him, licking her lips. “I really liked what we did this morning.”

He frowned, honestly trying to remember exactly which part she was talking about. “You’re gonna have to be a bit more specific, honey. We did a lot of things, this morning.”

She nodded, averting her eyes, an adorable blush creeping on her cheeks. Her hands reached for the buttons of his cargo pants, slowly undoing the top one. Oliver automatically took off his shirt and he closed his eyes when he felt her mouth pressed over his chest, peppering small teasing kisses over his heart.

“Felicity… which part?” he forced the words out while he was still able to think coherently.

Smiling shyly, she just turned around, not answering, walking to her couch. Stepping in front of the armrest, she threw him one cheeky look before laying down on her stomach, lifting her dress over her hips. Her lower stomach was nestled against the armrest and Oliver almost swallowed his tongue at the view of her perfect ass on display. A buzzing sound in his ear, he grabbed his wallet, fishing out a condom, mentally high fiving himself for the divine inspiration he had had in the morning when he had placed it there.
He was by her side in a few steps, shoving his shorts and boxers down, spreading her legs with his knee.

“Baby… this is going to be quick. I promise I’ll make it up to you,” he breathed as he slipped the condom down his cock. He didn’t waste any time, rubbing himself over her lips, once, twice, making sure she was ready for him, and thrust inside. He let out a sigh at the already familiar feeling, resting his hands on either side of her head, already moving inside her, getting a rhythm.

Like he had warned her, it was quick. Her little squeals of pleasure driving him on, he pushed himself inside her over and over again, afraid he wasn’t going to be able to wait for her this time. Blanketing her, supporting his weight on his arms, he was setting a furious pace, his hips slapping against her ass cheeks, the wet sounds of her sex reaching him through her loud whimpers. He felt the pressure at the base of his spine grow and grow, burning his insides and suddenly it was too much, the position, the sounds, the way her hands were gripping the sofa, how her eyes were squeezed shut in pleasure, her mouth open, gasping for air… he came with a loud shout, pleasure exploding down his spine. His hips were still moving erratically as he filled the condom with his seed. He came back to earth to Felicity rocking her hips, seeking friction against the armrest, trying to reach her peak. Out of breath, he pushed her further on the couch, giving him enough space to slip his hand between her thighs, his fingers finding her clit right away. He rubbed the little bundle of nerves in circles, letting her cries guide him, his face dropping between her shoulder blades.

“Oliver, please… please… I need to…”

He was still inside her, still hard and he rocked his hips, grinding against her, his fingers rubbing harder until she stiffened with a moan. Trying to not drop over her, he moved to the side, completely forgetting how precarious their position was. He ended up on his back on the floor, Felicity being dragged along. She let out a breathless laugh as they both stared at the ceiling, letting their blood calm down.

His hand splayed out on her stomach, he murmured, “I should get the results today, by the way.”

“Seriously? How much did that cost you?” she chuckled.

“No idea. Positive it will be worth it, though.”

Once they caught their breaths, they finally got off the floor, both cleaning up, Felicity getting a fresh pair of underwear. He smirked at the thought of how many pairs of her panties he had already seen in such a short amount of time. They did have a lot of time to catch up, after all.

After storing the groceries in the fridge, they both cuddled on her couch, watching old reruns of some 90’s show that he barely remembered. His mind was so at ease and relaxed that he couldn’t even bring himself to try to pay attention, being entirely focused on the way she fit in his arms, how she always snuggled against his chest, making herself as small as possible, her hand stroking his lower stomach.

It was perfection.

After a small nap, they made sandwiches for dinner and Felicity insisted on getting some work done, having originally planned a few things before their sex marathon. After much pouting - which didn’t change her mind in the slightest - he had grabbed his own laptop, which had been brought by his
driver with his clothes and a suit for Monday. They both sat down at her dining table and he stayed focused a whole five minutes before his mind strayed back to what exactly they had done the day before on that very table. His thoughts weren’t filled with lust, rather with wonder and intimacy. He eventually closed his laptop, knowing he wouldn’t get anything done. Supporting his head on his fist, his elbow resting on the table, he gazed at her, her eyebrows frowning in concentration, a pen between her teeth. It reminded him of all the times he had witnessed her in that exact same position in her office. Except she usually had her hair in a sleek, professional ponytail, not in a rushed-after-sex bun.

“Oliver. I can feel you staring,” she said, typing on her laptop.

“You’re beautiful,” he stated quietly, not ashamed in the slightest to be caught red-handed. “Have I ever told you that?”

She tried to fight back a smile but eventually lost the battle. “Thank you. And actually, yes you have. But it was in the archive room so…”

“I will always regret the fact that we never got the chance to christen the archive room properly, you know,” he sighed. All those amazing things they could have done on that table. Or against the shelves. Or against the wall. He really wasn’t picky.

She giggled. “Technically, I christened it. You didn’t.”

Knowing he would only distract her, and not ready to risk her wrath, he made his way to her bedroom, her bed still looking like a battlefield after their intense… good-morning sex. He tidied the room, making the bed, spreading scarves on her bed lamps, and noticed a few candles on a shelf. It wasn’t much but it would have to do. Closing the curtains loosely so they would still enjoy the dim evening light, he took a look at his handiwork. It wasn’t exactly the most romantic setting but it was better than nothing.

He checked his phone for the hundredth time that day, knowing that Dr Grant had warned him that he would either hear from him by 8PM or not until Monday.

Having nothing to do, he eventually walked back to the dining room, finding Felicity munching on strawberries absent-mindedly. He felt a buzzing in his pocket and fished his phone right away, his heart beating when he saw an email for his physician. Scrolling down, he quickly read the little note confirming that he was indeed healthy, without any trace of STD.

He smiled, putting his phone back in his pocket. Show time.

He walked to Felicity, setting his hands on her shoulders, gently massaging them. She moaned, tilting her head back. She brushed a kiss on the back of his hand, then proceeded to shut off her computer.

Thank God.

“You started dessert without me?” he whispered in her ear, grabbing a strawberry and biting in it.

“Well… you weren’t around so…”

“I’m here now.”

“I see that.” She stood up, pecking his lips. “Let me get a bowl of cream.”

He watched her walk to the fridge, pouring a generous amount of thick cream in a bowl, and
washing the rest of the strawberries, placing them in another one.

_Felicity… you have no idea what I have in mind for you and those strawberries…_

She was back by his side a minute later. “Do you want to eat on the couch?”

He shook his head, taking the bowls from her hands, his head nudging towards her bedroom.

She frowned, confusion written over her face for a second, quickly replaced by curiosity. “... in the bedroom?”

“Yup. Come on.” He led her to her room, putting the bowls on her nightstand. He grabbed the lighter he had found on her shelf, lighting up the candles. He eventually turned around, facing Felicity who was still standing on the threshold, her mouth slightly agape as she took in his arrangements.

“OK… did you find yourself a new vocation as an interior designer?” she finally asked.

“Nope,” he grinned, fishing his phone out of his pocket, showing her the email he had just received. “I’m all clear.”

She narrowed her eyes teasingly. “Oooh… so you’re seducing me.”

“I think I already seduced you. Several times, actually;” he answered cockily, pulling her inside the room. He took her in his arms, pressing a peck on her nose. “I have also worshipped you... so now this is me cherishing you.”

Her grin was wide as she put her arms over his shoulders. “You really have a way with words, you know that?”

“I’m actually quite talented with my mouth, indeed…”

Felicity raised her eyebrows. “I wish I could swipe that smug smile off your face but we both know I have nothing to complain about when it comes to what you can do with your mouth.”

He laughed, a low, quiet laugh that warmed him up from the inside. He sat down on the side of the bed, pulling on her hand until she was standing in front of him. He gently turned her around so her back was to his front, allowing him to unzip her dress. He took his time, savoring the way her skin appeared to him, slowly, inch by inch. He slid the straps down her arms, the fabric pooling at her waist. He circled her his with his arms, his mouth pressing soft kisses against her spine, traveling from one side to another. Felicity stroked his arms, letting her nails scratch his skin. He rubbed his cheeks against her side, knowing she liked the graze of his stubble. He was rewarded when goosebumps erupted over her skin, and he turned her in his arms until they were face to face. She smiled at him, her hands cradling his face, lowering to kiss his mouth. Her glasses slipped down on her nose and she giggled, taking them off and setting them on the night stand. Oliver buried his face in her soft stomach, the gesture reminding him of the time she had comforted him, so many months ago. He had known then… he had known that she was special to him, that she could see right through him, that she had a place in his life that no one had occupied before. It had taken him some time to eventually figure it out and put the pieces together but… the knowledge had always been there, in a small corner of his heart. His soul had seen something in her and he had been reaching out for her ever since.

He nuzzled her belly button with his nose, breathing her in while she played with his hair, her fingers ruffling them, scratching his skull.
He eventually crooked his fingers in her panties, taking her dress as well, slipping them down her hips. She stepped out of her clothes, completely naked in front of him, her eyes full of trust. His throat tightened, knowing he probably didn’t deserve her, probably didn’t deserve what they had, something so good and pure that no matter what they did between these sheets, it could never really be a sin.

“Lie down,” he whispered, placing one last kiss between her breasts. He opened the sheets for her and she took place on the bed, looking slightly nervous. He smiled at her reassuringly, getting rid of his own clothes, ignoring his erection for now. He had sated his hunger this afternoon. Tonight was about her, about showing what he felt for her with his body.

“Scoot up a bit.” He nudged her, making sure she was high on the pillows. He wanted her to be able to see him, to see every little thing he was about to do to her.

He winked at her, crawling between her thighs, pressing a kiss on her breast as he grabbed a strawberry, guiding it to her mouth. He traced her lips with the plump fruit, his eyes fixed on her tongue peeking out. He finally slid the berry between her open lips, letting her bite half of it.

She closed her eyes, savoring the taste and he lowered the rest of the juicy fruit on her breast, circling her nipple. Her eyes shot open, the cold hardening her nipple instantly.

“What-”

The rest of her words caught in her throat as he lowered his mouth around the areola, sucking the juice of her skin.

Her back arched, pressing the mound of flesh closer to his hungry mouth and he circled the other nipple the same way, the cold bringing goosebumps all over her skin. He soothed the small ache with his mouth as well, savoring the taste of the fruit on her skin.

“Oh my God…” she breathed, pressing his face down. He trailed the fruit from one nipple to the other, his lips chasing the sweetness it left behind. He ate the rest of the fruit, his hand already reaching for another one, this time dipping it into the cream.

She whimpered, watching his every move, her lips already opening, her tongue peeking out. He chuckled at her impatience, knowing he had to reign it in or it would be over way too soon for the both of them.

“Shhh,” he hushed, kissing her neck. “Slow… we have all night.”

Her eyes were wide, her pupils dilated when he slipped the creamy fruit into her mouth, whispering, “suck.”

She moaned but did as she was told, suckling the cream. The vision of her cheeks hollowing, her lips stretched around the round fruit… pictures of him thrusting his cock into her mouth invaded his mind, but he forced them out. Now wasn’t the time.

There was such innocence in her eyes, despite what they were doing, that it soothed an ache in his chest he didn’t even know he had. All the things he had done in the past, all the mistakes, all those senseless affairs… they didn’t matter now. It was just the two of them and with every kiss, every touch, she was absolving his sins, cleansing his soul of regret and remorse, cleansing his heart of wounds that had been inflicted long before she had walked into his life.

“Bite,” he said, watching her teeth sink into the red flesh, then took a bite himself, mesmerized by the way her throat moved when she swallowed. Unable to resist any longer, he pressed his mouth
against hers, suckling on her lower lip, his tongue licking whatever was left of juice. He felt her
tongue reaching out, touching his almost timidly and he felt a surge of tenderness swelling his heart,
swearing to himself that he would always cherish her, protect her from anything that could tarnish the
purity of her soul.

They parted, catching their breath while he trailed his lips down her chest, tracing her throat, the
valley between her breast, her stomach. He circled her belly button, nibbling on the skin, biting, then
soothing the ache with his tongue. Her hands rested on his shoulders, her back arching, and all he
could hear was her breathless whimpers getting louder and louder the more he trailed down. He
dipped another strawberry in cream, offering it to her lips. She only took a small bite, licking the
cream. He smiled, bringing the fruit to her belly button, circling it, watching the small red marks it
was leaving on her skin.

“Oh my God,” she groaned as he licked her stomach clean, then rubbed his stubbled chin over the
slightly damp area, her hips jostling against his face.

“More?” he asked, holding out the half-eaten strawberry. She shook her head, her cheeks red,
pinching her lips. He smiled, sliding down the bed. Pressing the fruit on her skin, travelling down her
lower belly until it reached her mound. His mouth followed down, his chin pressing against her sex,
rubbing slightly.

“Oh fuck,” she moaned, head falling back for a second until she pushed herself up on her elbows, as
if she was hypnotized by the way his mouth was travelling down her body.

“Add a pillow,” Oliver murmured against her skin, watching her grab a pillow on his side of the bed,
putting it behind her head, resting on her back, her arms now free. He wanted her to be able to play
with her breasts or push down on his face.

When he was sure she was comfortable, he gripped her thigh, pushing it up, spreading her open. He
threw her other leg over his shoulder, biting the naked flesh. The scent of her arousal hit his nose and
he breathed in deeply, knowing her smell was already a drug he couldn’t live without. Her eyes were
fixated on his hand, the one that was still holding the juicy fruit and he saw the question in her eyes,
the one she would never dare to ask and he smiled, kissing the inside of her thigh.

“Look at me,” he gently ordered. “Keep your eyes on me.”

She nodded, gulping and he saw how her eyes grew big when he pressed the strawberry against her
mound, sliding down, slowly, slowly… until it reached her outer lips. She kept her eyes on his, her
mouth opening on a soundless cry as he lightly pushed the fruit against her clitoris. Witnessing the
surprise in her eyes, the pleasure, knowing he was the one taking her in uncharted territory, felt like
he had finally found his place in the world. This was where he belonged. By her side.

Unable to resist any longer, he threw the fruit on the floor, licking a long trail from her entrance to
her clitoris.

Felicity let out a loud moan, her head dropping back. He licked all around her clitoris, tasting the
strawberry mixed with her own sweetness, groaning, knowing they would be doing this again. He
flattened his tongue, licking her up and down, from one side to the other, making sure to spread his
saliva, keeping the friction slick. He could feel her thighs trembling under his hands, struggling to
stay put, probably aching to move.

“Oh my God… oh my God…” she panted, her hands fisting the sheets besides her. Oliver reached
out, slowly untangling her fingers, guiding a hand to her own breast instead and she whimpered,
pinching her nipple, massaging the flesh, her hips rolling. He straightened his tongue, wedging it
between her inner lips, teasing her entrance, bumping against her clit and the mewl that escaped her
gone straight to his cock, his own hips rocking against the bed.

She whined when his mouth left her for a second, just the time to reach out and dip a strawberry in
the cold cream, knowing the contrast with her inflamed lips was bound to drive her into a frenzy.

Her hand reached for his skull, trying to press his head back between her thighs, her fingers flicking
the hard little nub of her breast. “Please… Oliver, please, I need you… I need you to…”

“To what baby?” he asked, his voice deep, his hand holding the cream-covered fruit right above her
thigh. “Tell me…tell me the words.”

She cried out when he blew on her sex. “Please… your mouth… I want your mouth.”

*Patience, honey.*

He brought the strawberry to her sex, spreading the cold cream over her clitoris.

Felicity shouted, her legs kicking wildly as she tossed on the bed. “Fuckfuckfuckfuck”

Oliver licked the rest of the cream from the fruit before slowly opening his mouth over the hard
bundle of nerves, his tongue warming up her flesh. He could feel Felicity’s heel digging in his back,
her hands grabbing his skull, pressing it down on her sex, grinding her hips against his face, seeking
the relief from the light pinch of pain the cold cream had caused. He flattened his tongue, rubbing it
over her clit over and over again, hearing her cries getting louder and louder.

“Oh God... oh... Oliver... oh yes... yes,” she wailed, her leg kicking blindly.

He sucked on her clitoris, hard, then let it go, rubbing the strawberry against it while his tongue
traveled south to her entrance, taunting it, tasting her juices. It was only then that he noticed that the
sheets were damp, her arousal dripping between her thighs and onto the bed. He gritted his teeth,
seeing how wet and ready she was only making him ache to be inside her even more.

“Do you want to come, Felicity?” he asked, glancing at her.

She lowered her eyes at him, whimpering, “yes…. Oh yes.”

He lightly brushed the strawberry between her inner lips, right over her clit, making sure her essence
covered it then raised his hand until it reached her lips. “Suck. Taste yourself.”

She gulped, her eyes shifting from his face to the small fruit, her hesitation clear.

“Honey… you have no idea how fucking good you taste,” he whispered, pressing a kiss on the
inside of her upper thigh, right next to her sex.

She hesitantly peeked out her tongue and he slowly pushed the fruit between her lips, his mind once
more invaded by a different kind of fantasy. She sucked, biting on the juicy flesh and she moaned
loudly, dropping her head back on the pillows.

*That’s my girl.*

Keeping his promise, Oliver licked from her entrance to her clit, circling it, rubbing it with the flat of
his tongue, knowing, by the way she was gripping his hair that she was close. He brought two
fingers to her entrance, pushing them in slowly, his tongue never leaving her clit, bringing a constant
pressure while he thrust inside her.
Soon enough, Felicity was gasping for air, grinding herself against his face, inhibitions long gone, keening desperately, chasing her release, until he crooked his fingers inside her, finding that spongy spot and it was immediate, her walls clenching, her juices soaking his hand, a long wail escaping her lips as her legs closed on his head.

She pushed on his head, probably over-sensitive and he nestled his face against her thigh, watching her riding out the wave, her breasts rising and falling as she scrambled to catch her breath, her eyes unfocused, staring into emptiness.

“You OK?” he finally asked, stroking her stomach.

She nodded, her hand swiping the sweat of her forehead.

Now that she had had her orgasm -and a good one at that, seeing how she was still sprawled out, unable to move or even talk- his cock was begging for attention. He laid down on the bed beside her, his fingers grazing her stomach, moving up between her breasts, stroking her jaw. He pressed a soft kiss against her lips and she mewled, her tongue seeking his with eagerness. Her hand travelled down his chest, gripping his length, stroking it, relieving the pressure he was feeling in his balls. He moaned into her mouth, pushing his hips against her, thrusting his cock in her small fist. She bit his lip, pressing her body closer to him, her breasts against his chest, their legs entwined.

She rested her thigh on the top of his, rocking her hips against his muscles, letting him know without words that she was ready. He let go of her mouth, looking in her eyes, relieved to see the flame of desire burning again. He was dying to get inside her, to share that new connection for the first time.

She licked her lips, settling on her back, pulling him over her. He nestled his hips between her open thighs, his hand pulling her leg over his waist, then taking a hold of his cock. He closed his eyes as he rubbed himself between her lips, feeling how warm and slick she was. He bumped against her clit, repeating the motion several times, knowing how much she liked it.

“Stop playing…” she smiled, her hand travelling down his back, pressing on his ass.

He grinned back at her, brushing his nose against hers, then finally positioned himself at her entrance and pushed in slowly, their gazes locked. He was a prisoner of her eyes, the intimacy of their love-making binding their souls.

"Oh God... yes," he moaned as he entered her, skin to skin for the very first time.

Heaven. It was heaven on earth. She was so warm, so wet, literally dripping all over him as he pushed into her, savoring the sensation of his length sliding up her walls. Once he was fully inside, he reached out for one of her hands, placing it near her face, entwining their fingers.

He brought his lips to hers when he slid out of her, pushing back in with a groan, feeling how she was already gripping him like a vise, welcoming him into her warmth.

His lips travelled down her jaw, finding the perfect spot between her shoulder and her neck, his hips finding their own rhythm. He was slowly thrusting in and out, blinded by the pleasure of being inside her, skin against skin, holding her hand like his life depended on it. He could feel Felicity’s lips peppering kisses wherever she could reach, his ear, his cheek, his neck, his shoulder, muffling her little moans against his skin. He nibbled his way back to her lips, his tongue diving in, mirroring how he was thrusting deep inside her.

He started to move faster, and he saw, by the way Felicity’s breathing hitched up, that the new rhythm was working for her. She shifted her legs, spreading them wider, her hand pulling on his hair,
hard, but he welcomed the light pain because it was her losing control.

“Oliver… Oliver…” she chanted his name, her hips meeting his thrusts as much as she could. He let go of her hand, slipping it underneath her ass and rolled them over so she was on top. She looked at him in surprise, her mouth opened on a silent O. He helped her sit up, holding both of her hands in his, linking their fingers, offering her leverage to push down on his cock.

“Lean towards me, baby,” he encouraged her. “Rest your weight on my hands.”

She did as she was told, the new angle bringing her clitoris in contact with his pubic bone and she ground down, closing her eyes.

“Open your eyes, Felicity,” he breathed. He wanted to see her. He wanted to see her beautiful eyes while she rode him, looking for her release. She stared in his eyes, her mouth gaping, already lost in her pleasure.

Soon she let go of his hands, finding her balance by pressing down on his shoulders, rubbing her clit up and down on him. Her movements didn’t really allow him to thrust but he let her be in charge, content to be inside her and let her use his body for her pleasure. He could sense she was approaching her peak, her movements getting sloppy as she pressed down harder, her breathing ragged.

He cupped her breasts, massaging them, rolling her nipples with his thumbs and she let out a strangled cry, grinding down faster and faster and he locked his jaw, tensing, because despite the lack of thrusting, seeing her get off would always turn him on like crazy, and he could already feel her flutter around his length, knowing the best was yet to come, dying to find out how good it would be to have her milking him like she always did without anything between their bodies.

Hearing her loud gasp, he looked up at her, eager to see her face when she climaxed. "Come on... let go, honey. Let me hear you."

“Yes, yes, yes, yes,” she whined, her back arching and then he felt it, how her walls squeezed his cock, the rush of wetness bathing him and he groaned, his hips shooting off the bed, his feet digging into the mattress, desperate to reach deep inside her, to feel more, to feel her everywhere, to bury himself as deep as he could go. She was still fluttering against him when he rolled her on her back, gazing at her for a second, taking in her dazzled eyes, the trembling smile she gave him. He kissed the corner of her lips, his hips finding a new rhythm between her silky thighs.

“Oliver… Oliver… come on… let go,” she panted, her lips kissing his shoulder. He could feel her breasts rubbing against his chest, her legs locked around his waist, her nails grazing down his back. She was everywhere and the little moans he could hear were spurring him on, his movements getting faster, his mouth searching hers in a desperate kiss. He reached for her hands, holding them in his own on each side of her head, entwining their fingers, clinging to her.

Soon, too soon, he felt the first sparks of pleasure in his lower belly and he pressed himself closer to her, his forehead resting on hers, their breaths mingling, the tension building and building until it finally snapped. Moaning her name, he pushed himself as deep as he could, stiffening as he poured himself inside her, knowing his release was filling her spurt after spurt, the sensation like no other.

"Fuck... holy fuck..." he groaned, pushing himself up on his toes, trying to get even deeper inside her.

It was only then that he registered Felicity’s whimpering, the way she was clenching down on him again, his climax having triggered another one from her. His body dropped on hers, and he caught
his weight on his elbows at the last moment, letting go of her hands. A bone-deep satisfaction spread through his body, from his toes to the tips of his ears. He could hear her softly humming, and he breathed in deeply, letting her scent invade him, mark itself on every cell of his body.

He knew he should move, and they probably needed to clean themselves but it was so warm, so soft inside of her that he couldn’t bring himself to pull out. Felicity was stroking his hair, and he buried his face in the crook of her neck, pressing a kiss on her shoulder.

His softened cock eventually slipped out of her, making them both whimper. It forced Oliver into action and, with a small peck on her lips, he sat up, padding to the bathroom, grabbing a washcloth, cleaning himself, wincing at how unusually sensitive his dick was. He brought another wet washcloth to Felicity, gently coaxing her into opening her legs for him. She stiffened but then let him clean the mess they had made together. He kissed the inside of her thigh, discarding the cloth. He blew out the candles, grabbed the sheets and spooned behind her, cocooning them.

His last thought was that those strawberries were the best fruits in the whole fucking universe.

Chapter End Notes

... sooooo?
A few random stuff: I had them talk about birth control and getting rid of condoms very fast because I didn't want them to act irresponsibly but I also didn't want to have to deal with condoms any longer (because it kinda limits me... lol). I tried to make it as realistic as possible but it's a fanfic... I feel like if Oliver can come back from the death with some tea, I can have him get tested and have the results a few hours later XD.

Find me on twitter @Pimsiepim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don't be shy, come say hi!
Hi guys!
So here is the last chapter concerning their weekend of "let's go at it like bunnies to make up for the lost time"
NSFW, obviously. Smutty stuff, obviously. Explicit sex, obviously. Can I make it clearer? XD

Thank you so much for all the amazing feedback for the last two chapters. You guys rock!!!

Special thanks to pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda for their help, as always :)

Song: Underneath your clothes - Shakira (or when I couldn't make up my mind between two songs and eventually picked a third one. Story of my life)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Underneath Your Clothes"

You're a song  
Written by the hands of God  
Don't get me wrong cause  
This might sound to you a bit odd  
But you own the place  
Where all my thoughts go hiding  
And right under your clothes  
Is where I find them  

Underneath Your Clothes  
There's an endless story  
There's the man I chose  
There's my territory  
And all the things I deserve  
For being such a good girl honey  

Because of you  
I forgot the smart ways to lie  
Because of you  
I'm running out of reasons to cry  
When the friends are gone  
When the party's over  
We will still belong to each other  

Underneath Your Clothes  
There's an endless story
There's the man I chose
There's my territory
And all the things I deserve
For being such a good girl honey [x2]

I love you more than all that's on the planet
Movin' talkin' walkin' breathing
You know it's true
Oh baby it's so funny
You almost don't believe it
As every voice is hanging from the silence
Lamps are hanging from the ceiling
Like a lady tied to her manners
I'm tied up to this feeling

Underneath Your Clothes
There's an endless story
There's the man I chose
There's my territory
And all the things I deserve
For being such a good girl honey

There were many things that made a Sunday morning… a Sunday morning.

For Felicity Smoak, it was the fact that she could lie-in and stay in her pajamas for as long as she wanted, reading her favorite book for the 127th time.

Or wake up completely naked in Oliver’s arms. That worked too. That really, really worked too. And waking up in his arms, his soft breath caressing her shoulder, the sound of pouring rain tapping against her windows… that was something she could get used to. Like… for-the-rest-of-her-life get used to.

She stretched out beside him, careful as to not wake him up, a small moan of utter contentment escaping her throat. She felt… deliciously sore. Their -vigorous- activities from the last two days were certainly taking a toll on her body. Her muscles were protesting, not used to being so over-worked. Her thighs were particularly tender and there was a soreness in her core, direct result of being… well… thoroughly well-fucked. Even though what they had done had been so, so much more than just fucking. Still… she couldn’t deny the carnality, the raw desire that had taken them over. They had waited for so long, deprived their bodies of what they were naturally craving that once they had finally caved in… it had been wild, passionate,… raunchy. Except last night. Last night, it wasn’t just their bodies making love. It was their souls. She couldn’t remember ever feeling as close to anyone as she had when Oliver had started to move inside her, his eyes dipping into her soul, baring her to his gaze. And she had let him because she could see right through him as well. They didn’t hold back, they didn’t hide. They just gave themselves to each other fully, completely.

When she had picked up her purse contents and seen the condom, it had reminded her of that tiny moment of frustration during their first time. That barrier between them. She wasn’t stupid or irresponsible in the slightest but she couldn’t exactly ignore her body’s needs and pretend they didn’t exist. Yet… this was a big step. She trusted Oliver. The man he had been before was long gone and what she had told her mother was true: he had changed. Completely. And had never, not at one time, made her doubt his growing feelings for her. She knew he had been faithful to her way before their
weekend in Vegas, where they had finally acted like a couple. No words had been needed between them, they were together and exclusively together. Yet, she knew they would need to talk about that, about their relationship, their future and also… what had happened during those ten days apart. She was confident they would work it out, at their own pace, as a couple.

The word made her smile, her eyes still closed. They were indeed finally a couple. In the light of day, this time. There were going to be many, many more Sunday mornings for them, many more farmer markets, many more kisses, many more nights where they just collapsed in each other’s arms, passing out from mind-blowing sex. But this Sunday morning, their first one in many ways, would always be special.

She could have stayed like that forever but her bladder had other plans. Sighing, she slipped from Oliver’s arms, padding her way to the bathroom. When she came back into the still mostly dark room, she saw that it was barely 6AM. She shouldn’t have been surprised, they had gone to sleep quite early after all.

Oliver had shifted while she was gone and was now sprawled on his back, the sheets low on his hips. Shivering, she grabbed a duvet from the trunk at the bottom of the bed, spreading it over the sheet. She then crawled back underneath the sheets, pulling the covers over their bodies, snuggling into his embrace, using his chest as her own pillow. His arm circled her waist automatically and she sighed, rubbing her nose against his heart. The sound of the rain outside her apartment lulled her back to sleep, Oliver’s arms becoming her shelter. She was safe and warm in his embrace, in their own little cocoon.

Fingers softly trailing down her back woke her up. She was still in the same position, Oliver’s chest underneath her cheek, her hand on his lower stomach. It was still raining, she noticed absent-mindedly but the room was brighter. She felt Oliver press a kiss on her head, his fingers travelling up and down her spine, his other hand lightly stroking her hip. She snuggled closer to him, burying her face in the crook of his neck, her hand leaving his stomach to softly scratch his scalp, running her fingers through his hair, gently pulling. She felt rather than heard the little moan he made and she grinned against his skin, pressing a kiss on his shoulder.

He squeezed her ass, kneading a cheek, his thumb tracing circles. He really did have a little fixation on her backside, she thought with a smile.

Her mouth trailed on his throat, his stubble prickling her hyper sensitive lips. There had been so much kissing and nibbling and biting lately that they were swollen and more red than usual - not that she would complain. Oliver was an amazing kisser and she was more often than not the one making the first step.

She nibbled on his chin, suckled on the small mole that she had obsessed about so many times, until she finally reached her destination. Oliver sighed in her mouth, opening up for her, letting her stroke his tongue with hers, in a lazy caress that made her toes curl. She slipped a leg between his, already feeling him hardening against her hip.

OK so maybe this isn’t going to be as lazy as I thought…

As usual, feeling his desire only fed her own but she was in no hurry and kissing him so slowly felt so good that she wasn’t about to stop. Oliver suckled her tongue, then her lower lip, his hands now stroking her backside and the top of her thighs.

They eventually parted, Felicity kissing her way over his nose, his forehead, sliding up his body. Oliver breathed in deeply, then slowly turned them on their sides, his face snuggling underneath her
chin. He peppered small kisses over her chest, wedging his leg higher between hers, pulling her thigh over his waist. His cock was fully hard now, nestled between their stomachs but he didn’t seem in any hurry, it was as if he was still half-asleep. The palm of his hand went from her upper leg to her side, goosebumps erupting along the way despite the duvet that was still blanketing them both. He didn’t stop until it reached her breast, cupping the mound of flesh delicately. His thumb flicked the little nub, which stiffened instantly under his touch. He rolled it under the pad of his finger a few times then stopped, making her groan in frustration and scratch the back of his neck in retaliation. She felt his short intake of breath against her throat, the small rumble in his chest when he let out a small chuckle but almost instantly, his thumb was back, this time damp with his saliva. A shiver went down her spine at the sensation and she pressed a kiss on his head in gratitude, earning another laugh from him.

He already knew her body so well… almost better than she knew it herself if she was honest. After all he had seen certain parts of her anatomy quite… closely. He knew how to touch her, where and when, could read the way her body reacted to him and always, always paid attention to the small signs. A moan, a sigh, a shiver and he knew if he should continue, slow down or stop. And whenever he had a doubt concerning her reactions, not sure if a hiss was a “oh God yes, right there” or a “OK this is borderline painful”, he would ask her, or just look at her and wait for her consent to keep going. This man was a maestro when it came to her pleasure.

Oliver lightly pinched her nipples between two fingers, his tongue licking the erect nipple then took it inside his mouth, sucking on it. She closed her eyes, sparks of pleasure making her breathing quicken. He suddenly pressed on her lower back, and she pulled her leg higher on his waist. He angled his hips so that his cock could come into contact with her sex and she ground down but the angle didn’t allow for a lot of friction. She mewled in frustration and Oliver’s hand circled her waist as he slid up her body, his mouth now laving on her neck. Soon, she felt him cup her sex, his palm grinding down, his fingers teasing her entrance, spreading the wetness that was already there and the little groan he made when he felt her arousal went straight down to her core.

There was an ache growing, that already familiar craving deep within her body that was calling for him, for the relief only he could give her.

She keened when she felt his finger wedging in her folds, going up to her clit, circling it slowly but not touching it directly, then going back down to her entrance, collect her essence, letting it coat his finger, and moving back up again, repeating the same motion over and over again, always avoiding direct contact with the little bundle of nerves. Her hips were rolling against him, her inner walls clamping on emptiness, desperate for something to stretch her, to fill her. Despite the soreness, she wanted him, she needed him, needed the burn, the one that felt so good.

She was spurring him on, her hands stroking his arms and back, scratching his skin, massaging the muscles, palpating his firm stomach, feeling how tense he was. He finally raised his head, his eyes dark with desire, when she grazed his cock, squeezing it in her fist.

He looked at her, intensely, his jaw tight as she pumped him once, twice before kissing her, hard, his tongue diving into her mouth as if he couldn’t get enough of her taste. She was gasping for air when he pulled back, the tension building, making her heart beat as fast as if she had run a marathon. He tried to roll onto his back and take her with him but she resisted. She wanted to feel his body over hers, wanted him to nestle between her thighs. Being on top was a really good position for her, one that allowed her to come quickly but this wasn’t what she was craving right now. He stared at her, a question in his eyes and she pulled him to her, leaning back on the bed, spreading her thighs to accommodate him. He rested his weight on his elbows on each side of her head and pressed a soft kiss on her lips, his hips grinding down against her. She hissed when his cock slid down against her clit, and it reminded her of that morning in his hotel room when they had been in a similar position,
their clothes the only thing separating them. If only she had known how good it felt to have him inside her, she would have cancelled that brunch and spent the entire day making a mess of the sheets.

Oliver must have had a similar thought because he grinned at her, winking as he pressed down against her center, making sure his cock was sliding up and down her sex.

She smiled, pecking his lips as her hands reached down his back, her nails leaving their mark all the way down to his ass. He tensed, shivering, perking an eyebrow. He didn’t need to talk, his eyes letting her know that she was going to be in trouble when she grabbed his ass, her nails digging in the hard cheeks. He suddenly rested his weight on one arm, his other hand travelling down between their bodies, gripping his cock. He pressed it down to her opening, barely pushing in, then travelled up to her clit, bumping it, rubbing his tip all around it. She squeezed her eyes shut because that was something that drove her completely crazy, the pleasure so intense, having the most sensitive part of her body being stimulated by his cock, knowing he’d only have to slip an inch south and he could slam into her, fill her to the hilt. It always upped her arousal to know he was so close to thrust into her but at the same time the contact against her clit felt so good that she was torn between her desire for him to bring her to orgasm that way -because she knew he could- or wait until he was moving deep inside her.

Oliver was clearly taking his time, rubbing and teasing the bundle of nerves and she thought that maybe this was the time where she’d get to option number 1. He lightly tapped the head of his cock against it one, two, three times and she gasped, her eyes opening wide, feeling the tension in her lower belly growing tighter and tighter, all her pleasure concentrating in that tiny button of flesh that he was playing masterfully. The smirk on his face was one of a man knowing he was giving pleasure to his woman, knowing he was satisfying her in ways no other man had been able to. In any other circumstances, she would have told him to wipe the smug smile off his face but knowing she was literally keening from the pleasure he was giving her, she decided to give him a pass.

She was just at the edge of her orgasm, her moans getting louder and louder in the quiet room, when he suddenly pulled back, depriving her of the final rub that would have made her climax.

She wailed, her hips jerking underneath him, desperately chasing her release. She rested her feet flat on the bed, her knees bent on each side of his hips, trying to get enough leverage. She wouldn’t need much, just a slight brush against his cock and she would dive head first.

Oliver clucked his tongue, shaking his head, a teasing flame in his eyes. She was breathing heavily, the wave slowly dying down, leaving only an aching frustration that almost had her pouting. She knew he’d never leave her unsatisfied, but that orgasm had seemed so promisingly good and now it was just a memory and she couldn’t help but glare at him.

Dipping his head, Oliver kissed her, his tongue invading her mouth and she let the frustration take over, biting his lower lip, battling for dominance. Suddenly, his cock was at her entrance, nudging her opening and then Oliver was sinking into her, groaning, his eyes squeezing shut as he filled her to the hilt. She moaned, loudly, throwing her head back on the pillow, the burn, that delicious burn inside her making her see stars.

He let her adjust for a moment, his hand gently stroking her clit back to life then going back next to her face. He peppered small kisses along her jaw then down her neck until she started to rock her hips, pushing on her feet for leverage. He then pulled back until only the tip stayed inside her, only to surge back again slowly, letting her feel every inch going inside her.

Her hands travelled over his back, massaging his sides, spurring him on. She needed him to move.
His hips started to roll, pushing in, pulling back, pushing in again, the rhythm slow and leisurely, as if he had all the time in the world, as if he wanted to savor their love-making for as long as possible. She felt her heart swell at the thought, her hands roaming over his back, feeling the muscles move underneath the skin every time he would thrust into her. His penetrations were slow but deep and he would grind his hips in a small circle motion once he was fully inside her, making sure to stimulate her clit. She was meeting his thrusts as much as she could, her hips pushing back against him, feeling the wave of pleasure building back up again, slowly, so slowly.

It felt good, it felt incredibly good, but she could sense she would not be able to orgasm that way. The angle wasn’t working for her and she shifted her legs, circling his waist and the next thrust went deeper, making her groan, her nails digging into the skin of his lower back. It seemed to encourage him because he thrust harder, letting out a grunt when her walls clench around his cock in reflex. He sped up the pace, and soon he was pushing inside her forcefully, the bed rocking underneath them, the headboard banging against the wall.

She bit her lips, closing her eyes, trying to focus on the delicious burn down her core, feeling it grow as Oliver started to slam into her, his breathing ragged in her ear. He suddenly lifted himself, still pushing into her, grabbed her legs and spread them open until they rested in the crook of his arms, opening her, offering her clit to his thrusts, his hands now resting by her breasts.

Her mouth opened, whimpers escaping her throat, because it allowed him to go really deep and grind directly on her clit with his pelvic bone every time he would thrust in. Her hands travelled down his chest, until she could grip his waist, guiding his movements, letting him know he could go faster because she really was getting there now and seeing the tension in his arms and neck, the sweat dropping from his forehead onto her stomach was turning her on like crazy. A particularly hard thrust made him grunt in effort and that sound alone was enough to drive her over the edge, to make the heat in her core explode, her inner walls squeezing his thrusting cock as she let out a long, tortured wail, welcoming the relief she had been seeking so desperately.

It took her a few seconds to catch her breath and Oliver was still pushing inside her, much more slowly, his eyes squeezed shut, his face a mix of pain and intense pleasure. Her first thought was that she had been so focused on her climax that she had missed his but as soon as her walls stopped fluttering around him, the tension took over his body once more. He let go of her legs and she just let them drop on the mattress, the lower part of her body bathing in pure bliss. His body covered hers once more as he slipped a hand underneath her ass, holding her tightly against him. His movements became erratic as he lost control, and all she could do was hold him, stroking his hair, her body accepting his punishing rhythm, letting him find his pleasure deep inside her. The headboard was banging loudly now, following his furious pace, the sound echoing loudly in her room but not enough to cover his little groans of pleasure as he chased his release. It dawned on her suddenly that it was the first time she could actually really witness his orgasm, having been lost in the middle of her own the other times they had made love. Now, she was completely focused on how hard his hand was gripping her ass, how desperate his thrusts were, his mouth literally crushing on her shoulder, muffling his groans, his hips snapping against her.

She could feel, by the way he would press himself against her, the way his hips were starting to lose any rhythm, by the tension in his arms, that he was getting close to his own release.

He suddenly stiffened in her arms, a long moan escaping him as he slammed into her one last time, and she closed her eyes when she felt his cock throbbing against her walls as he emptied himself deep inside her. The rush of warmth inside her body as he found his pleasure made her whimper, the action so intimate, bringing their bodies even closer. It was going to become a drug, one that was sure to drive her crazy with lust. ad she not been so sated, already in that post-coital bliss, she would have come again, like she had the night before.
He sagged on her, his body heavy and slick with sweat, only making sure most of his weight would rest on his elbows. Panting, he buried his face in the crook of her neck as he tried to catch his breath.

She cradled him, her hands stroking his back, his hair, his arms, basking in the after-glow with him. When his heart finally calmed down, he lifted his head, a relaxed, sated smile stretching his lips. He rolled over, taking her with him until he was lying on his back, Felicity on top of him. Slipping an arm underneath his head, he gazed at her, his other hand slowly caressing her backside.

And to think they still hadn’t exchanged one word - she thought, amused.

She grinned, leaning in, pressing a soft kiss on his lips. “Good morning.”

Oliver chuckled against her mouth, the sound echoing through his chest. “Good morning, indeed.”

It was still raining outside, she noticed randomly as she stroked his jaw, the feeling of his stubble underneath her fingertips reminding her of the beard burn she had on her neck. And on her shoulders. And inside her thighs.

Giggling, she wiggled her legs, slipping them between his. The duvet had been pushed aside during their… activities and she leaned back to grab it, pulling it over them.

“Wait.” Oliver stopped her with a peck on her nose. He gently rolled her on the mattress, getting up. He padded to the bathroom, closing the door behind him while Felicity lingered in bed, stretching her legs, feeling wonderfully relaxed. She heard the toilet flushing, water running down in the sink and then he was back, ruffling his hair. Her eyes travelled down his naked body, the toned muscles of his legs flexing with each step making her mouth water. He was carrying a washcloth and he gently nudged her legs apart. She blushed, embarrassed, because he was cleaning her private parts and, well, that was… private. He winked at her as he delicately wiped the traces of their pleasure off, dropping the cloth on the floor.

“I like doing that,” he said softly as he slipped back underneath the duvet.

She frowned. “... you mean what you just did right now or what we did before that?”

“Both. One very, very much, actually. I really, really… really like to come inside you. It’s… insanely hot. Taking care of you afterwards is my way to extend the experience, I guess.”

She bit back a smile, secretly pleased that the act meant as much to him as it did to her.

He turned on his side, facing her. Their heads were sharing the same pillow and he took her hand, linking their fingers and resting it between them, his thumb stroking her knuckles.

She grinned, entwining their legs, her toes wiggling against his calf.

“It’s raining?” he suddenly asked, glancing towards the window.

Felicity laughed. “It has been raining since before you woke up, Oliver.”

“I guess something else had my complete and undivided attention,” he murmured, his eyes softening as he pressed a soft kiss on the back of her hand.

“I’m definitely not going to complain about that,” she beamed.

He sighed, a deep, happy and satisfied sigh that made her heart flutter. She had always enjoyed sex, not in a crazy addicted kind of way but more in the pleasant, nice kind of way. With Oliver,
though… it seemed like she would never get enough of him. She loved how messy it was, how her body was completely taking over her brain. She squirmed, her thoughts already travelling to round 2, and maybe this time they could try spooning because she had had this fantasy in her mind ever since they had woken up in his hotel room in Vegas. She pinched her lips, remembering how good it felt when he took her from behind, the angle deep and…

“Again?” Oliver asked, raising an eyebrow, completely aware of where her thoughts had gone.

Felicity blushed, knowing it would be foolish to lie. “...yes?”

He huffed out a laugh, rolling on his back. “You’re insatiable. You’re gonna have to give me a bit of time, though.”

“Look who’s the one who has to work on their stamina, now…” she smirked, scooting closer to him, her hand travelling on his chest.

He chuckled, stroking her hair as his hand covered hers, resting it over his heart. “Why don’t we play a game? We could start that puzzle. It will keep your mind off those naughty thoughts I can see in your eyes.”

She groaned, burying her face in the crook of his arm, having about zero desire to move from where she was. It was warm, and so comfy underneath the duvet with the rain still tapping against the windows.

“OK, no puzzle,” he snorted.

“I don’t want to move,” she whined, pressing a small peck on his shoulder. “We can play a game here. Two truths, one lie?”

Oliver hummed, kissing her forehead. “You go first, then.”

Biting her lips, she thought about things he could guess but that he didn’t necessarily know about her either.

“OK… I wanted to be an astronaut when I was a kid, I can ice-skate pretty well and… I love Bon Jovi.”

“Easy. You sang Livin’ On A Prayer constantly during the business strip. By the way, my ears still haven’t recovered, thank you very much.”

“You’re welcome,” she chirped.

He grinned. “You have an old, overused Nasa cap on your secretary… so I guess you can’t ice-skate?”

“I tried to learn but I failed miserably and it kinda ruined all my dreams of a Nancy Kerrigan career. Without the whole knee busting thingy, I mean.”

He laughed. “I’ll teach you. I’m pretty good at it.”

“Ugh. When it comes to physical activities, you seem to be good at everything.”

“I’m glad to know I satisfy my very insatiable girlfriend despite my lack of stamina.”

She bit back a smile, because it was ridiculous how such a simple, stupid word could make her heart beat faster all of a sudden. She was supposed to be a grown-up, independent woman, for fuck’s sake.
She leaned in, pressing a little kiss on his jaw, then pulled back, resting her head on his pillow. He turned his face, winking at her, his fingertip grazing the lobe of her ear tenderly.

“My hair must be an awful mess,” she suddenly realized. She hadn’t combed it or tied it since yesterday’s afternoon and it had the habit to tangle very easily.

Oliver glanced at her skull, a lopsided smile stretching his lips. “It is a mess of epic proportions, indeed.”

“Thank you for softening the blow,” she huffed, rolling her eyes.

“I’ll help you untangle it. I’m partly responsible for it, after all.”

“My, aren’t you boyfriend of the year?” she grinned at his smug face.

“I’m trying my best.” He gazed at her, his eyes soft and full of something that she didn’t dare to name yet. He suddenly dipped his face, grazing her lips, lingering. He didn’t try to deepen the kiss and neither did she, the touch so intimate and reverent at the same time, allowing them to breathe each other in. His mouth moved softly against her, keeping the contact light, and it honestly felt like a butterfly was grazing its wings against her skin.

“That’s it. I’m never getting out of this bed. Neither is he. This bed is like a direct portal to heaven.

Oliver eventually pulled back, his eyes shining, a wide grin on his face as she let out a sigh of pure contentment.

“It’s your turn,” she eventually reminded him once she had gathered her thoughts.

He nodded thoughtfully, staring in the distance, obviously taking the game seriously.

“Alright…” he eventually said, looking at her. “I can never get my tie right when I’m stressed, my car’s name is actually Frances because of Dirty Dancing-”

“I knew it!” she exclaimed. “I knew you liked that movie and didn’t call it ‘baby’ randomly!”

“And I’m not in love,” he continued, his voice soft, a small, shy smile on his lips.

It took a few seconds for his words to register - mental pictures of all the times she had had to fix his tie for him before an important meeting flashing through her mind. Her mouth opened in a silent O before biting her lips, attempting to keep her huge smile at bay and miserably failing.

She cleared her throat, trying to keep her tone serious. “Oh really?”

“Really,” he nodded, his eyes never leaving hers, telling her so much more than words could ever do.

“Good. Cause I’m not either. I mean… no butterflies in my stomach, no day-dreaming, no missing you even though you’re just in the next room,… Nothing,” she pretended teasingly, completely unable to keep a straight face, her cheeks hurting from grinning so wide, Oliver’s face a perfect mirror of everything she was feeling at the moment.

The smile on his face was giving him those little wrinkles around his eyes that she loved so much and he was so handsome, so perfect, so beautifully him, bathed in the dim morning light, relaxed and at peace, that she felt a lump grow in her throat. This was her Oliver. The man she had slowly fallen in love with. The man she trusted, the man who made her laugh and smile and feel more of a woman
than she had ever felt. The man who helped her become the strong, confident woman she had always dreamed of being. The man who was miles away from the public persona of heir to the throne, the one who had opened up to her, sharing his vulnerabilities, his flaws because of that unspoken, unbreakable bond that had grown between them.

He had been her boss, her friend, her partner, her boyfriend and she knew, deep down in her heart, she knew without a doubt that the road would not end there for them. A connection like that was rare, and precious and she swore to herself that she would never let it die.

Finally making love with him, entering that step in their relationship, being a couple in the open, hadn’t been the finish line. It had only been the start.

Their story was just beginning.

“You OK?” he asked her, frowning.

“Yeah,” she whispered, trying to swallow the lump, a shaky smile on her lips. “I’m more than OK.”

He softly traced the little wrinkle between her eyebrows, soothing the skin. She snuggled into his embrace, letting his warmth invade her, the smell of his skin tickling her senses. He wrapped her in his arms, holding her tight. They stayed like that for God knows how long, awake but quiet, and Felicity honestly didn’t think there was any better way to spend a Sunday morning.

“There’s a stain on your bedstand,” Oliver said, entering the kitchen with the bowls they had used for ‘dessert’ last night.

They eventually had left their warm cocoon, their stomachs protesting loudly about the lack of food. Oliver had tidied her room, changing her sheets while she had volunteered to make breakfast.

“Mmmh?” she asked, battling with a canteloup. She was only dressed in his t-shirt, a habit she would gladly take.

“Strawberry. I missed my target last night and it ended up on your bedstand instead of the bowl.” Oliver winced, rubbing the back of his neck.

“It’s OK” she shrugged, too busy staring at how his sweat pants were hanging low on his hips to really care. “It will make a nice souvenir.”

“I’m still sorry,” he murmured, pressing a quick peck on her hair before rinsing the bowl of cream left-over.

“I don’t think there’s anything about last night that could ever make me feel sorry, Oliver.” She stuck her tongue out at him, her hip bumping against him playfully.

He observed her struggling with the canteloup, then asked, “why don’t you let me handle this and set the table instead?”

"Have you ever even cut your own fruit?"

Pinching his lips, he took the knife out of her hands. “Well, yes, occasionally. When the staff has a day off, for instance.”
She wiped her hands and quickly set cutlery and plates on her dining table. The coffee was almost ready and she opened the cupboard where she had stored her mugs, reaching on her toes, stretching out her arm and cursing -once more- her landlord who had thought high cabinets were a good idea. Oliver’s hand appeared out of nowhere, grabbing two for her, settling them on the counter.

“Show-off,” she grumbled, opening the fridge to get the cream cheese.

He snorted, shaking his head as he opened the bag of bagels, putting two in the toaster.

He leaned against the counter, waiting for the bagels to be done. Felicity stepped in front of him, her arms sliding around his waist, snuggling against him. He huffed out a laugh, rubbing his chin against the top of her head, holding her tight.

“I like being in your arms,” she whispered, closing her eyes.

“That’s good because I like having you in my arms,” he murmured, his hand sliding underneath the t-shirt she was wearing, pausing. “Felicity Smoak… you’re not wearing underwear?”

She giggled. “Nope.”

“I approve very much,” he said, stroking her hip.

“It’s not much by choice but more by necessity. At the pace we’re going, I won’t have any clean panties to wear for work tomorrow.”

He chuckled. “I definitely don’t want that to happen. Although, I have to admit that back when you were my assistant… I might have fantasized about it…”

Leaning back, she looked at him cheekily. “Now really, Mister Queen?”

“Yup!” He lightly slapped her ass when the toaster pinged. “But that’s a story for another time… breakfast is ready, Miss Smoak.”

After their breakfast, Oliver took a quick shower while Felicity checked her emails. He had tried to convince her to join him - purely to save water, of course - but she had declined, her little shower-tub being way too small for the two of them. Last thing she needed was a sex-induced shower injury. Even his small pout hadn’t been enough to convince her, neither his promise of behaving and keeping his hands to himself. Truth be told, it was her own hands that she didn’t trust.

By the time she was done with her own shower, her hair having been a nightmare like she had assumed, she found Oliver sitting down by the couch.

She rolled her eyes when she saw the box of the puzzle he had bought her in Vegas and the small little pieces spread out on her coffee table. Sitting on the couch behind him, she circled his shoulders with her arms, kissing his cheek.

“You found something to keep you busy, I see.”

He smiled at her, proudly holding out a corner piece. “Tada! Always start with the corners, then the frame.”

“I know, Oliver. I do have a basic knowledge of how to make a puzzle. Then you sort the pieces according to colors and that’s usually the step that drives me nuts.”
“Why?” Oliver frowned. “Too much work?”

“No but… you almost never have just one color. So I make so many different piles to be as precise and accurate as possible but I end up needing a bigger table and… ugh.”

“That is so you,” Oliver laughed out loud. “Just make a few piles and work with that. Come on, sit down on the opposite side. We’ll do this the same way I used to do it with Thea: we each start at one point and the goal is to make the bigger part of the puzzle.”

“And what’s the prize?”

Oliver paused, distractingly scratching his chin. “Mmmh… winner gets to pick where we go on our first date?”

“First date that was actually supposed to happen last night, I’ll remind you,” she chuckled.

“Even more so. That should give you motivation to finish it as soon as possible.”

Tilting her head, Felicity pursed her lips. “Considering what we did instead of that date, I wouldn’t be so sure…”

Oliver chuckled. “No matter how much I loved doing that, I’d very much like to take you out on a date as well.”

She eventually sat down, because despite everything, Felicity Smoak liked competition. Unfortunately, despite Oliver’s organization, she found herself getting distracted more often than not. Like when Oliver would ruffle his hair. Or when he would clear his throat.

“Felicity… you’re not taking this seriously,” Oliver gently scolded her as she eventually rested her head on her hands, having decided that gazing at him was a much more productive way to spend the rest of her Sunday morning.

“I am! I am mentally preparing myself. It’s an old technique that, if used well, sharpens your cognitive perspective.”

“And that cognitive perspective involves staring at me?”

“Well… yes. You’re very pleasant to look at, Oliver. Besides, I helped.”

“You found two pieces, hon.”

“Two pieces you didn’t have to find yourself,” she insisted, pinching her lips. “You do realize that if Tommy could see you now, he’d probably disown you or something, right?”

Oliver smirked. “Probably. Good thing I have my own trust fund.”

They eventually managed to finish the frame, mostly thanks to Oliver, though. He had even started the hotel part and she had to admit he was pretty good at it. He was observant, memorizing the shapes and colors of the pieces much faster than she did. To be fair, the fact that she kept ogling him didn’t help her concentration at all. He was wearing a black t-shirt and a pair of jeans and he honestly looked like the yummiest piece of candy she had ever seen.

“Thank you… I guess,” he said with a small smile, fitting a piece in the corner.
She blushed violently, realizing she had said that out loud. *Well that hadn’t happened to me in a while.*

He glanced at her, winking.

*Oh, well… I’ve said worse.*

She shrugged, because after all it was nothing he didn’t know. The last couple of days had proven she had a hard time keeping her hands to herself, after all. But since he was obviously very absorbed in his task, going down that road was not a good idea. She pursed her lips, her eyes travelling to the empty puzzle box laying on the floor, tracing the outlines of the Bellagio distractingly, her mind already miles away.

Suddenly, she remembered their fight at QC when she had told him she quit. He had told her she wasn’t fighting, but running, like she had ran away from Vegas, from MIT, from Boston. And then, when he had apologized, his soft questioning if it really was because she wasn’t used to counting on anyone - or on any man…

Those conversations had been in the back of her mind ever since, maturing quietly. Was there some truth to that? She couldn’t deny that her coping mechanism was to leave. Start afresh. But every single time she had done that… a man had been at the source of her disappointment. Her father had left her and had also taken away the only part of her hometown that felt like she belonged to. Cooper had been the cause of her departure from MIT and Boston. And then at QC, when people had found out about her relationship with Oliver, she hadn’t even thought one second that he would want to be there and help her.

It wasn’t that she had thought he wouldn’t be there for her. It’s just that her mind hadn’t even considered that possibility. She had seen a tough situation rising, a never-ending list of battles ahead of her and she had seen herself fighting them alone - like she had most of her life.

“Oliver…” she trailed off, knowing it was probably time for them to talk about it.

“Yup?” He raised his head, questioning. He suddenly frowned. “What’s wrong?”

She smiled reassuringly. “Nothing, don’t worry. I was just thinking. About what you told me. How I ran instead of staying and fighting with you.”

“Oh,” he said, putting down a puzzle piece. “I wasn’t accusing you, you know.”

“I know. There was some truth in that… I think. When I got back from Walter’s office, my mind was completely overwhelmed with…” she waved around her head, adding, “… everything.”

“Understandable. It felt like I just got knocked over the head myself.”

“I couldn’t focus on anything, not even to consider your mother’s proposition. So I went to get lunch.”

“Chocolate cake?” Oliver smiled, resting his elbows on the small table.

Huffing out a laugh, she nodded. “Yeah. Didn’t even get to eat it, now that I think of it. Ugh. Not fair” she shook his head “anyway. I arrived there early, sat down, and then… people started to arrive. I didn’t notice it, at first.”

“Notice what?” Oliver murmured.
“The stares. The whispers. The snickering. Take your pick.” She shrugged. “Then Mandy and Mark, those two sneaky little bastards…”

“Did they tell you something?” he leaned in, his voice colder.

“Well, duh. Of course. Knowing them, do you think they’d let that one go?” she snorted.

Oliver locked his jaw, his lips now a fine line. “What did they tell you exactly?”

Sighing, Felicity picked up a puzzle piece, fiddling with it. “Doesn’t matter anymore. Usual stuff about cheap stuff coming from Vegas and… sluts with a holier-than-thou-attitude.”

Oliver gaped at her then hissed a furious. “Excuse me?! Why didn’t you tell me about this, Felicity?!”

“So what, my boyfriend/boss would come to the rescue? That was about the last thing I needed, Oliver,” she calmly explained.

“What else?” he gritted through his teeth, his eyes flashing with anger.

“… they asked if it started once your dad passed away. And that everyone thought I was blackmailing you while it turned out I was just giving you better head than my predecessors,” she caved in, knowing this probably wouldn’t help him feel any better, but also confident he wasn’t about to let it go.

He covered his mouth with his hand, processing her words.

“But that’s not what I wanted to talk about, anyway,” she sighed. “And I got back at them so no need to put on your white armor to defend my honor, by the way.”

“I can’t let that go, Felicity. That is crossing a line. I won’t have anyone badmouthing you like this. Not on my watch, and sure as hell not in the building with my last name on top of it.”

“It doesn’t matter anymore, Oliver. I left, I have an amazing job, I’m at the start of a very, very promising career which is something that they will never have. I have the man of my dreams who makes the most perfect toasted bagels with cream cheese. I already won.” She reached for his hand, holding it protectively between hers.

He quietly observed her for a moment, then apparently decided to humor her. “I do make a mean bagel with cream cheese.”

“You really do. And don’t even get me started on what you can do with strawberries and cream.”

“I’ll still keep an eye on them and won’t let anything go.”

“Fair enough,” she approved, knowing this was his way of compromising. Whatever happened now wasn’t on her part anyway. If Mandy and Mark were stupid enough to spread other gossips or rumors, then let them deal with the consequences. They had a fair warning, after all.

Oliver suddenly frowned, still stroking her hand. “... what did you tell them, by the way? Because I stumbled on Mandy on my way to Walter’s floor and she acted strangely.”

“Strangely?”

“She didn’t try to hit on me.”
Felicity giggled. “I might have done some digging concerning them… you know… just in case I’d ever need some blackmail material.”

“Again with the blackmail material?! Am I dating a former spy or something?”

Grinning, she straightened her shoulders proudly. “I would have made a great spy. When you’re used to being picked on, you start gathering ammo. In Mandy and Mark’s case it involves a potential case of fraud and a career in the porn industry. Just so you know.”

Oliver raised his eyebrows, gaping. “Seriously? How did you even find… Wait, would you have to kill me if you told me?”

“I’d make an exception for you.”

“Thank God.”

“Mostly because I still have strawberries in my fridge, though.”

“Oh, so you’re only with me for my sexual prowess?”

“Of course not,” she protested. “There’s also your good looks.”

“And my bagels,” he reminded her.

“And your bagels,” she nodded seriously.

They grinned at each other, their hands still laced together.

“But that’s not what you wanted to talk about, right?” Oliver eventually reminded her, his thumb stroking her knuckles.

“Right.” She sobered up. “What I was trying to say is when I got back from lunch… I just realized that it was always going to be that way and… no matter how much I loved seeing you everyday and working with you… I needed to think about what I wanted in life. And the more I thought about it, the more it became clear that I couldn’t find it at QC because I would always be seen as your affair or your girlfriend. So, I looked for a solution. By myself. Because that’s what I’ve always done. And I had to do it alone, Oliver. I had to make sure the next step in my career was me and me only. I couldn’t stay and fight with you at QC because I… I never really learned how to. I ran away from Boston. It was painful and it didn’t seem worth it. The pain of being reminded of the things I had wanted so desperately but never would have was… it was holding me back. I could have fought and forced them to honor their promises but I didn’t. I didn’t because, you’re right. My first instinct is to look for a solution somewhere else.”

“There is nothing wrong with that. We all have a coping mechanism when we’re confronted with an unusual and stressful situation.”

She smiled. “Yours is to try to control everything.”

He looked at her, surprised. “That’s… almost word for word what my mother told me.”

“I know you quite well, Oliver Jonas Queen.” She winked at him. “Our coping mechanisms were bound to clash because they are completely opposite.”

“We are so different. I mean I always saw us as so compatible that I never stopped to think about why we were so compatible in the first place. We’re like puzzle pieces,” he chuckled.
She smiled, because what he was saying was very true. They were extremely different, and those differences were making them stronger, inspiring each other.

“When my dad left us, I didn’t understand. It hurt when I realized he was gone. But… knowing I couldn’t count on him anymore to pick me up after school or take me to that cave beneath the fountains like he had promised me… I just learned not to count too much on other people. Then… Cooper happened and it just cemented that. I have never really been able to count on a man and therefore… I naturally don’t do it. It’s not a conscious process. It… it became a reflex, somehow. But it’s not because of you or… it has nothing to do with how I feel about you, Oliver. I just… reacted out of habit. I’m sorry it hurt you. I can understand you would see it as me not trusting you.”

He quietly gazed at her, then kissed the back of her hand. “Let’s make a deal. Everytime I become too controlling, you just tell me ‘puzzle piece’. And I will do the same when you forget I’m by your side and have the perfect shoulder for you to lean on.”

“Like a codeword in a BDSM relationship?” she giggled, the mood suddenly lighter.

Oliver shook his head, grinning. “Yeah… I guess, yeah.”

“Deal!” she nodded, looking quite proud of herself. “That was a very adult conversation, wasn’t it?”

“It was,” he agreed, going back to his puzzle. “Next step is me introducing you properly to my family, don’t you think?”

“I already met your mother. And Tommy. It only leaves Thea.”

“I said properly. Like a family dinner.”

“Oh,” she answered, slightly nervous at the idea. It was ridiculous, indeed, but she knew how close Oliver was to his sister and she had never been that great in society.

“Not now, though,” he assured her. “They are on a small vacation in Big Sur. Before mom becomes VP, she wanted to spend a bit of time with Thea alone so she doesn’t feel left out.”

“That’s a good idea.”

“It actually was mine,” he explained, the pride in his voice making her giggle.

She eventually stood up, pausing to press a quick kiss on his head. Since he was so busy, there was no reason she shouldn’t do something she liked too.

As she was waiting for water to boil, she shouted from the kitchen. “Do you want some tea?”

“Hum… no thanks,” he shouted back. “Actually, I think it’s time for me to tell you that I don’t really like tea.”

Felicity stopped, the tea bag hanging limply from her hand. “… what?”

She frowned, remembering that he had drunk chamomile every time he had stopped by her place and never complained about it or even asked for something else.

“Yeah… it’s really not my thing.” His voice startled her, surprised to see him standing on the threshold of the kitchen, rubbing the back of his neck, a little grimace on his face.

“But… you drank some! Every time!”
“... I guess I was already smitten and wanted to stay as long as possible?” he murmured, stepping behind her, his arms circling her waist.

“I wouldn’t have kicked you out if you had asked for simple water, you know.”

“But tea takes longer to make and to drink…”

“Are you serious?” she burst out laughing. The idea that Oliver Queen was looking for any excuse to stay longer just so they could talk was endearingly cute.

He hummed quietly, his face nestling in the crook of her neck, his fingers stroking her hips over the light cotton pants she was wearing, his thumbs tracing the hem underneath her t-shirt.

She reluctantly pulled out of his embrace to pour hot water in her mug. “Do you want something else?”

“Does bending you over the counter count?” he asked, staring longingly at her ass.

Smirking with a typical feminine pride she hummed her disapproval. “You had your fun with your puzzle, now I want to do something I like.”

“Oh, baby… you would like it very much.” He shook his head, a wide grin stretching his lips “I promise I’d make sure you even like it twice.”

She playfully tapped his chest, willing herself to not cave in. Not that she didn’t want to. She did. But making him simmer a bit was also doing wonders to her ego. She never had held that much power over a man and she couldn’t deny that a teasing part of herself was actually enjoying the pout on his face.

She made sure to swing her hips just a tiny bit more than necessary as she walked past him, heading to the couch.

“... Felicity. You’re not playing fair” he all but whined as she chose a DVD to watch, taking her time to bend down to the DVD recorder, sticking her butt out.

She sat down in the middle of the couch, patting the place next to her. “Come on. I want to cuddle.”

Her words seemed to force him into action and he was by her side in an instant, plopping against the comfy pillows, his arm stretched out on the backrest. “You’re going to kill me, you know that?”

Taking a sip of tea, she hummed innocently, pressing play. As soon as the first notes of the opening scene started, Oliver groaned, throwing his head back. She chuckled, blowing on her tea.

*The night we met I knew I*

*Needed you so*

*And if I had the chance I’d*

*Never let you go*

“Shhh… it’s the perfect movie for a rainy Sunday,” she soothed him, patting his leg.
“I should have never told you about Frances,” he huffed.

Despite his grumbling, he rested his feet on the coffee table, making sure not to disturb the puzzle pieces. Felicity slowly sipped her tea, leaning against him more and more as the movie went on.

The rumble in Oliver’s chest when Baby brings a watermelon to the party made her smile, the picture of a much younger Oliver watching Dirty Dancing secretly amusing her beyond words. Oliver Queen really had a dirty past, pun intended.

She snuggled into his arms when she finished her tea, the mug hanging from her hand, too lazy to put it on the coffee table. Oliver’s hand gently forced it out of her grip, setting it on the small console by the couch. By the time they had reached the iconic lake scene, she had slipped in his lap, her head cushioned by his thighs, her hand resting on his knee. Oliver had reached out for the blanket behind them, draping it over her, his fingers lacing through her hair lazily, delicately grazing the lobe of her ear or the back of her neck every now and then.

The touch was innocent and light but enough to wake up a few nerve endings. A shiver ran down her spine when Oliver brushed the side of her neck, going from her ear to her shoulder then down her arm. She rubbed her cheek against the rough fabric of his jeans, her glasses digging painfully into her flesh, welcoming the distraction from the little sparks of pleasure he was causing. His nails slightly scratched her arm, his thumb tracing soothing circles.

She realized he was doing it on purpose when he wandered to the side of her breast. Taking a deep breath, she closed her eyes for an instant, letting herself savor the warmth of his palm. Her hand gripped his thigh and his sudden intake of breath told her he wasn’t completely in control of the situation. She slipped her hand between his legs, her nails scratching his inner thigh through his jeans right underneath her cheek. She felt his muscles contracting, his hips shifting and she smirked.

_Two can play that game, Oliver._

His fingers trailed down to her waist, tracing the hem of her pants, slipping the tip of his finger underneath it. A trail of goosebumps awoke in its path and her breath stopped for a second, feeling the now familiar pang of need tugging at her lower belly. She now knew what his fingers could do… and they could do great, great things in a very short amount of time.

Biting her lip, she slipped her hand higher between his thighs, wiggling her fingers. She was rewarded by his short intake of breath as she got closer to his crotch. He tensed, then exhaled slowly, slumping against the cushions, his palm sliding over her hip then spreading over her stomach. His thumb traced slow circles around her belly button and she turned her head, biting his strong thigh through the fabric of his jeans.

He hissed, his other hand reaching for her skull, his hips jerking upwards.

“Careful there, honey,” he murmured.

She smiled mischievously, her head now resting against his hip, giving her hand more space to wedge between his legs, allowing it to brush against an already impressive bulge.

She cupped him through his jeans and he let out a sigh, shifting to give her more access. Tracing her palm over his growing erection, she nudged his t-shirt out of the way with her nose, nibbling on his hip.

“Fucking hell,” he breathed as she squeezed his length, marveling at how hard he already was for her. He pushed his hips into her hand, pressing his cock against her fingers.
His hand has moved up underneath her t-shirt, palming her breast, teasing her nipple, making it roll with his thumb. His touch was rougher, less controlled than she was used to but knowing he was slowly losing his grip because of what she was doing to him... It only made her more aroused. So aroused that suddenly she couldn’t take it anymore and she pushed his hand aside, sitting up.

She saw his smug smile slipping from his face when she straddled his lap, pressing her core against him. She forced him to tilt his head backwards and her mouth found his in a hungry, desperate kiss. Not one full of promises and sensuality… no, this kiss was screaming I want you and I want you bad. Oliver’s hands fell to her hips and she moaned, rocking against his erection, seeking friction. She knew she could orgasm from this contact only… that’s how it had started between them, after all. But there was a hunger growing inside her, another kind of craving. She wanted to devour him, she wanted his scent, his taste to surround her. She bit his lower lip, soothing the ache with her tongue then dipping into his mouth. Not one full of promises and sensuality… no, this kiss was screaming I want you and I want you bad. Oliver’s hands fell to her hips and she moaned, rocking against his erection, seeking friction. She knew she could orgasm from this contact only… that’s how it had started between them, after all. But there was a hunger growing inside her, another kind of craving. She wanted to devour him, she wanted his scent, his taste to surround her. She bit his lower lip, soothing the ache with her tongue then dipping into his mouth.

Oliver guided her movements, pressing his hips against hers every time she would push down, grinding his cock against her, and she mewled when the button of his jeans brushed against her clit. Pulling back from his mouth, she gripped the hem of his t-shirt, raising it over his stomach and the view of his taunt, hard stomach made her salivate. She wanted to put her mouth on those delicious abs of his, lick them, bite them, leave her mark on them. Following her lead, Oliver leaned towards her, helping her get rid of his t-shirt, throwing it carelessly on the floor.

She gazed at him wordlessly, taking in how his panting was making his chest rise and fall. Her nails scratched down from his shoulders to his abs and he threw his head back, groaning, pushing down on her hips to bring her back against his crotch. She splayed her legs further apart, opening herself, she keened as he thrust up, her lips travelling down his jaw. She pressed an open-mouthed kiss on his throat, sucking, hard, knowing it would definitely leave a mark. The taste of his skin woke up that wanton side of her that only existed with Oliver and she knew… she knew she could never have enough of him.

Shifting on his lap, she put some distance between their hips and he all but whined, his head snapping up, his eyes dark and pleading as he gripped her ass, hard, pressing her back, his hips pushing against her center.

She squeezed her eyes shut, loving the way he was gripping her tight, loving the way he was letting the mask fall, loving the way she was the one in charge this time. She pushed against his chest and slid further down, her lips travelling down his chest, until her feet touched the floor and she slowly lowered down, her tongue tracing his abs, biting his belly button, while her hands gripped the waistband of his jeans for support.

"Fuck. Felicity, come back," Oliver groaned, his hands on her arms, trying to pull her back on his lap. "Come on, baby… you know I’ll make it good for you."

She licked her lips, staring in his eyes and slowly shook her head, her fingers reaching for the buttons of his jeans while she settled between his legs. She gulped, having understood what her main goal was and he let go of her arms, burying himself into the cushions, his hands falling limply on his sides.

"Felicity…” he whispered as she took her time with the buttons, opening them one by one, keeping her eyes on him. Truth be told, besides that hunger she had to taste him, to give him pleasure that way, there was a slight nervousness as well. Oliver was… not exactly on the small side. It was something they still hadn’t done, and she wanted to please him so badly. But she trusted him. She just hoped she would be able to make him feel the same way he had made her feel on that dining table two days ago.
She drew in a shaky breath as she opened his jeans, his cock still prisoner of his boxer briefs. Using the flat of her hand, she stroked it up and down, feeling it tense and twitch under her touch.

“Oh God, please…” Oliver breathed, his jaw tensing as if he was in pain. She felt her mouth water, knowing she would be the one bringing him relief, knowing she was about to give him something he desperately craved.

“What do you want, Oliver?” she asked, her voice throaty and low, betraying how aroused she was by the situation. She was completely focused on him, on his pleasure, but she could feel how wet she already was. She suddenly understood why he hadn’t been able to stop himself when he had gone down on her on Friday night. He wasn’t touching her but seeing him at her mercy, knowing she was about to bring him to his knees, about to hear the small groans he always made when his climax built… she had to stop her hand from reaching between her legs to touch herself. Seeing and hearing Oliver during sex, the sounds he made during orgasm always turned her on violently.

He clenched his teeth, briefly closing his eyes, breathing through his nose. His eyes stared at the wall behind her, refusing to meet hers and she bit the inside of her mouth to keep from smiling. Where was mister I-love-talking-dirty now? The way he was stubbornly refusing to meet her eyes, how he was gritting his teeth… could Oliver Queen be shy, somehow?

She pressed his cock in her hand, traveling up until she bumped against the tip and she brushed her thumb against it, rubbing small circles. He hissed, his hand reaching out for her head but dropping back on his thigh at the last moment.

“Tell me, Oliver… “ she spurred him on, her head dipping until her nose could graze his cock, breathing heavily against it, knowing he could feel her even through the fabric of his boxers.

“Felicity… I… I don’t want to… you… you’re not…” he gritted through his teeth as she licked a long trail from the top of his underwear to his belly button, her hand massaging his balls. “Oh fuck. Suck me… Please, Felicity… my cock… take it in your mouth” he eventually caved in, his chest raising frantically as his hips kept on rocking, seeking any kind of contact with her. She smiled cheekily, slowly lowering his boxer briefs. He raised his lower body, helping her.

His cock finally sprung free, the head a deep, angry shade of red and the thick vein running on its side just begging to be licked. She straightened her tongue, tracing the vein until she reached the tip, circling the crest teasingly. Oliver stared at her, his eyes wide, his mouth slightly open, his hands twitching on his sides. She knew what he wanted, what he was dying to do: bury his fingers in her hair. He was holding back, just like he had held back with his words, some part of him hesitant, as if he was afraid of scaring her or crossing a line.

She took a hold of his engorged member, unable to not notice how big it seemed in her hand. Squeezing, she stroked it up and down, making sure to twist her hand whenever she reached the head of his cock. He was so warm, so hard yet so soft in her hand, making her die to taste it, to see exactly how far she could take it in her mouth. She leaned in, her glasses slipping on her nose and she reached for them, ready to take them off when Oliver’s hand stopped her.

“No… keep them on,” he let out in a strangled voice. “Please, keep them on.”

She had to squeeze her legs shut at his words, which went straight to her core. He wanted her to suck his cock with her glasses on. He wanted to thrust in and out of her mouth with her glasses slipping on the tip of her nose. Despite the lack of practicality, there was no way in hell she was going to take them off now.

Keeping her eyes on him, she slowly licked the head, her tongue swirling around it. His hands
automatically reached for her arms while his hips jerked up, as if he was trying to anchor himself. She pressed a soft kiss on the tip of his cock, her lips gradually parting to allow it inside of her mouth, her tongue pressing and rubbing the underside of the hard shaft, until she let it go, licking his entire length before taking it back into her mouth.

Little by little, she took more of him, growing more comfortable with his girth, her hand stroking him rhythmically and massaging his balls, rolling them in her palm. Oliver’s breathing was ragged, his fingers digging into her arms, his hips jerking in little movements, obviously desperate to push in deeper but always holding back, letting her be in charge of his pleasure. Soon enough, she was bobbing her head up and down, keeping her pace regular, flicking her tongue against the swollen head, tracing the small slit, rubbing the crest. The sounds her mouth made as she sucked him were so obscene, so carnal, that the slightest touch against her clit would have made her see stars. Her hips were rocking on their own will, her walls clenching down on emptiness, desperate for what was filling her mouth instead.

She moaned loudly around his cock and the sound, or the sensation, made Oliver snap, his hands slipping into her hair, holding her, gripping her as he pushed himself inside her mouth.

“Oh God… that’s it baby… just like that… keep going,” he chanted above her, his eyes never leaving hers as he finally let go of some of the control he was exerting on himself. “Holy fuck, yes… yes… your mouth, Felicity… your fucking mouth…”

He suddenly thrust in deeper and she gagged, retreating. He let her catch her breath, stroking her hair, a sheen of sweat covering his chest.

He gulped. “Baby, grab the base so it can’t go any deeper than where your fingers are,” he panted, wincing. “I’m sorry… Felicity, honey, I’m sorry but I can’t hold still, I need to…”

She saw in his eyes the words he wouldn’t say to her. Say them, Oliver. A part of her wanted to hear them, wanted to hear his despair, his lack restraint. She knew she had his respect, his love, his care. What she wanted now was much darker and much more dirty, and she knew his words would liberate the naughty girl inside her, empower her in a way that no other man had ever been able to, knowing without a doubt that however far they would go down that road, he would never see her as anything less than his equal. And that was the most liberating thing a man could give to a woman.

“What do you need, Oliver?” she murmured, blowing air on the wet shaft she was still holding in her hands. “Tell me.”

He shook his head desperately, his eyes glued to what she was doing with her tongue, to how she was teasing the head of his cock, swirling around it, suckling it into her mouth, retreating before his hips could thrust in.

Groaning, his fingers tightened on her skull, bringing the tiniest pinch of pain but she welcomed it, letting it ground her. She wasn’t doing this for her pleasure, but for his, no matter how turned on she was.

She repeated the motion, once, twice, suckling the tip, stroking his shaft with the flat of her tongue, peppering kisses all over it but never taking him in her mouth the way he needed to. She let herself savor his taste, the way he felt between her lips, over her tongue, licking the small beads of pleasure that were already escaping him. His hands, his arms were trembling, his strangled voice a mix of moans and whimpers as he was fighting himself. Until she dipped her head, opening her mouth over him, letting him glide on her tongue, swallowing as much of his length she could, then releasing him with a loud pop.
“I want to fuck your mouth,” he finally blurted out, wincing in pleasure.

She squeezed her eyes shut, her breathing as ragged as his, her arousal literally drenching her panties, having never been this turned on by someone’s words. It was crude, it was primitive, and had it been anyone else but him she would have pulled back. But with him… with him… oh she wanted to do so many filthy things, she wanted to push her limits, because she knew that whatever was waiting on the other side was going to be mind-blowingly good.

She stared at him above the rim of her glasses that were now hanging low on her nose, her mouth lowering on him once more, her hand grabbing him tightly like he had told her and he tilted his head, sighing as he pushed her glasses back on her nose.

“Oh Felicity… the things I wanna do with you...” he murmured, brushing her hair away from her face as he pushed himself inside her mouth, his hand gently lowering her head to meet his hips. He groaned deeply as she sucked him, hard, her cheeks hollowing and he picked up a steady pace, guiding her but never pushing too far.

She could feel the tension taking over his body, his neck stiffening and his face growing red as his climax approached, his thrusts growing faster, his hands a bit rougher in her hair. She slipped her hand down a little bit, allowing him deeper inside and he must have felt the difference right away because he swore under his breath, gripping her tight. He was pushing himself inside her mouth, until her fingers would bump against her lips, making sure he wouldn’t choke her, his eyes fixed on her, his hands guiding her head, meeting his thrusts.

His balls tightened underneath her palm, his cock throbbing, and there was such a wild, savage desire low in her belly to taste him, to feel him come against her tongue that she thought she was going to lose her mind if he didn’t give her that. His moves were growing more and more desperate, feeding her own hunger, reminding her of how it felt when he was pushing himself between her thighs, thrusting his cock in and out of her until she would finally climax around him.

It spurred her on, her tongue stroking him, her own hips moving on the same rhythm he was thrusting inside her mouth. She parted her knees as if she was straddling him, remembering the delicious burn, how he would stretch her and she couldn’t hold back the little moans that escaped her throat. She was violently turned on, her mind unable to separate what she was doing to him with her mouth and the memories of her pushing down on his chest, riding him.

“Felicity… I’m close,” he grimaced, his hand grabbing a few tissues from the console near the couch.

She shook her head, moaning, her hand leaving him for a split second to tear the tissues from his fist and let them fall on the couch.

Gulping, Oliver looked at her with wide eyes as she bobbed her head faster, desperate for what he was about to give her. “Oh God. Yes. Please. Yes... in your mouth.”

His hands tightened in her hair and she suddenly felt the first spurt of his release filling her mouth, his cock jerking. She relaxed her muscles, swallowing him as much as she could as he shouted his relief, pushing himself into her mouth, his pleasure covering her tongue.

“Fuck, yes… yes!” he breathed as his hands held her still, his hips moving frantically, thrusting inside her mouth.

His grunting, the way his hands were holding her as the orgasm crashed through him made her whimper with need. He moaned as he emptied himself inside her mouth, his hands gently cradling
her face as she released him with a wet, slurping sound that made his eyes darken and his cock twitch one last time.

He was breathing heavily, his mouth agape as he stared at her in wonder, his face slowly relaxing into a blissful expression.

She had been the one who put that expression on his face. The one who had pleased him with her mouth. Despite the growing ache in her core, the need for her own release, she couldn’t take her eyes off him, lightly stroking his still-hard cock. His hands relaxed in her hair, lacing through it leisurely, his thumb grazing the corner of her lips and she peaked her tongue out, licking it, nibbling on it. She squeezed her thighs together as she bit on his thumb, trying to gain control over her own body, visibly shivering from unsatisfied lust. She knew she was wet, literally weeping with need, her walls clenching on emptiness, her clit throbbing, craving relief.

He eventually slowly pushed her hands away and she kneeled back as he rubbed his face, sighing deeply with clear contentment. “God, Felicity. That was amazing.”

She shifted, rubbing her thighs together, a poor and useless attempt to release the tension in her lower body. Her hands gripped his thighs, her nails digging into the hard muscles as she desperately tried to hold onto her sanity and not dry-hump his leg.

Narrowing his eyes, Oliver licked his lips. “You OK?”

“Yes,” she squeaked, blushing in shame at the sound of her own voice. She might as well have told him blatantly she was horny as hell.

“Oh, baby,” he whispered, his eyes soft and understanding. “... you need to come?”

She gulped, the heat on her cheeks reaching new levels. How exactly was she supposed to answer that? *Yes. Yes. And it won’t take much.*

“Come here.” He reached for her arms, helping her on her feet, her knees wobbling. He laid her down on the couch, helping her get rid of her pants and underwear in an instant, pushing them down just enough to free one of her legs.

He spread her thighs, opening her up as he leaned between them, her pants and panties rolled around one ankle. He pressed the flat of his tongue against her clit, her hips shooting off the couch as she grit her teeth, the pleasure so violent it made her hiss.

“Oh… oh yes… Oliver… yes… yeeees,” she wailed, rocking her hips against his mouth. She rubbed her inner thigh against his jaw, his stubble scratching the sensitive skin and sending shivers down her spine. It felt good, so, so good, her whole body tensing towards release.

It didn’t take long. Oliver thrust two fingers inside her aching core, appeasing it, her walls literally sucking them inside as he moved his tongue up and down her clit. One, two, three times and she was gripping his head, pushing it against her folds, riding the wave, moaning desperately.

“Oh my God… oh yes… oh yes right there, right… there,” she panted, every cell in her body focused on what Oliver was doing between her legs, on how his tongue was massaging the hard bundle of nerves, sending her higher and higher with every stroke.

Oliver sucked on her clit, hard, slightly moving his mouth from left to right and she stiffened, her legs tightening, floating for a quarter of a second, her orgasm right there, right within her reach... all she needed was the slightest stroke of his tongue and-
The coil of tension released violently and she gasped for air, a long strangled cry struggling to escape her throat as Oliver’s tongue rasped against the swollen button of flesh. She pressed his face down, moaning loudly, grinding against his lips as the pleasure exploded deep in her belly, wave after wave until she slowly came back to earth.

Eventually releasing the tight grip she had on his hair, her legs sagged on each side of him, her entire body buzzing with blissful satisfaction. She plopped back against the couch, her core finally sated, the deep ache slowly fading away.

Oliver pressed a soft kiss on her mound, resting his head on her thigh. “... that seemed like a good one.”

She giggled, still out of breath, her inner walls still fluttering around his fingers. “... Yeah. I guess you could say that.”

“You’ve never climaxed that fast,” he smiled, stroking her hip.

“I know,” she moaned, hiding her face behind her hands in shame. “I was… I was just…”

“Very turned on?” he prompted.

She nodded. “I don’t know how you controlled yourself when you did that to me before.”

“Knowing that if I waited, I’d feel you come around me did wonders,” he grinned as he finally slipped his fingers out of her. Her walls automatically clamped down on them, trying to hold them back and Oliver groaned. “Damn it, Felicity. Next time you take me in your mouth, you’ll have my face between your thighs. And then I’ll take you hard.”

She whimpered at his words, blaming that multiple orgasm thing for the very first time in her life because damn it, she wanted to go at it again.

He must have sensed what was going through her mind because he huffed out a small laugh, crawling up her body, settling against the back of her couch and pulling her in his arms, both facing the television. “I’m sorry. I promise we’ll get to do that later.”

She blindly reached for the blanket, covering them both while on screen Baby and Johnny were dancing in the final scene.

Felicity giggled, remembering their own -poor- attempt at replicating the famous lift in Ivy Town.

Oliver laughed, probably understanding where her thoughts had gone. “It’s still one of the craziest nights of my life, you know.”

“Same,” she smiled, remembering the shift it had caused in their relationship. Everything had changed between them after that, not in a sudden kind of way, but subtly, smoothly, little by little, leading them step by step to this very moment.

And what a journey it had been.

Chapter End Notes
Sooooo... what did you think?

I do hope that little line Oliver says did not shock you too much? I just wanted to find a way to show how comfortable Felicity is getting with their sexuality, how Oliver doesn't want to treat her the same way he treated other women and also how she doesn't doubt his respect for her. She pushed him because she doesn't want to be seen as this perfect, only made for love partner. She wants the raunchy parts too and is comfortable exploring them with him. So it was a small detail but at the same time... it wasn't.

Anyway, next chapter will be more of a "return to reality", everyday work, struggling with schedules and obligations... also you shall see Oliver going through the process of finding his next assistant :)

Find me on Twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com DON't be shy, come say hi, ask questions, I don't bite (I love questions!)
Hi guys!
This chapter is safe for work (woot woot). Also I am dealing with a tooth extraction right now and even if I'm fine, I still feel a bit dizzy so... if you notice I forgot to "clear" a note left by beta, sorry... don't hesitate to let me know lol.

Song: Walking on sunshine - Katrina and the Waves

Special thanks to Beta and Delta, mysticaldetectivepanda and pidanka.

Happy COH2 and... yeah... I know I'm forgetting stuff here but whatever.

Oh yeah we're meeting a new character in this chapter, special mention to the Beta ;)

(Oh God I'm really light headed, or hearted or well... you get the picture!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Walking On Sunshine"

I used to think maybe you love me, now baby I'm sure
And I just cant wait till the day, when you knock on my door
Now every time I go for the mail box, gotta hold myself down
'cause I just cant wait till you write me, you're coming around

[Chorus:]
I'm walking on sunshine (whoa oh)
I'm walking on sunshine (whoa oh)
I'm walking on sunshine (whoa oh)
And don't it feel good (HEY!) Alright now
And don't it feel good (HEY!) Alright now
All right now yeah! (HEY!)

I used to think maybe you love me, I know that it's true
And I don't wanna spend all of my life just waiting for you (just waiting for you)
Now I don't want you back for the weekend, not back for a day, no, no, no
Baby I just want you back and I want you to stay

[Chorus]
Walking on sunshine
Walking on sunshine

I feel the love, I feel the love, I feel the love that's really real
I feel the love, I feel the love, I feel the love that's really real
I'm on sunshine baby yeah
I'm on sunshine baby yeah

[Chorus:]
I'm walking on sunshine whoa
I'm walking on sunshine whoa
I'm walking on sunshine whoa
And don't it feel good hey alright now
And don't it feel good hey alright now
And don't it feel good hey alright now
And don't it feel good hey alright now
I'm walking on sunshine
I'm walking on sunshine
I'm walking on sunshine
I'm walking on sunshine

Monday morning came way too fast. It seemed like they had just made it to bed when that damn alarm clock woke Felicity up.

Groaning, she buried herself underneath the covers, sagging into Oliver’s warm embrace. She heard him blindly reaching for the buzz button, hitting it forcefully and she sighed with deep contentment when the sound finally died. Nestling her face in the crook of his neck, she lazily laced through his hair, pressing herself close to him while he lightly stroked her spine with his fingertips.

She didn’t want to move. They had made love two more times after their little session during Dirty Dancing. Once while making dinner (a simple stir-fry, about one of the only things she could do), when Oliver had quite literally bent her over the kitchen counter, lowered her pants and fucked her senseless. It had been fast, rough. And she had loved it. The other time had been much slower, while they were in bed. She had been reading on her tablet when Oliver had gotten out of the bathroom and he had settled on his side, looking at her for a couple of minutes, until his hand had wedged between her legs. He had teased her for what seemed like forever, until her tablet had dropped from her hands and she couldn’t take it anymore. She had pushed him on his back, thrown a leg over him and straddled him, sinking onto his length. He had let her use his body to reach her climax, her hands on his chest for leverage. Then he had slowly but surely coaxed another orgasm out of her, until she had dropped on him, breathless, this time triggering his own release.

Suffice to say, her body was deeply satisfied when sleep had taken over.

She eventually dozed off again, Oliver’s warm hands against her skin lulling her back to sleep until the alarm clock went off again. He silenced it once more, pressing a kiss on her head.

“Come on, sleepy head,” he murmured.

She shook her head, mumbling a muffled no against his neck and he chuckled, his hands leaving her as he untangled their bodies, slipping out of her embrace. Moaning, she dropped against his pillow,
keeping her eyes stubbornly closed. Oliver kissed her ear softly then she felt the mattress shift, the sound of his steps in the quiet room reaching her ears.

Sighing deeply, she hugged his pillow, inhaling his lingering scent. Soon enough, she heard the water running and she begrudgingly opened her eyes. Glancing at the alarm clock, she saw that it was 6:30 and she sat up, still half-asleep. Yawning, she stretched up, her muscles protesting. She winced at the ache in her entire body. Her legs, shoulders, neck and... intimate parts were particularly sore.

“I need to start working out,” she grumbled, grabbing Oliver’s shirt and putting it on.

She padded her way to the kitchen, starting the coffee maker and washing the rest of strawberries she had. She was just setting the table when Oliver walked into the living room in nothing but a pair of boxer briefs, his hair damp.

“Morning,” he smiled, leaning in to press a soft kiss on her lips.

“Good morning,” she beamed, stroking his chin. “Your stubble is much longer now. I didn’t really notice.”

“I haven’t trimmed it in a few days,” he reminded her, his hand rubbing his jaw. “Do you mind?”

“Not really. I like it shorter, but it’s softer this way so... it has its perks,” she grinned cheekily, setting the bowl of fruits on the table.

Once they were done with breakfast, Felicity took a long shower, letting the warm water relax her muscles. She was bearing the traces of their lovemaking all over her body, hickeys and beard burns on her neck, shoulders, breasts and even her thighs. She moisturized the sensitive skin, thinking that maybe that longer stubble wasn’t a bad thing at all. She was slightly surprised to see that Oliver had already made the bed, and the thought of him being so domestic brought a smile to her lips.

Getting dressed quickly, she dried her hair and applied some light makeup, cursing when she saw that it was already way past 7:30, which was the time when she usually left. She didn’t have to be at work by 8AM, but had taken the habit to start as soon as possible. Slipping her sandals on, she cast one last look at the mirror, checking her outfit. She had picked a pair of white capri pants and a sleeveless baby blue blouse with white polka dots, the fabric covering most of the small bruises on her skin.

“You’re perfect,” Oliver said, leaning on the doorframe. After brushing his teeth, he had dressed as well, into grey slacks and a crisp white shirt. He had foregone the suit jacket, probably because of the summer heat, but the tie was neatly in place.

In one word, he looked scrumptious.

“You’re not bad yourself,” she whispered, approaching him. Taking a hold of his tie, she pulled on it, forcing him to lean in. He laughed and she captured his smile in a kiss, taking the time to savor it, knowing she would have to make the entire day without another one. After having spent the whole weekend with him, the withdrawal was bound to be tough.

Pouting, she eventually pulled away and let his tie fall back in place, smoothing it with the palm of her hand, wandering slightly over his chest to palpate the hard muscles.

“Felicity…” he breathed in warning.
Looking up at him, she smiled innocently. “Just getting one last bite.”

Oliver grinned, shaking his head, his own hand travelling down her ass, giving it a firm squeeze. “We should get going before I’m tempted to get one last helping.”

She was still giggling when they stepped outside her building. The rain from the day before was long gone, the sun back and already shining brightly. Felicity was surprised when Oliver pulled her towards his car.

“What? But you left it.” she exclaimed, her eyebrows reaching her hairline.

“I asked my driver to get it at Palmer Tech last Friday. There’s an extra set of keys at the mansion,” Oliver explained as he held open the door for her.

She sat down, fastening her seat belt while he slipped behind the wheel. Being wealthy really made life easier and not just the everyday life, but also all those extra little things, like someone dropping off fresh clothes or making sure your car would be ready for you on a Monday morning. And Oliver seemed completely unfazed by this, as if it were perfectly normal. It reminded her once more of how different their lives had been… and still were, actually.

“I have a video conference later tonight with Melbourn,” Oliver said as he pulled into traffic.

“I know. I’m the one who planned it, remember?” she teased him “not to mention, I might have forgotten to un-sync our agendas…”

Oliver quickly glanced at her, perking an eyebrow. “Stalking, much?”

“Just making sure you didn’t forget anything important. Call it force of habit” she said innocently, patting his leg. Truth be told she had quite simply forgotten to delete the alerts she had set up concerning important meetings. When she had received the first one, she had found herself unable to sever that last bond.

“I’m going to be quite busy this week and then I’ll be gone for about two weeks,” Oliver grimaced. “I really don’t want to. Maybe I should just-”

“Nope. It took me forever to manage your agenda around that trip and you know Andrew doesn’t have a lot of free time either.”

He rested his hand on her thigh, stroking it absent-mindedly. “If I didn’t know any better, I’d think you’re trying to get rid of me. Do you have a lover waiting for me to leave or something?”

Sighing dramatically, Felicity grimaced. “Damn it. I thought I had been discreet. You totally got me. I’m having this torrid affair with my janitor and he promised me he’d check my plumbing while you’re gone.”

Oliver laughed, picking up her hand, carrying it to his lips to press a kiss on her knuckles. “It’s the coverall, right? I could wear one!”

“Oliver, I’m sorry but… you just don’t have what it takes to pull off that kind of outfit.” She shook her head, pinching her lips. “Not to mention… I prefer you naked, anyway.”

“I prefer you naked too,” he winked, resting her hand on his thigh. “But I have to admit the dress you wore at the Mansion had me on my knees.”
Felicity frowned, trying to remember the last time she had been invited. “For the dinner with your mom, you mean?”

She couldn’t deny she was surprised. The dress had been quite simple, no cleavage, with a flowy skirt that didn’t exactly showcase any part of her anatomy.

“The first time you went to the Mansion, I mean. That golden dress with the cutout in the back?”

“Oh. Wow. I almost forgot about that. It was ages ago, I had just started working for you. I can’t believe you even remember it.”

“Oh, baby… there is no way in hell I’ll ever forget you in that dress. It’s the day my obsession with your ass started.”

She giggled. “Seriously? That long ago?”

“Yup. And I kept thinking about how soft the skin of your back looked and how I’d like to… well. You get the picture,” he mumbled, shifting in his seat.

“Actually, no, I don’t,” she grinned. “But maybe we should save that for another day.”

“As long as you promise me you’ll wear that dress again.”

“I will. It might not be that easy to find the perfect occasion, but I will wear it again for you. And then you’ll show me exactly what you had in mind” she nodded cheekily, saving that little piece of information in the back of her mind. *Maybe for a special date, or an anniversary…*

It was barely past 8 when Oliver pulled the car over to the curb.

“Well… the weekend is really over, I guess,” she couldn’t help but pout. No matter how much she loved her job, she couldn’t deny that she wasn’t looking forward being away from him and their warm little cocoon. Their weekend had been nothing but magical and even if putting some space between them was good, and healthy, it didn’t mean it was easy.

“I’ll text you if I can stop by tonight?” he asked, hopeful, as he stopped the engine.

“OK,” she smiled, leaning in to kiss him. She had to restrain herself from climbing onto his lap when his tongue stroked hers, reminding herself that it clearly wasn’t the right place for car-sex. She gripped his arm as she let him deepen the kiss, tasting the lingering minty traces of his toothpaste. With a last little nip of her lower lip, he pulled back, his eyes fixed on her mouth.

“I think we should get out of that car before I cave in and drive us back to your place,” he grumbled, opening his door.

She watched him circle the car and bit back a smile when he opened the door for her. *No matter what we do, gentleman Oliver is never too far…*

“Felicity cut him off with a kiss, reaching on her toes, her arms thrown over his shoulders. She swallowed his gasp of surprise, felt the smile stretching his lips before he circled her waist, pulling her flush against him, lifting her off her feet.

Her little squeal of surprise was met by a deep chuckle as he twirled her around in his arms, setting
her down on the pavement. Her hands cradled his face as she laughed against his mouth, not willing to let go.

“You make me so fucking happy, Felicity Smoak,” he grinned against her lips, his eyes shining bright, so blue in the morning light. She got lost in them for a moment, her fingers stroking his cheeks, pecking his lips a few times.

“I have to say you make me very happy too, Oliver Queen.” She gazed at him, zapping away the rest of the world. In this moment, he was all she could see, and the fact that they were standing right near her workplace didn’t even cross her mind.

The grin he gave her was so wide and bright that she couldn’t help but smile back, her own cheeks hurting as they both stood there, like the two lovesick puppies they were, oblivious to everything that wasn’t them.

“Yeah?” he whispered, leaning his forehead against hers.

“Yeah,” she nodded, closing her eyes and breathing him in, the gazillion butterflies in her stomach back with a vengeance.

“Do you really have to go to work?” he whispered in her ear, nestling his face in the crook of her neck.

Felicity winced, her own voice muffled by his shirt. “Well… yes. And so do you, by the way.”

Oliver eventually let her go with a deep sigh, pressing one last kiss on the corner of her mouth. She watched him get back to his car and pull into traffic, smiling like a fool on the now busy pavement.

“Well… I guess those rumors were true.”

The voice snapped her back to reality and she turned around, meeting Mary’s gentle smile. “Congrats, by the way. He looks like a real catch.”

“Yeah… he is,” Felicity answered, biting her lips nervously.

“I didn’t mean to imply anything you know… just that I’ve heard that you were romantically involved with the heir to the throne at QC and…”

“It only started very recently. But you’re right. That’s one of the reasons why I left.”

“For what it’s worth, I think you made the right decision. We clearly needed someone like you at PT and damn… I’d give up my job too for a guy like him kissing me senseless on a Monday morning,” Mary laughed as they made their way to the entrance.

Felicity smiled, relieved. For a minute she had been afraid of being judged but it turned out Mary didn’t really seem to care much about the reason why she had ended up working at PT.

“I don’t think anyone here would doubt that hiring you was a good call, by the way. Don’t worry about that, you’ve already proven yourself.” Mary winked at her, probably sensing where her thoughts had travelled. “I am not going to deny that we were a bit surprised when Ray told us about you but after a few days… it all made sense.”

“Thank you,” Felicity replied, honestly touched, as they parted ways on their floor. When she walked into her own office, she couldn’t help but grin at the vision of the fern now resting proudly on her desk. So many things had happened since she had left it there on Friday… so many great,
Stroking the leaves, she let her mind wander back to all the cuddling, snuggling and amazing sex they had had. Oh, yes… amazing, mind-blowingly good sex that she still could feel in the soreness of her lower body. This had been, without any doubt, the most incredible weekend of her life. She had discovered so many things about herself, about Oliver, about how perfect they were together and she couldn’t wait to get back to their little bubble.

She eventually sat down on her chair, starting up her computer, gazing absently through the window. Her cellphone buzzed, startling her and she beamed when she saw it was a text from the one who had been occupying her thoughts.

I miss you.

Giggling, she rolled her eyes as she replied:

*Oliver, it’s been… about 8 minutes.*

A lot of things can happen in 8 minutes. You remember what I can do in 8 minutes, right?

Actually, no… not really. I’m afraid you’re gonna have to refresh my memory.

Damn you. You know I can’t exactly afford to walk into my office with a boner, vixen.

Aww… lacking self-control, Mister Queen? We’re gonna have to work on that…

Feel free to visit me anytime and I’ll show you about self-control as much as you want, wherever your want, however you want.

*I always had a little fantasy about your desk…*

...

*I mean, it’s the perfect height.*

Felicity…

*Yes, my love?*

You know very well I have thought about office sex with you about a million times.

*Pretty sure I have imagined it at least one time more. Why do you think I started wearing skirts and dresses all of a sudden?*

To torture me?

*Well, yes, that too.*

Damn it, I knew it. The grey one with the squares on your hips?

*Why do you think I have it in two colors?*
If I get arrested for exhibitionism, just know you’ll be partially responsible.

She frowned, suddenly realizing that he couldn’t have made it to QC in less than 10 minutes.

*Are you still in your car? Oliver Queen, tell me you aren’t driving and texting!*

I’m not. Stuck in traffic. With the beginning of a boner now. Thank you.

*Anytime. By the way, I miss you too.*

;)

Felicity let out a deep sigh, putting her cellphone down, staring at his name until it switched to sleep mode. A knock interrupted her reverie and she raised her head with a warm smile.

“Daniela. Good morning,” she greeted the newcomer.

“Hi, Felicity. I just have all those docs you need to sign and get back to me by the afternoon and we also need to go through your schedule for -” Daniela stopped herself mid-track, her eyes staring at Felicity, looking her up and down.

“Is something wrong?” Felicity asked, confused, checking if there was a stain on her blouse.

“Oh my… you had sex this weekend. You had great sex,” Daniela gasped, dropping the files she was holding on the desk and sitting on it. “I take it whoever got you all mopey last week made it up to you? And by up… yeah, pun intended, sorry.”

Felicity felt her cheeks heating up with embarrassment as she moved her keyboard about a quarter of an inch to the right. “What? Wait… no… I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

“You have hickeys on your neck,” Daniela deadpanned.

“I bumped into a... “ Felicity trailed off, trying to come up with something at least a little bit believable.

“A sucking mouth?” her assistant prompted innocently. “Drop the act. You have circles underneath your eyes but they’re shining, you were gazing into emptiness and you have that ridiculous ‘oh-my-God-he-totally-rocked-my-world-I-can’t-wait-to-do-it-again’ smile.”

Felicity opened her mouth, then closed it, her eyes shifting. “... maybe?” she eventually squealed, feeling the blush spreading over her chest.

“You need arnica. It looks like you’ve got beard burn too. Damn… you must have had quite the weekend. And when I think I spent mine knitting and talking to my cat…”

“I didn’t know you had a cat?” Felicity asked, welcoming the change of topics.

“I don’t. It just sounds less pathetic than admitting I talk to myself.”

*Why did I never think of that?*

“So…” Daniela continued, wiggling her eyebrows. “What happened? On Friday you were about to take the whole building down and today you’re just… basking in the after-glow.”

“We just… found a common ground” Felicity smiled, reaching for the files her assistant had dropped
on her desk. Like my bed… the couch… the dining table… and the kitchen counter.

“... Is that what young people call it, nowadays?”

“Shut up,” Felicity stuck her tongue out at her. “and weren’t you here for a reason, apart from this rude interrogation about my private life?”

After they went through her schedule for the rest of the week, Felicity was finally able to busy herself with work, forcing Oliver out of her mind. She wasn’t paid to day-dream, after all.

It was almost lunch time when her assistant barged into her office with a beaming smile.

“Package for Miss Felicity Smoak,” Daniela chirped, holding out a small parcel “it’s lover boy, right? It must be lover boy. I never got anything delivered for me at work… is it a jewel? No, it’s too heavy for jewelry… maybe perfume?”

“What?” Felicity asked, confused. She grabbed the small package, genuinely curious. “I don’t think it’s a perfume… Oliver likes my natural… I mean he doesn’t seem like the kind of guy who’d get me perfume.”

It was a simple box, wrapped in an even simpler brown paper. It wasn’t exactly light, but not heavy either and she shook it, bringing it to her ear. “Was there a note?”

“Nope,” Daniela answered, sitting down across Felicity, not even bothering to pretend she wasn’t dying to find out what it was.

Felicity bit her lips as she grabbed a pair of scissors, cutting the wrapping. She threw a nervous glance at her assistant, because the last time someone had sent her a private package at work, it had been her mother and her collection of dildos. She carefully opened the lid, peeking inside, making sure the contents were safely hidden.

She giggled once she saw the innocent object lying in the box, opening the lid wider.

“... a stapler?” Daniela asked, disappointed. “Why would he get you a stapler? We have staplers here.”

“It’s… it’s a private joke.” Felicity shook her head, picking up the small card that had been inside the package.

_Because you forgot it._

_Oliver_

“You have it bad if a stapler can make you smile like that.”

“I guess so,” Felicity grinned, placing the stapler on her desk, next to her computer screen.
“I have scheduled ten interviews for you this morning, Oliver. Most of the candidates are from the company, but there are a few whose resumes caught my attention and they all passed the standard assessment,” Macy Grey explained, handing him a small pile of files.

“Ten?” he groaned. His entire morning was going to be devoted to interviewing candidates and trying to find Felicity’s official successor. He had been assigned an intern ever since the day she had left, but it was time to find a more capable assistant.

“Yes. I really hope you’ll find the right one in that group, but there is a waiting list as well, just in case.”

“Thanks. When do the interviews start?” he asked, taking a sip of his coffee.

“At 9:30. It leaves you enough time to get ready,” the head of HR explained as she walked out of his office. “Don’t hesitate to call for me if you have any questions.”

“Yeah… I won’t,” Oliver grumbled, standing up. He went to Felicity’s former office, the usual pinch in his heart finally starting to fade away. The ten days he had spent away from her had been tough and seeing her office, her desk, with someone else occupying them had been a punch in the guts every single time. Now, though… he wasn’t as bitter as he used to be. He still missed her, but he was also aware that their relationship clearly benefited from the forced distance. He knew she would have never been this carefree with him if they had still worked together and truth be told, it would have probably been the same for him.

“Are there any important messages?” he asked the young man who had been assigned to his office.

“No. No, Mister Queen. I scheduled a few calls for you to make this afternoon, though. The list is in your agenda.”

“Great. I’ll be interviewing candidates all morning, and I believe one of the janitors is going to set up a few chairs by your office. Don’t forget to offer them a drink, and make sure I don’t get interrupted,” he gently reminded him. Todd, the intern, was a good employee, a hard worker and enthusiastic, but probably way too nervous and fidgety to handle the kind of responsibility that came with the job of EA for an executive. He was great with phone calls and messages, as well as keeping things organized for him… which was actually the normal duties of an assistant, Oliver realized.

Unfortunately, Felicity had set the bar impossibly high and even if he knew he would never find another one like her, he was at least hoping he could get an assistant ready to take initiatives.

Oliver was about to go back to his own office when the sight of the stapler on the desk made him stop. “… Todd?”

“Yes, Mister Queen?”

“Was the stapler already there when you arrived?”

Todd frowned, obviously searching his memory. “Well… I do believe so, Mister Queen. I mean, I moved it a bit because I had a cup of coffee but apart from that…”

Oliver huffed out a laugh. “No… I meant when you arrived here on your first day? Was it the stapler of Miss Smoak or did you bring yours?”
“Oh. Then, yes. Everything was in its place when I arrived. Miss Smoak had made sure all the office equipment was complete, apparently. She also left notes explaining everything.”

Typical Felicity… she should have toilet-papered his entire office with how he had behaved but instead of that, she had been loyal and thorough until the end.

“Do me a favor… can you find me a box for this stapler? And then ask for one of our couriers to stop by, will you?” Oliver asked, taking the stapler. “Don’t forget to get a new one, by the way.”

“... alright, Mister Queen,” his assistant said, confused.

Oliver was smiling when he handed the box to their courier, a small idea forming in his head. He had ten days of dickness to make up for… despite Felicity forgiving him, there was still a small pang of guilt in his chest whenever he would think about Tommy’s words.

“Dude. You are going to man up, get her a freaking plant and apologize. I’m done watching you mope all around and… and Felicity is hurt. Like really hurt. She didn’t even try to assault me with her tote bag, that should tell you something.” Tommy stood in front of his desk, hands on his hips.

“... you saw her? Where? When? How is she? Did she have her hair in a ponytail?” Oliver asked, his hand freezing over the document he was about to sign.

“... ‘did she have her hair in a ponytail’? Like… for real? You haven’t seen her in ten days and you’re wondering about her hair?!” Tommy pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration, breathing heavily. “You need to stop with the romcoms, dude. Like seriously… I’m this close to calling for an intervention.”

Oliver lowered his eyes, nervously rolling his pen between his fingers. “I’m sure she’s mad at me and… I can’t really blame her.”

“Yes, she is mad. But I didn’t see a girl furious with her boyfriend, I saw a girl who was sad that she hadn’t been able to share her first day with him.”

“I didn’t want to hurt her,” Oliver mumbled. “But… what if she wants to break up with me?”

Tommy sat down, sighing dramatically. “First of all: you’re not sad about someone not calling you if you’re planning on breaking up with them. You text them it’s over and get done with it. Second of all: that girl, by some weird miracle I still haven’t completely made sense of, loves you. Maybe not as much as you love her because boy, you have it bad. But she loves you. It’s clear as day, so don’t you think you’ve wasted enough time already?”

“Maybe I should get her flowers?” Oliver asked, biting his lips.

“A plant. A potted plant, actually. That’s what she requested. So don’t you go and screw up all my hard work by getting her stupid roses or something. So go wait for her at Palmer Tech, apologize, ask her out on a date, do whatever it takes but for the love of God I won’t be able to take another week of ‘I can’t go out with you Tommy The Notebook is on TV tonight’.”

Oliver glared at him. “I never said that and The Notebook wasn’t even on TV.”

“Give yourself another couple of days and you’ll probably rent it.”
Oliver opened his mouth but his best friend interrupted him right away.

"I’m serious, Ollie. Do something. You can’t just stand there while she is slipping through your fingers. She’s not going to wait forever. And then you’ll probably turn gay, I’ll have no wing man anymore, we’ll have to go to gay strip clubs and there aren’t that many girls in gay strip clubs, I’ll have you know."

“I’m pretty sure you don’t ‘turn gay’, Tommy,” Oliver huffed out a laugh, shaking his head.

Tommy grinned suddenly. “You two are really made for each other, you know that? It’s Friday, you have the entire weekend to spoil her rotten and bring back that lovely smile to her face. I almost asked her out myself to cheer her up, poor little thing. I’m really good at cheering ladies up, you know.”

Oliver felt his jaws tensing. “Don’t even think about it.”

“Well… you know what to do,” Tommy smirked, standing up and readjusting his jacket. “If you need me, I’ll be preparing your bachelor party.”

“Woaw… let us at least have a first date!” Oliver snorted, leaning back in his chair, his hands crossed.

“Yes… as if you haven’t already thought of it yourself…” his friend smirked, straightening his tie. “We both know that you wouldn’t have thrown such a hissy fit if you didn’t already have a mental picture of the two of you at the top of this company.”

“Mister Queen?” Todd interrupted his reverie, handing him a small carton with some wrapping paper. “Do you want me to do it, or…?”

“No, thank you. I’ll handle it,” he smiled politely, quickly scribbling down on a small notecard. "Can you have this delivered to Felicity Smoak, at Palmer Tech?"

“Of course, Mister Queen.”

Two hours later

Oliver sighed, passing a tired hand over his face. So far, he had interviewed four candidates. The two first ones had spent most of their time batting their eyes at him and leaning so he would get a good view of their cleavage. He couldn’t exactly blame them since it had famously been his main hiring criteria not so long ago. They both were beautiful and charming and six months ago, he would have probably ended up with one of them in the bathroom, his pants around his ankles.

But that seemed like ages ago. He needed someone he could rely on, and trust, not someone trying to get into his pants - and wallet, probably. Not to mention, he was spoken for. And very happy to be.

The third one was a nice change, a very serious young woman with plenty of qualifications. Unfortunately, she also seemed too reserved and he was afraid she wasn’t ready for the responsibilities - or his temper. He had been afraid of hurting her feelings every time he asked her a question.

Number four had been wearing the shortest mini-skirt he had ever seen - which was saying
something - and he was pretty sure he had had sex with her once.

Which brought him to number five… Mandy. He did a double take when he saw her opening the door. The girl had a nerve, that was for sure. She sat down, a flirty smile on her lips and he leaned back in his chair, his finger tapping on his chin, replaying the words Felicity had told him the day before.

“Are you really applying to be my assistant, Mandy?” he finally asked, tilting his head.

“Well… we both know I’ve been working as an assistant for a couple of years now. And I wanted to apply last time but didn’t get the chance to.”

“Don’t you feel like it’s a bit… inappropriate?”

She raised her eyebrows. “Why, because we almost had sex? It was months ago, Ollie.”

“No, because of the way you treated Felicity,” he explained calmly, rolling his pen between his fingers.

Mandy smiled. “Whatever happened between your former assistant and I is in the past. It’s not as if she were still working here anyway.”

“My girlfriend,” he corrected her. “You taunted, bullied and badmouthed my girlfriend. Last time was less than two weeks ago.”

Her smile flickered on her lips, but she quickly got a hold of herself. “Listen, we both said… harsh things. Women can be like that. And I didn’t know she was your girlfriend. We all assumed she was just another one of your affairs.”

Oliver locked his jaws, gritting his teeth “Fair enough. I am mature enough to admit my past behavior is partly responsible for that. It doesn’t change the fact that gossiping isn’t exactly the main skill I’m looking for. And I’m afraid bullying is not an acceptable behavior for an executive assistant.”

“You’re not fair. We both know I’m the most qualified of your candidates. Nobody knows QC like I do and has the skills as well as the experience.”

“Maybe. I still don’t want you around whenever Felicity visits me.”

“I would be professional, Oliver,” Mandy pinched her lips. “You know I’ve been dying to get a promotion and you promised me the job months ago.”

“That was before I started caring about my own job. I need someone I can trust and I can honestly say that you don’t fit the bill when it comes to that.” Oliver shrugged, his hand already putting her resume aside. “Unless you want to pretend you could fill Felicity’s shoes, but surely even you can’t be that delusional?”

She visibly paled at his words, her mouth slightly open. “Woaw talk about being professional…”

“Yup. I guess I’m just another of those sluts with a holier-than-thou attitude…” Oliver shrugged, his eyes daring her to deny.

“Ollie, it’s not.”

He cut her off, losing all pretense of politeness, his voice cold and barely containing his anger.
“Don’t waste your time, Mandy. The only reason… and I really mean the only reason why you and Mark still have a job is because Felicity talked me out of it. Had it been just up to me, the two of you would have been packing your stuff this morning. But let’s be clear: if I ever hear you said anything concerning her, whether it’s about our relationship, her job or even her fucking haircut, all bets are off.”

“Are you threatening me?” Mandy hissed, her eyes throwing daggers. “I could complain about you, about what happened in that hotel—”

“Do whatever the hell you want. That is either stay in your lane, or get ready to deal with the consequences of your choices.”

Mandy stood up, pinching her lips. “Well. I got the message clear and loud, Oliver. Crazy how someone can change in a few months. She's really got you whipped,” she spat the last words, picking up her handbag.

“Yes, she really has. I’d remember that if I were you… and feel free to mention it to your BFF as well.”

Oliver sighed deeply, throwing his head back against his chair as Mandy walked out of his office. He couldn’t deny that getting that off his chest felt good but he honestly wished he wouldn’t have had to do it in the first place.

“I’m sorry, but the other candidate said you were expecting me…” a calm voice reached him, making him snap his head towards the door of his office. A forty, or maybe fifty year-old african-american woman was observing him quietly, a hand on the handle.

Oliver shook his head. “No, I wasn’t but that’s fine. Come in, please.”

He looked through the small pile of resumes, quickly finding hers. “Debbie, is that right? Have a seat, please.”

“Yes, Mister Queen.”

“You’ve never worked for QC… you were an executive assistant for about fifteen years then had an almost ten-year break… is there a reason for that?” Oliver asked, frowning.

“I was raising my children.”

“Oh. How old are they?” he smiled warmly, not willing to have his spat with Mandy affect this interview. It wasn’t the candidate’s fault that he was in a bad mood.

“My son is 10 and my daughter is 13. They wouldn’t be a problem for my working hours, I have a system with my neighbours, in case something happens at school or such.”

“That’s always good to know. So after this break to take care of your family, I see you’ve been working for different companies?”

“Yes. As secretary or assistant. Mostly as a replacement, which is why none of my contracts lasted any more than six months. I still have references for each position, though.”

“Yes, I can see that,” Oliver mumbled, checking the notes left by one of Macy’s interns. “Human Resources already checked your references and everything seems in order. I’m just afraid… I’ll be quite honest with you, I’m afraid your knowledge might be outdated?”
Debbie nodded her head, folding her lips over her teeth. “I can assure you that, despite my lack of knowledge concerning social networks or other internet gimmicks, I am more than capable of handling a computer and an online agenda.”

“I’m not really into social networks either,” Oliver smiled. “why marketing, though? Is there a specific reason?”

“May I be brutally honest, Mister Queen?”

“Of course,” he answered, surprised.

“I don’t know much about marketing. But I know how to handle responsibilities and make sure my boss gets to focus on what they are good at. I am smart and a fast-learner and I want this job because Queen Consolidated is a solid company, one where I could work long-term. I may not be your typical assistant… I have seen the other candidates, believe me, I am fully aware of that, but I have years of experience behind me, whether it’s in an office or handling responsibilities as a parent.”

Oliver quietly observed her, seeing the calm, strong and confident woman who clearly wasn’t there to fool around. “How exactly do you see your job as an executive assistant?”

“I like to be involved. I know my place, but that doesn’t mean I don’t have an opinion. Especially in marketing… I am a consumer after all. I need to feel useful in what I do. That being said, being a personal assistant is mostly handling distractions and organizing the work of someone else.”

“This contract has a six month trial period, would that work for you? I am looking for long-term partnership, and there will be an evaluation after those six months.”

“It seems fair enough to me. At least there is an opportunity at the end,” Debbie smiled. “I am actually already thankful I was given a chance to go through this interview, it’s the best prospect I’ve had ever since I started looking for a full-time occupation again.”

“Would full-time work for you? With your children, I mean? Sometimes, I’ll need you to stay later or even go on a business trip. I need to know I can count on my assistant.”

“Of course. As I told you, my daughter is already 13. She can look after her brother for a few hours and I have friends who can handle things if there is an emergency.”

“... this is a personal question and you do not have to answer it if you don’t want to but… are you raising them alone?”

A flicker of sadness crossed her face. “Yes. My husband died a couple of years ago. That’s why I had to go back to work in the first place.”

“I’m really sorry to hear that. It must not have been easy to deal with everything and still raise two children. I recently lost my father and I’ve seen my mother struggling… and my sister and I are much older,” Oliver said softly, sitting back on his chair.

“We managed. And it’s also one of the reasons why I am looking for stability above everything else. I know I am older than the other candidates, and I also know people are wary of hiring someone who is closer to fifty than twenty, but at least you know I am not trying to climb up the social ladder, or to make a career. I am looking for a stable job and once I’ll find it, I won’t have any reason to change.”

“What do you think a day at work would look like if I hired you? What are you expecting?”

“I assume it will be handling emails, phone calls, messages, mail” Debbie explained, her eyes
unfocused as she articulated her answer. “then sort out your agenda, filter your meetings, probably be a link between your office and the other departments. I also have an accountancy degree so I do not mind going through budgets if necessary.”

Oliver raised an eyebrow, knowing that budgets were his own downfall. Felicity had been amazing with them, always checking, leaving little notes and questions for him.

“In short... I hope I won’t be just bringing coffee,” she concluded, setting her hands on her lap.

Grinning, Oliver hid his laugh behind his hand, being immediately reminded of a certain blonde with glasses who had all but lectured him in the middle of QC’s hall on her first day.

“So let me get this straight... you are good with numbers but not exactly experienced in marketing… and you don’t like bringing coffee, am I right?”

Debbie pinched her lips, her shoulders slumping. “I probably shouldn’t have mentioned the coffee part, right?”

“We agreed to be completely honest,” Oliver smiled reassuringly, before taking a deep breath. “What would you do if I asked you to run a personal errand for me? One that has nothing to do with Queen Consolidated?”

Debbie licked her lips, frowning and shifting on her seat. She was obviously struggling with the question and Oliver wondered if she was internally debating with herself between honesty and diplomacy.

“Well I hope it wouldn’t keep me from doing my real job. Running occasional errands is fine but I am not a courier. With all due respect, Mister Queen.”

“Very well,” Oliver nodded, standing up, Debbie automatically following his lead.

“Thank you for taking the time to meet me, Mister Queen,” she smiled politely, adjusting the strap of her purse on her shoulder.

Oliver shoved his hands in his pockets as he walked her to the door. “Can you answer a question honestly? You know... since the interview is over?”

“Hum... yes.” She looked at him, obviously confused.

“How did I do?”

“How did you... do? Do what?”

“The interview. As a recruiter, I mean.” Oliver shifted on his feet, his hand on the handle.

Debbie stared at him for a few seconds, obviously wondering if he was feeling alright. She eventually shook her head. “It was a... normal interview? I guess?”

“Don’t hold back. Speak your mind. It won’t impact anything.”

“I think you were focused and... thorough but...”

Oliver winced, trying to think about what he had forgotten. “But?”

“You didn’t ask me if I had any questions.”
“Damn it,” he cursed. “I knew I was forgetting something. I’m sorry, Debbie. Do you have any questions?”

She laughed, raising her eyebrows. “I thought the interview was over, Mister Queen?”

Oliver grinned. “You got me there.”

*And I think we have a winner.*

He still interviewed the other candidates. They had taken the time to apply and come for an interview and the least he could do was to give them a chance. But Debbie would be hard to beat. She clearly wasn’t the obvious choice and was more of a wild card. Like Felicity had been. She wasn’t like his bubbly blonde, but still had an “I’m not gonna take any of your crap” attitude that was more than necessary when dealing with him. She was experienced, had years of hard work behind her and he knew he needed that, he needed someone to ground him and put him back in his place whenever he’d slip back into his old habits.

Yes… he had a feeling they would make a good team.

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It turned out that Oliver hadn’t been able to stop by after work. The video call had been delayed due to technical issues in Australia and he had texted her that he probably wouldn’t be done in time to stop by her place.

Felicity had been disappointed but understood that they couldn’t spend every single night together. She had taken the opportunity to do some very necessary laundry (she was indeed running very low on underwear) and a bit of housekeeping. Oliver had texted her several times during the night, and they had gotten very close to sexting when he had asked her if she was already in her pajamas. Going to bed without him had been a struggle, her body already used to his warmth, his scent, his breath against her neck. She had eventually fallen asleep in one of the t-shirts he had left behind, curled around his pillow.

At least, she had had a long night of sleep, she thought to herself as she walked out of a meeting with a few engineers on Tuesday morning. She had rejected every single one of their suggestions, purely because she had already worked on them on her side and knew they wouldn’t fit. The meeting had turned into an arm wrestling and by the time it was over, she was dealing with the beginning of a headache.

As soon as she got back into her own office, she poured herself a glass of water, popping a pain-killer. She was supposed to meet Oliver for lunch, hadn’t seen him in about 28 hours -yes, she kept count- and the last thing she wanted was to be paralyzed by a migraine.

“You had another delivery?” Daniela knocked on her door, holding out a parcel the size of a shoe box.

Felicity raised her eyebrows? “... are you sure?”
“Yup, same courier.”

Did he send me post-its?

Grabbing her scissors, Felicity opened the box, holding back a smile when she saw the contents.

“... pens?” her assistant asked, peeking over her shoulder. “Seriously, doesn’t he know about flowers?”

“Not just any pens,” Felicity corrected her. “Red pens.”

And probably at least a hundred of them. With a little note at the bottom.

Because that day changed everything.

Oliver

(and also because I selfishly want you to think about me all the time.)

Giggling, she rolled her eyes, her fingers tracing his words lovingly.

She picked a pen, putting it in the old mug she used as a pen holder on her desk, slipping the rest of the box onto the bottom shelf of her cabinet. The note went next to the one with the stapler, on a small photo-holder near her computer screen.

Grabbing her phone, she saw that she still had one hour before Oliver would pick her up for lunch and decided to head to the lab to work on that battery, since the engineers couldn’t come up with a satisfying solution by themselves.

Time to put your brain to good work, Smoak.

One hour later, she let her head fall back in frustration. She had gotten nowhere. Either the battery was small enough to fit in a watch but lacked stability and didn’t give enough energy for what the watch was supposed to do or it was stable and powerful enough but wouldn’t fit in a watch. It was the snake biting its own tail over and over again. After a quick stop in the ladies room to freshen up a bit, she went to get her purse in her office and was just about to go out when she heard Daniela’s high-pitched squeal.

“Oh my God oh my God, guys!! Or actually, girls!!”

Felicity rushed towards the voice, concerned about the agitation in her assistant’s voice. “What’s going on??”

“Greek God alert, you all. I was just coming back from the deli with my sandwich and I almost dropped it in the middle of the street,” Daniella explained, hurrying towards one of the windows. “Oh my God… he looks even hotter from above… how is that even possible?!”

“Ooooh hot guy from Friday!” Carly said, joining the small group by the window.

“I’m sure he has abs. That kind of guy is always the whole package,” Daniela rambled, both hands
resting against the window. “Now if you could stop leaning against the car and show us your ass…”

Felicity pinched her lips, keeping her laugh at bay at the sight of Oliver’s familiar silhouette.

Mary shared an amused look with her, winking. “Girls… that’s Oliver Queen.”

“What? No, it’s not,” Daniela snorted. “Oliver Queen has longer hair and looks like Ted Bundy.”

“Hum…” Felicity cleared her throat. “Yes, it is.”

“Damn it. He really got yummy with the years,” Carly nodded approvingly.

“But what is he doing here? Felicity, you used to work for QC, right? Why would…” Daniela trailed off, realisation dawning on her face. “Oh my God, he’s the guy you banged all weekend?! He’s your Oliver?”

Blushing, Felicity found herself at a loss for words - which might have been a first.

“I’m sorry… that was totally inappropriate,” Daniela apologized right away, her eyes wide. “… Just tell me… am I right about the abs?”

Felicity shook her head, amused and turned around, walking towards the door.

“Come on, have mercy! At least ask him to turn around so I can get a good look?” her assistant shouted in her back.

The last thing Felicity heard was Daniela grumbling, "she’s not gonna ask, is she?"

She was still chuckling when she walked out of the building, Oliver focused on his cellphone, still leaning on the hood of a black car. He was wearing his usual dark grey slacks, a crisp white shirt, sleeves rolled up, and no tie. The top buttons were undone, his hair messier than usual as if he’d been ruffling it too much.

He raised his head when she was only a few feet away from him, a wide grin on his face. He was ready to kiss her when she pulled away.

“What… Felicity?”

“We have an audience,” she whispered, discreetly pointing behind her.

“… your office?” he asked, glancing towards the building.

“Oooh… I see them,” he smiled, waving towards her colleagues before taking her hand. “How long do you have?”

“I can have about two hours, I’ll just have to work an extra hour tonight. You’re being held back at the office again anyway, right?”

“Yeah,” he nodded, holding the back door open for her. “I’m sorry but my former assistant apparently didn’t think I would need my evenings and scheduled two video conferences in two days.”

“I’d say it’s a good thing she’s not your assistant anymore, then,” Felicity said innocently as she slipped on the back seat, Oliver following her. She just had the time to wave at the driver before Oliver pushed on a button, the separation rising between the front and the back of the car.
As soon as they were hidden, he pulled her in his arms, his mouth chasing hers and she couldn’t help
but giggle at his impatience.

“Felicity, I’m trying to kiss you, here. I’d appreciate a bit more cooperation on your side,” he scolded
her, resting his hand on her thigh.

“I’m sorry. Go ahead. I’ll behave.”

She couldn’t tell where the driver took them, or even if it took them long because she spent her entire
time kissing him and trying to not let things escalate too quickly. Knowing them... It was quite a
challenge in itself.

“Honey, you told me you had about two hours,” he whined, dropping his head in the crook of her
neck after she slapped his hand away from her thigh. “We haven’t had sex in forever and… limo sex,
Felicity. Limo sex.”

“One, this is not a limo. Two, it’s been one day, Oliver. And three, there is no way I’m going back to
work with damp panties. So no sex during lunch break,” she counted on her fingers.

“Technically, it’s going to be 48 hours tonight,” he mumbled against her shoulder.

“It’s still only two days… how are you going to manage when I have my period?” she laughed,
stroking his hair.

He slowly raised his head. “... do you really have to have your period? Isn’t there a way to… not
have it?”

Glaring at him, she grabbed the hand he was slowly slipping underneath her skirt, putting it away
once more. “Well, baby, now that you mention it… there is a way.”

He grinned, straightening on the seat. “Really?!”

“Yes, it’s called getting knocked up,” she deadpanned but quickly pulled away once she saw the
little light in his eyes. “Oh wow. Don’t even think about it!”

“Stop putting the thought in my head, then.” He pressed a soft kiss on her cheek. “But I get it… let’s
see this as practicing.”

“Not to mention you’ll be gone for two weeks soon enough.”

“Yeah but... we could still do things with Skype, you know…” he whispered in her ear, nibbling on
the lobe. “I’d love to see you touch yourself just for me…”

Felicity squirmed on the seat, putting more distance between them. “Maybe we should save this
conversation for when I’m not supposed to head back to work in a couple of hours?”

Trying to move the conversation to a safer topic, she grabbed her purse, fishing an extra set of keys.

“Which reminds me... here are my keys. I mean, if you want to stop by later tonight... I might
already be asleep though.”

Oliver smiled. “I missed sleeping with you. Even if you snore.”

“I do not snore!”
“So, how did the interviews go?” Felicity asked as their waiter put their plates in front of them. Oliver had booked a table in a small French restaurant near the bay, and they were enjoying the view from the small patio.

“Well… good. I think you’ll like Debbie. She reminded me of you. That’s why I picked her, mostly.”

Frowning, Felicity took a bite of broccoli. “What do you mean?”

“Not physically or anything, but she mentioned that she’d hope her job wouldn’t just be about bringing coffee. And she was honest, frank. If I have learnt something in all those months we worked together, it’s that I sometimes need someone who won’t hesitate to tell me I’m wrong,” he shrugged, cutting a piece of his steak. “Oh and also, apparently I’m whipped.”

“… what?”

“Mandy applied for the position,” he explained.

“You’re kidding,” Felicity gaped, putting her glass of water down.

“No. I spoke my mind to her, I believe she did too. She wasn’t exactly pleased but I feel like some things needed to be said.”

Felicity stared at him for a moment, pondering if she should ask more about it or not. She decided on no, trusting him to keep his promise concerning Mandy and Mark and not willing to waste time talking about them. She turned the conversation over to the small packages he had sent her and Oliver sheepishly explained that he was trying to make up for the ten days he hadn’t been there for her. Knowing there were probably going to be more mysterious parcels for her piqued her interest, but she knew he wouldn’t let anything out.

Once their lunch was over, they decided to stop for sundaes and eat them in the park near Palmer Tech. They sat on a bench, each savoring their ice-cream. Mint chip and fudge sauce for her, vanilla and strawberries for Oliver. She had almost choked on her tongue when she had heard him place his order and he had all but smirked innocently at her.

“I like this,” she whispered, leaning against him, his arm resting on the back of the bench. The park was on the small side, with just a few trees and benches, and it was mostly full of employees, but the weather was beautiful and there were little birds chirping enthusiastically.

Oliver hummed in approval, pressing a kiss on her head, putting the empty cups on the bench beside him.

“You haven’t talked much about work. Is everything OK?” he eventually asked, his nose rubbing against her ear.

She sighed, stroking his arm. “Yes. It’s just that bloody battery that is killing me.”

“Isn’t that why you have engineers?”

“Yeah but they just don’t get what I want,” she snorted. “It will be quicker if I do it myself.”

Oliver chuckled. “You just can’t help it, can you?”

“… no,” she laughed. “I just want it to be perfect. It’s important, you know.”
“I know. It’s a pity Palmer didn’t put you on his solar project. You already know a whole lot about that.”

“He thought it might raise some conflict of interest issues. I mean I worked on that for QC… and… and…” she trailed off, her eyes attracted by a ray of sunshine playing on Oliver’s hand.

“… and?” he nudged her.

“What if the battery used partial solar energy? It could recharge itself half of the day mostly… or I could use a thermal battery, one that would put the watch to sleep mode whenever it’s not around someone’s wrist. That would save so much energy and would allow us to add many more applications!” Felicity straightened up, slapping his thigh in her enthusiasm. Yes, this could work. Theoretically, this could be the perfect solution. Now all she needed was to combine a basic solar battery and-

Picking up her purse, she stood up, her mind full of calculations and wire patterns. She needed to head to the lab and put everything on paper.

She suddenly stopped, remembering her boyfriend who probably had no idea what had had gotten into her. She turned around with a small grimace and rushed, quickly pecking him on the lips “sorry. Thank you for the lunch. You’re the best. But I have to go.”

She didn’t wait for his reply, already jogging back to her office.

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“O… OK,” Oliver blurted out, watching her almost running back to her office and he shook his head, a small smile playing on his lips. He had about zero idea what had just happened apart from the fact that Felicity had apparently come up with a new idea. He nodded awkwardly at an old lady who was gazing at him, fiddling with the empty ice cream cups still next to him.

“I guess that’s what it’s like to date a genius,” he sighed, eventually standing up, throwing the cups in a garbage bin. “Better get used to it.”

It was only when he was almost by the car that he realized he’d been talking to himself. Damn. She’s rubbing off on me.

Felicity sent him a text about one hour later, apologizing for leaving so abruptly and mentioning technical terms he had never heard in his life, with a lot of exclamation marks at the end. Then another one about ten minutes later apologizing for the jargon, with a lot of x's and o's at the end. Which he prefered. Very much.

It was way past ten when he slowly opened Felicity’s door, tip toeing out of his shoes. She had left a
light on for him as well as a small note saying she had tried to wait for him and that there was some chinese leftovers in the fridge if he was hungry. He smiled, the domesticity of it giving him a glimpse of what life with her could be. His stomach growling, he re-heated a small plate, and ate it standing up in her kitchen, not even bothering to sit down. He gulped a glass of water before locking the door and padding his way to her bedroom.

He stood on the threshold, gazing at her. She was lying on her side, her back to him, and the small bed lamp she had left on for him was catching its dim light on her hair. He honestly couldn’t remember a time in his life when he had been so content to go back to a sleeping woman. Obviously, there would be no sex involved, but just the idea of holding her and falling asleep with her scent surrounding him was more than enough to make him happy.

He eventually moved after what seemed like minutes, quickly brushing his teeth and stripping down to his boxers. He slid underneath the duvet, switching off the light. Pressing himself against her back, his arm circled her waist, tracing a small kiss on her shoulder as he snuggled against her.

Felicity stirred, mumbling a sleepy “Oliver?”

She moaned, rubbing her face against the pillow as she held his hand between her breasts.

“Shhh” he hushed, burying his face in her neck, his voice barely a whisper “It’s me. Go back to sleep.”

“Missed you. Chicken fridge. Your T-shirt… my hair… and Doctor Who” she mumbled incoherently before relaxing in his arms, having drifted back to sleep.

His eyes closed, Oliver grinned.

*God, I love her.*

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... Back to reality, with a little bounce in their steps ;)

No smut because I was worried about Felicity's well being. Will be back in next chapter. We're reaching the end, I believe we're now in the last 5 chapters :)

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com

+ I forgot: Next chapter probably won't be up until next weekend
Hi guys!!
Here is chapter 48. It is NSFW, very smutty, very explicit. But there are also some fluffy stuff. After this chapter, there should be about three left. But some might be very long lol. I just want to write some scenes (mostly smut) for them before we close that chapter of their lives.

Song: Kiss - Prince

Special thanks to mysticaldetectivepanda who had a bit more work than usual and is very patient with me because I know I keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again... and to pidanka who couldn't read it through completely but she was busy getting me an autograph from Steve and Em so she's forgotten. Also special thanks to Ally who is responsible for this surprise as well :) You guys rock.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Kiss"

You don't have to be beautiful
To turn me on
I just need your body baby
From dusk till dawn
You don't need experience
To turn me out
You just leave it all up to me
I'm gonna show you what it's all about

You don't have to be rich
To be my girl
You don't have to be cool
To rule my world
Ain't no particular sign I'm more compatible with
I just want your extra time and your

[Muah muah muah muah muah]

Kiss

You got to not talk dirty, baby
If you wanna impress me
You can't be too flirty, mama
I know how to undress me (Yeah)
I want to be your fantasy
Maybe you could be mine
You just leave it all up to me
“So, you just want them to completely abandon everything they’ve been working on and start afresh… is that right?” Ray asked her, raising an eyebrow.

“Well… no. Not exactly. Technically, I already have blueprints and I am working on a prototype… but they should consider that possibility, too” Felicity winced, twisting her hands.

Ray had stopped by her office to see how things were going with the watch and Felicity had explained to him the new idea she had had. It was innovative, challenging and yes… a totally different direction than they had been approaching.
“I can’t give you two budgets and having the team working on two different prototypes would be way too expensive, Felicity” Ray shook his head, getting up from his chair.

“But that’s why I want to present both possibilities.”

“Making decisions is part of your job… but the battery is part of the engineer’s’ job. If you want them to go in a different direction, you have to convince them. Keep in mind that it will be a step back and you have a budget to respect.”

Frowning, Felicity followed him to the door “but aren’t you even going to take a look at what I did?”

“Not until I’m positive the team is moving in the right direction. I know you are very good at thinking outside the box, Felicity. That’s why I hired you in the first place. I need creative, innovative people. But I also must make sure things stay within a budget and a deadline. It’s your team. If you think you can make your prototype work within the time frame and the budget, then you have to make the team work towards that. You need to be 100% sure it’s the right choice, though, because there won’t be a second chance for another prototype.”

Felicity bit her lip as she watched Ray stopping by Daniela’s desk and chatting with her. She couldn’t exactly say she was surprised by this outcome. Ray was right in many ways: she had to respect several things and her idea would definitely take them back a few steps. But it also would allow them to explore many opportunities that had been deemed as impossible or improbable in the first place.

The question was could they afford to go backwards? Would the team agree to follow her? Especially the engineers who were very protective of their work. After all she had all but completely taken over what was supposed to be their part of the project.

Maybe she was being too enthusiastic and ambitious, too eager to show her worth? Wouldn’t it be safer to start with the smaller project, and then keep her ideas for a watch 2.0?

She knew she often found herself getting way too involved in her work. She never liked to settle, always trying to make the very best out of what she was given, and sometimes she forgot there were other people involved. Her work could easily turn into an obsession, something she just gave herself to 110%. Maybe she needed to clear her head a bit and consider her options more calmly. She smiled, remembering the texts Oliver had sent her in the morning. She had left him, still asleep in her bed, heading to PT quite early, her mind already set on the blueprints she had left unfinished the day before. Truth be told, she had been half tempted to wake him up but seeing how tired he looked, she had only allowed herself a small kiss on his cheek. He needed to rest, the last two days having been more than busy for him at the office.

So, she had gotten up, showered, and left her apartment trying to be as quiet as possible. There was something so… intimate and domestic in leaving Oliver asleep in her bed and going to work, as if it were his place as much as hers. She didn’t want to rush things between them in the slightest, but she couldn’t deny that the idea of eventually living with him sounded very appealing.

She had gotten his first text around 8AM and she had almost choked on her muffin.

Felicity… Tell me I did not just wake up with a boner and a missing girlfriend.

… You were tired, Oliver.
What the hell am I supposed to do with it now?! We could have done great things with that boner! GREAT THINGS.

*Just do what you usually do with your morning wood ;)*

:| That is so not funny.

*It is a little bit funny, Mr Grumpy*

We are so having sex tonight.

...

... Can we have sex tonight?

*Get back to work, Oliver xox*

You don’t have a late meeting, right? Please, tell me you don’t have a late meeting.

*I don’t.*

I’m ready to beg, Felicity.

*Oliver Queen, begging for sex… I kinda like that.*

You enjoy having me in the palm of your hand, don’t you?

*Yes. In many ways, actually…*

You did not just say that. You are so not helping with my initial problem, you know that?!

*Xox can’t wait for tonight ;)*

Sighing, she glanced at the clock. It was past 4:00, and technically she could call it a day but she also knew Oliver was still stuck at work and would probably be for a couple of hours. He had called her during lunch break, mentioning a few reports he needed to approve that would take several hours to go through at least. She shifted on her chair, wondering if she could pop up at his office… on the one hand, she could help him and even work from there but on the other, she didn’t want to be seen as the clingy girlfriend.

Remembering they had barely seen each other in the last couple of days, she started to pack up her things. She could also stop on Dig’s floor if Oliver was busy, after all. It wasn’t like she had been kicked to the curb when she had left QC. Not to mention, their last encounter in their office had been bitter-sweet to say the least and she didn’t want to keep a bad memory of the place.

She was slightly nervous when she walked into Queen Consolidated. She wasn’t an employee anymore and it felt kind of weird to be on the other side of the fence. Tommy Merlyn always had the habit of walking into the place as if he owned it, but she didn’t have that connection with the Queen family. Yet, Oliver had told her he missed her and surely he would be happy to see her… right? Right. She was his girlfriend, she had every right to come and surprise him every once in a while at work. Squaring her shoulders, she walked to the reception desk, a small smile on her lips as she
remembered the last time she had done so. It was her very first day, when she had been late for her interview. How things had changed…

Her smile froze on her lips when she saw that one of the two receptionists working that day was a familiar face… with a bowtie around his neck. Mark. Who was currently busy scribbling down on a notebook, not paying attention.

She cleared her throat “I would like to see Mister Queen.”

“Do you have an appointment?” he asked in a bored voice, not raising his eyes.

Tilting her head, she saw he was drawing small cartoons and she rolled her eyes “No. I don’t.”

Something in her tone might have finally clicked because he froze, his pen stopping on the sheet of paper. He glanced at her, gulping.

Smiling innocently, Felicity repeated “I would like to see Mister Queen. I just need a visitor badge.”

“I’m sorry, Miss. But you can’t get access to the offices if you don’t have an appointment” the other receptionist chimed in, glancing curiously at her colleague.

Damn, how did Tommy and Laurel get in so easily all these times?!

“Could you please just call his office, I don’t think he will mind?” Felicity offered, sensing Mark wouldn’t be of any help. Whether it was from bitterness or because he was caught off guard, she didn’t know.

“Miss Smoak, what a pleasure to see you!” Walter Steele’s charming voice echoed through the mostly empty hall.

Turning around with a smile, she faced the one who had been her boss not so long ago “Mister Steele.”

“How are you doing? I’ve been told you found your footing right away at Palmer Tech?” Walter smiled at her, shaking her hand.

“Well, yes” she grinned back “thank you very much.”

“I assume you’re here for Oliver?”

“Yes. It’s kind of a surprise visit” she winced, twisting her hands nervously “but I don’t have a badge anymore. And it’s only if he’s not busy, don’t worry! I wouldn’t distract him from work. I’m not… I’m not a distracter.”

Walter tilted his head “well… he’s been working a lot lately. I’d say a bit of distraction wouldn’t hurt. Not to mention, it was such a relief to see his mood had noticeably lifted this Monday that no one would ever complain about your influence on him.”

“Oh…” Felicity blushed, not knowing what to say. I can’t exactly explain to the CEO of QC that I sexed up his Head of Marketing all weekend long.

“Please, make a permanent visitor badge for Miss Smoak” Walter asked the receptionists then turned towards her “it will make your life much easier.”

“Thank you” she answered, blessing the Brits and their good manners.
“Mister Steele, I’m not sure…”

Walter cut Mark off “Well, I am. Just get into the database, get a picture of Miss Smoak and make a badge for her, then drop it to Mister Queen’s office.”

“Of course, Mister Steele” Mark’s colleague answered, handing Felicity a simple visitor badge “I’ll get right on it and make sure it’s delivered as soon as possible.”

“Very good” Walter nodded “I must get going. Miss Smoak, it was a pleasure to see you.”

“Likewise…” she trailed off as he quickly walked towards the garage entrance, barely paying attention to the receptionists bickering behind her back.

“You don’t contradict Mister Steele, you idiot!”

“I wasn’t contradicting him, but we only give permanent visitor badges to family members, you know that!”

“If the CEO asks for a permanent visitor badge for the Pope, you google a pic of the Pope and make him a freaking badge!”

Felicity pinched her lips, trying to keep her laughter at bay as she made her way to the elevators, passing the security checkpoint.

She quickly checked her hair and makeup when the doors closed, thankful for the mirror-covered walls. Pouting, she smoothed the fabric of her dress, a simple pink cotton dress with a flowy skirt that reached mid-thigh. She didn’t look as neat as she wished but it would have to do, she thought as she undid the tie in her hair.

The doors opened when she was finishing the messy bun on the top of her head and she stopped in her tracks when she saw the two rows of chairs against each wall. Oliver had told her he had interviewed candidates on Monday… which was two days ago. She felt a slight pinch in her heart when she walked towards her desk… no, her old desk. It wasn’t hers anymore. It belonged to a woman who was currently on the phone. She seemed to be around forty or fifty years-old and she smiled warmly at her, holding out a finger in apology. Felicity glanced towards Oliver’s office and her mouth fell open when she saw that… well, actually she didn’t see anything. And that’s what shocked her. The glass wall had been partly replaced by wood panels, apart from the door, which was now made of frosted glass.

“May I help you?”

Felicity snapped her head “Sorry… I’m here to see Oliver? Is he here? I should have at least checked if he was in his office…“ she mumbled to herself. In movies, surprise visits are much less complicated. The girl arrives wearing nothing but a trench coat and no one tries to stop her. Maybe I should have worn a trench coat.

“Do you have an appointment?” his assistant asked, frowning as she looked up on the computer screen “Mister Queen is holding a video conference right now.”

“No. It’s… no I don’t” Felicity mumbled, feeling her cheeks flaming up, mentally cursing herself. What was she thinking, really? Oliver was a busy man and of course his assistant wasn’t going to let her through. She wouldn’t have either.

“Mister Steele let me in, but… of course he didn’t know Oliver was busy either. Do you mind if I wait here?” she asked, walking towards the chairs.
“Not at all” the woman smiled “would you like anything to drink, Miss…?”

The door to Oliver’s office suddenly opened, interrupting them.

“Debbie, could you just type these suggestions for me? It’s just a few notes I took” Oliver grumbled, his eyes fixated on the paper he was holding in one hand, the other ruffling his hair. Judging by how messy it was, he had probably done it all day long “I think it’s readable, but let me know if it’s not…”

Damn it. Grumpy Oliver with messy hair is my favorite kind of Oliver.

“Of course, Mister Queen.”

“And also, could you-” Oliver paused, his eyebrows raising when he finally saw Felicity shifting on her feet. She waved at him awkwardly, feeling utterly out of place for some reason.

“Felicity?” he asked, his lips stretching in a wide smile as he joined her in a few steps. Leaning in, he pressed a small kiss on her cheek, his hand landing on her hip, probably more out of habit than anything else “what are you doing here?”

“I’m sorry, I should have called, I know. I wanted to surprise you but you’re busy and I can totally stop by and talk with Dig or go window shopping. Or get a mani-pedi, it’s been a while” she rambled, wincing “not that you needed to know that.”

“What? Don’t be silly, we barely see each other lately” he rolled his eyes, taking a hold of her hand “Debbie, this is Felicity. Felicity, this is Debbie, my new assistant.”

Debbie took a short breath “Oh God, I’m so sorry, Mister Queen. I didn’t know it was Miss Smoak.”

“We didn’t really have the time for proper introductions” Felicity explained, fiddling with her purse.

“Could you make sure I’m not interrupted, Debbie? I still have to go through that report from hell” Oliver asked as he held the door to his office open, gently pushing Felicity inside.

“I’m pretty sure having your girlfriend around is the definition of an interruption, Oliver” Felicity snorted as he closed the door. She dropped her purse and tote bag on the small sofa, but didn’t have the time to do anything else, Oliver already cradling her face, peppering kisses over her lips.

“Damn, I missed seeing you here” he grinned, his thumbs stroking her cheeks.

Giggling, she stepped out of his embrace, knowing he still had work to do. The sooner he’d be done, the sooner they’d be able to get home “no funny business, here. I brought some work too, so I wouldn’t bother you.”

“I don’t mind being bothered by you…” he murmured, his hand still holding hers, trying to pull her back into his arms.

She shook her head, holding out a finger in warning “No. I came here because I thought we could spend a bit of time together… not like that, Oliver” she added when she saw him nodding enthusiastically “besides, I could help you out and we’d be able to head home sooner. Where I will probably bother you as soon as we walk in.”

“Or… we could bother each other a little bit now, to take the edge off?” he asked innocently, playing with a strap of her dress.
Glaring, she slapped his hand away “No. Now, behave, or there won’t be any kind of action at all today.”

“Felicity” he whined “we haven’t had sex in ages…”

“It’s been two days, Oliver.”

“Three. It will be exactly 72 hours tonight around 11PM” he sighed, dropping his head against her shoulder “why are you torturing me with all my fantasies and not letting me play them out? First the limo, now my office… what’s next, you’re wearing lacy lingerie?”

Pinching her lips, she hummed non-committedly “... maybe?”

He slowly raised his head, his eyes already darkening “oh no… you wouldn’t dare.”

She shrugged innocently, turning around “well if you’re nice, you’ll find out eventually.”

“You can’t tell me that and then leave me hanging! I’m… I’m in pain, Felicity!” he threw his arms above his head.

She perked an eyebrow at him, not impressed in the slightest “I never believed in blue balls, just so you know. So, come on. Back to work, Mister Horny.”

Grumbling, he eventually sat down at his desk, throwing her a furious glare.

*My, my… aren’t we pouting like a five-year-old who can’t have ice-cream for dessert…*

“You know, endorphins can help you focus and actually sharpen your attention, making you far more productive in a shorter amount of time.”

“Sure, babe” she answered distractedly, setting her own laptop on a corner of his desk.

She saw him pinch his lips as he finally opened a file, letting out a huge sigh. She had to bite back her smile, the view reminding her of the number of times she had scolded him in this very same office. She now knew, or was at least very suspicious, that he liked being scolded by her. As much as he was on the dominant side in bed, he loved letting her be in charge in the other aspects of their life.

“... not even a quickie?” he asked in a small voice after five minutes.

“Oliver” she warned him, not even bothering to look at him, mentally counting down the seconds.

3, 2, 1...

“OK. Let’s compromise. A small one? Like that time on your couch?”

“You mean the one where you couldn’t wait for me?” she asked smoothly, raising her eyebrows, secretly amused to see him blush furiously.

“I made sure you finished, too!” he gasped “… eventually.”

Taking a deep breath, she observed him quietly. His hair was even messier than when she had arrived, and it reminded her of the times when she was the one to lace her fingers through it. She gulped, willing herself to not cave in, and she put her hands flat on the desk.

“Oliver…”
He grinned widely, already standing up, pushing his chair back.

“No. We are not having sex until your work is done” she finished sternly “you’re overworked lately, and I’d like us to head back home soon so we can have a nice evening.”

“Exactly! I’m overworked! I need to relax, honey. In your hands, if possible. Or mouth. Or-”

“I get it!” she cut him off, holding out a hand “here’s the problem, Oliver. I don’t want a quickie. I want at least two orgasms because you turned me into a gluttonous woman when it comes to sex. And there’s no need to look that smug!”

Oliver smiled proudly, shoving his hands in his pockets “well, actually, I think there’s every need to look smug. I mean, my super hot girlfriend just told me that-”

“That she won’t have a quickie in your office.”

“... you’re mean to me” he pouted, shifting on his feet “besides, I could do two.”

Felicity licked her lips, knowing they were going nowhere. She needed the big guns. Standing up, she circled his desk until she was facing him.

“Oliver…”

“Yeah?” he breathed, his hands already reaching for her hips.

“I want to have sex with you. Very, very much. I want you to take me hard, and I want to be able to scream or moan without worrying about someone hearing me. I want you to fuck me until my legs can’t carry me anymore. And once you’re done with me, I want to be able to still feel you tomorrow morning. I don’t want anything less. So do you think you can finish your work like a good boyfriend so you can take me home as soon as possible and fuck my brains out?”

Oliver gulped “damn it, Felicity…”

She pushed on his shoulders until he sat back down, offering no resistance “do we have an understanding?”

He nodded, his eyes clouded “yeah… yeah… once we get back home… I’ll… yeah… your brains… out.”

“Good” she kissed the top of his head and went back to her seat “oh and… I’d really like it if you could go down on me too, while we’re at it. I’ve really missed it” she added, scribbling a few notes on her notebook.

Only silence answered her and she smirked, knowing Oliver would probably focus for at least an hour now. Being in a relationship with someone you already knew so well definitely had its perks. There was nothing Oliver liked more than a challenge… except for her bossing him around. She knew that combining the two was practically cheating but sometimes, Oliver needed her to play dirty as well.

All is fair in love and war, after all…
“This thing doesn’t even make sense!” Oliver grumbled, throwing his pen on the desk. They had been working, mostly in silence, for almost an hour. He had grown obviously frustrated after thirty minutes, his hand ruffling his hair over and over again, furiously tapping his pen against the file he was currently reading.

Felicity smiled, shaking her head as she turned off her own laptop “Presentation?”

Oliver scratched his jaw, frowning “yeah… I’m supposed to send a short - and the keyword here is short - guideline for our other branches. This report has been done by the Applied Sciences, but they lost me after two pages. I don’t even know what is important and what is not anymore, it’s just so technical…”

He sighed deeply, resting his head back on his chair “It just… it sucks.”

Felicity snorted, putting her own laptop away. She had managed to get quite a lot of work done and knew it wouldn’t hurt for her to take a look.

“It sucks?” she asked as she stood up “My, my, my… I believe you are reaching your limits if your vocabulary starts resembling the one of a fifteen-year-old boy.”

Opening his eyes, he glared at her “I asked them to be as simple as possible, as if they were talking to a bunch of kids and they just type that thirty page report that no one in their right mind is going to read until the end. Let alone understand it.”

Stepping behind his chair, she put her hands on his shoulders, gently kneading her way to his neck. He groaned, dipping his head forward as she tried to relax his muscles. He was tense underneath her fingers and she used her thumb to press and rub hard circles into the kinks she could feel under his skin. He suddenly hissed as she worked on a knot and she froze.

“I’m sorry” she winced.

“No. No, please keep going. That feels amazing” Oliver mumbled “why did you never do that to me before?”

“Because I was your assistant, Oliver. That would have been highly unprofessional of me” she laughed, her hands pushing him forward so she could work her thumbs down his spine. A deep shiver ran through him as he let out a strangled moan.

“Holy fuck. Where did you learn to do that?”

“… You probably don’t want to know” she hesitated, her hands kneading his back one last time before stepping aside.

“… why did you stop?” he whined “and why don’t I want to know? Where are you going?”

Giggling, she pressed a kiss on his neck “I stopped because massages aren’t very comfortable through fabric. I don’t think you want me to explain to you I dated a chiropractor. And I’m going nowhere” she finished, pushing him slightly aside so she could get a look at the documents that had him so grumpy. She suddenly froze, her eyes falling onto the frame on his desk. She reached for it, a smile stretching her lips as she recognized the picture from Ivy Town.

“Really? We took a few pictures in Vegas and you choose that old one?” she laughed, putting the frame back next to his computer screen.

Oliver blushed “I love that picture of you. It’s the first time I saw you so… carefree.”
“Oliver, we were drunk.”

“I beg your pardon. You were hammered but I was still OK.”

“So you’re keeping a picture of your drunk girlfriend?”

He smiled sheepishly “it’s also the night I realized there was… there was something more. About you.”

“That early?”

“... yeah. Apart from your gorgeous ass, I mean” he added, his hand trailing down to said body part.

She slapped him playfully on the arm, willing to get back to work “don’t try to charm me. I came here to help you, not get seduced.”

“Can you at least sit on my lap?” he asked hopefully, patting his leg.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea, Oliver” she shook her head, resting a hand on his desk and leaning against it as she went back to the first page of the report, reaching for his pen and crossing two paragraphs “OK that part is pure technical jargon, you can get rid of it. If they have questions, they’ll ask.”

“I don’t want to leave too many things out.”

“Then make a simple presentation and add the rest in annotations” she shrugged, circling a few sentences “That you have to keep.”

“Mmmhhmmmm” Oliver nuzzled his face against her side.

“Oliver…” Felicity warned him, turning a page.

“You smell so good, Felicity” he mumbled against her dress, his hand reaching for her leg.

She slapped his hand away, forcing herself to stay focused “that part doesn’t make much sense if you don’t have a deep knowledge of wind turbines, so I’d get rid of it, too.”

“Ow!” Oliver shook his hand “was that really necessary?”

“Apparently, yes” she breathed “now behave.”

“... You’re such a meanie” he grumbled, sitting back properly on his chair.

She bit back a smile, because grumpy Oliver was quite a sight “which parts seem confusing to you?”

Sighing deeply, he turned until he reached page 8 “this entire page makes no sense to me.”

Felicity quickly read through, humming quietly. It was indeed very technical and didn’t bring much information “I don’t think you need that, I agree. It’s confusing.”

A small knock on the door interrupted them and, after Oliver told her to, Debbie came in carrying a small stack of papers.

“I transcripted your notes, Mister Queen. I also finished the letters you asked me to type.”

“Perfect, Debbie. Thank you very much” Oliver smiled at her “I was wondering if you could also go
through the newest budget for the website?"

“Today?”

“No. Of course not. Tomorrow will be perfect. I just feel like it’s not exactly…”

Felicity honestly would never be able to tell what was wrong with said budget because at this exact moment, she felt Oliver’s hand slipping underneath her skirt. They were perfectly hidden by his desk, and the bastard knew it, she thought as she gripped the papers she was reading, straightening and trying to move away from him. He probably sensed her movements because his palm grabbed her thigh, keeping her in place.

Oliver was still talking with his assistant, but she was unable to even try to pay attention to what they were saying, a part of her so furious he would put her in a position where she couldn’t exactly voice her discontent without giving away what was happening. The other part of her was trying not to squirm when his warm palm slowly, so slowly circled her thigh, until his fingertips could brush the inside of her leg… he was moving up and up and up… His nails suddenly grazed the bare skin and her knees wobbled, her hands holding the papers as tightly as possible, holding them out in front of her face, pretending to read them.

She was vaguely aware of the fact that Oliver was keeping the conversation going, asking questions she couldn’t make sense of and she knew, without a doubt, that he was doing it on purpose. She wouldn’t move or let anything show with someone else in the room, and that sneaky little bastard was fully aware of that. His hand was so warm, sliding up between her thighs. He was taking his time, stroking the skin, massaging the soft flesh. It felt like she hadn’t felt him there since forever - in reality it was only a couple of days but oh God how much she had missed this. His touch, his warmth, the way he knew exactly how to make her forget everything. Her brain was shutting everything out, even the fact that his assistant was just on the other side of the desk and all she had to do was lean in to figure out where her boss’s hand had disappeared. But she couldn’t bring herself to really care anymore, desire having taken over. Already. The slightest touch from this man was enough to turn her into a blubbering mess of pure, unadulterated lust. She was struggling to keep her eyes open as he was inching his way north, getting closer and closer to the apex of her thighs but still not reaching it.

She closed her eyes, licking her lips as his fingertips finally, finally grazed the fabric of her panties, tracing the hem, making her tremble with need. She was wet. She was already wet, her desire dampening her lace panties, the same ones she had picked so carefully, hoping he would get to see them. He was so close to where she needed him, literally inches away from the ache that was taking over her core but she couldn’t let a sound escape her.

She gulped, trying to calm down her breathing, her legs closing on his hand and the movement caused one of his fingers to bump against her clit. She couldn’t hold back the whimper at the flash of pleasure it caused, her hips rocking before she could stop them. There, she needed him to touch her there.

His finger traced her outer lips from the little bundle of nerves, down to her entrance. Her eyes snapped opened when he pressed down through the fabric and she saw him stiffening when he realized how damp her panties were. She pressed her hips against the desk, leaning against it and welcoming the little pinch of pain as the hard edge bit her soft stomach. She could see Debbie from above the papers she was still, by some miracle, holding in her shaking hands and she forced herself to push back more against the desk, trying to escape Oliver’s finger, despite how much she craved it.

“Very well. Thank you Debbie. You should go home, now” Oliver suddenly said, his voice still professional, not letting anything show of what he was doing to her.
Felicity counted her breaths as Oliver’s assistant walked out of the room and the door had barely closed when she shoved his hand away, throwing the papers back on his desk. Her mouth set in a firm line, she glared at him and he winced under her eyes.

“I’m in trouble, right?” he asked when she turned around, her entire body tense.

Her heels was the only sound that could be heard in his office when she made her way to the door. She locked it, the noise reverberating throughout the entire room. Leaning against it, she looked at Oliver who was still sitting on his chair.

“Felicity, I’m sorry... You were so close and... damn you really are wearing lace panties” his eyes travelled down her figure, pausing where said-piece of clothing was located.

“There was someone in the room, Oliver” she said calmly, not moving.

“I just wanted to touch you a bit, I promise. But then you... your thighs trembled and... God Felicity you’re so hot, I couldn’t resist...and you liked it. I felt it” he gulped, gripping the edge of his desk.

She quietly observed him, noting how he was getting nervous under her stare, trying to get a hold over herself. He was right. She was turned on. The fact that someone had been in the room had only made things worse. Knowing she had to keep quiet and couldn’t move made her focus on her desire. Oh, she had been mad. Mad as hell when she had walked to the door. But the sound of the lock had revived her arousal. She had literally locked everyone and everything away. They were alone, now. No one would interrupt them, no one would overhear them. And she was horny. She wanted him, the initial anger she had felt slowly turning into pure heat running through her veins. She wanted to work on that anger. She wanted to get it out of her system, get rid of that dull ache she could still feel between her thighs. Both emotions were mingling, tangling together, making it impossible for her to separate them.

“Honey, let’s just go home. We have barely seen each other lately, I’m on edge and we just need to relax a bit-”

Felicity slowly shook her head, licking her lips. There was no way in hell she was going to wait until they were back to her place. She couldn’t wait. The ache couldn’t wait. He had been the one to put her in such a needy state... he was going to get her rid of it.

Oliver frowned as she walked back to him “...Felicity? Are you really mad?”

“It’s not just the panties” she murmured as she stepped in front of him, resting her knee on the chair between his legs. She quickly got rid of her glasses, setting them aside on the desk, and untied her hair, letting it fall freely around her face.

“...not just... what?” Oliver stuttered as his hands automatically reached for her hips, tilting his head back.

“The lace” she explained as she kissed his neck, his rough stubble feeling absolutely delicious against her lips “it’s not just my panties that are made of lace. My bra, too. I picked them thinking of you.”

His throat vibrated with a groan, his hands gripping her tightly, pushing her down. The chair wasn’t wide enough for her to straddle him but it was obviously not what Oliver had in mind. He pushed up a leg between hers, coaxing her down until her sex was firmly pressed against the hard muscles of his thigh. She moaned at the flash of pleasure the simple contact caused, her hand reaching for the back of his neck, her mouth hungrily searching for his. They both sighed in contentment when their
tongues finally met, and she couldn’t help but roll her hips, her fingers tightening in his hair at the coil of tension that was already forming in her belly. The lace of her underwear was causing a delicious friction as she ground down over Oliver’s leg. He reached underneath her skirt, his warm palms stroking the back of thigh until they reached her butt. He growled in her mouth as he palmed both cheeks firmly, massaging the flesh over the fabric of her panties and guiding her movements, pressing her down firmly.

She let go of his mouth with a small high-pitched cry when her clit rubbed over his leg.

“You good?” Oliver whispered, peppering kisses over her cheek.

“Yeah… oh yes…” she gripped the back of his chair for leverage as her hips started to rock harder against him. The pleasure was already building, the tension growing, each roll of her hips taking her higher, making her wetter, literally weeping with the utter need to climax, however the way.

“It hurts, God it hurts” she panted, grabbing his tie with her free hand. The craving she had for his body was creating a dull ache, throbbing deep inside her, painful in its intensity. She needed more. More friction, more of him. Oliver suddenly pushed her away, his hands on her elbows forcing her to stand up and she cried out, she literally cried out when she lost contact with his leg.

“Holy fuck, Felicity…” Oliver turned her around so she was facing the desk and his hands rushed over her legs, bundling her skirt over her hips in a hurried mess “oh baby…”

“Oliver, please…”

She was close. So close and she needed to come so badly. The ache, the deep ache wasn’t going away, only growing stronger and stronger by the second. She leaned on her outstretched arms when Oliver put his hands on her backside, the heel of his palms burning the naked skin underneath the line of her panties. It was a pair of tiny boxer shorts that left the lower half of her buttocks bare, showcasing the rest by the deep red of the lace.

He squeezed her cheeks together, his thumbs dipping between her thighs, pressing her outer lips but avoiding her entrance. Her walls clamped down as if they sensed how close he was, as if they could suckle his fingers deep inside her to stroke the ache away.

Her own fingers curled over the wood of his desk, her knuckles turning white when she felt Oliver’s mouth tracing open kisses on her lower back, her dress falling over his face.

“Take it off” he groaned, straightening up behind her and pulling her zipper down. She barely had time to raise her arms before her dress went flying to the other side of the room, Oliver twisting her in his arms.

His eyes travelled up and down her body, licking his lips “you’re fucking gorgeous.”

He let a single finger trace the hem of her panties on her hips, then slowly circle her bellybutton before grazing her stomach until it reached the valley between her breasts. Her breathing shortened as he softly brushed the upper side of one cup, then the other, goosebumps following his path, her nipples getting impossibly hard. He must have seen the effect he had on her because he suddenly dipped his head, opening his mouth over an areola, sucking it through the material of her bra. The fabric was keeping her from feeling his warm, wet mouth over her sensitive skin and she whimpered in frustration. She knew very well how good it felt to have Oliver’s mouth suckling on her breast and she was craving a more direct contact.

“Oliver… Oliver, please” she whispered, pulling on his hair. He let go of her breast, heading for her
throat. Nibbling his way up to her jaw, he circled her waist with his arm, lifting her until she was sitting on the desk. He pressed himself between her open thighs, pushing his erection against her sex and she all but mewled, leaning back on her arms and pushing back against him.

“That’s what you want, right? That’s where you want to feel me?” he whispered against her lips, one hand gripping her ass as the other cleared his desk of all the files and pens scattered around. Felicity could barely hear them falling to the floor, every single cell of her body focused on where their bodies were touching each other, her hips rolling up and down his erection.

She bit her lips, her eyes shutting when Oliver put his hand near hers, leaning against it for leverage, his hips grinding down more forcefully “yes… yes… yes” she whined when he bumped directly against her clit “right there. It hurts, it hurts so good…”

She was being incoherent, a small part of her brain was fully aware of that, but she wasn’t in control of her own body anymore - or of the words that were escaping her mouth. It was hurting, that craving was borderline painful in its intensity. She wanted him so badly, wanted his body against her, inside her.

“Where?” he groaned, resting his forehead against hers “where does it hurt, Felicity?”

Panting, she couldn’t form a coherent answer and moved against him harder, her legs closing over his hips, afraid he would leave her.

It felt like she was on fire, her whole body tensing, the waves of pleasure taking her higher and higher as she kept on rubbing herself against him “please… please, Oliver…”

“Look at me” he ordered, his hand reaching for her head, tilting it back “look at me, Felicity.”

Eventually opening her eyes, she saw the same hunger, the same desire on his face, saw that he was just as aroused as she was.

“Where does it hurt, honey?” he asked once more, slowing the movement of his hips.

Felicity wailed, her legs tightening around him, trying to force him to speed up again, to no avail.

His eyes darkened as he leaned away from her, depriving her of the contact she was craving.

“Oliver, stop playing… you know where” she pleaded and she honestly felt like she was going to cry if he didn’t give her what she needed. Her arms were starting to hurt and she straightened on the desk, her hands reaching for his belt. She was done playing.

Oliver slapped her hands away, forcing her off the desk and turning her around. She was about to complain, and loudly, when he pressed her flush against him, licking the lobe of her ear. A shiver ran down her spine as he trailed down, nibbling on the soft skin beneath her ear.

His mouth laved on her neck while he started to slowly pull on the cups of her bra. The fabric was brushing against her over sensitive nipples until it finally passed them, the hard little buds finally springing free. He smoothed the fabric underneath her breasts, pushing them up as he palmed the mounds of flesh, rolling her nipples underneath the pad of his thumbs. Her breathing quickened when Oliver’s hands travelled to her back and he pushed her gently, but firmly, until she was bent over his desk. The cold wood against her sensitive breasts made her hiss but she couldn’t push away as Oliver’s lips were already pressing kisses down her spine.

She felt his hand slipping between her thighs, cupping her sex and pressing his fingers against her clit. Hard. She keened, pressing back against him as he started to rub her through the fabric.
“Oliver, don’t stop… don’t leave me hanging” she panted, resting her cheek against the desk.

“Fuck… Felicity, you’re so fucking wet for me” he groaned, grinding his cock against the back of her thigh while his hand kept on pressing firm circles on the swollen bundle of nerves.

Felicity closed her eyes, her entire body focusing on the pleasure that was radiating from his touch. She was climbing, climbing too fast and a part of her wanted to stop and slow things down but she couldn’t, there was no way she could stop from rocking her hips against his hand, seeking her relief, the tension in her core growing impossibly tight until it finally reached its peak. She felt another rush of wetness soaking her panties, but she was still riding the wave, still pressing down on Oliver’s hand, her body far from sated.

She sobbed in frustration, not understanding what was wrong with her. She had just climaxed, but it felt like it wasn’t enough. The painful need was still there, still unsatisfied and she didn’t know what to do to make it go away.

“…babe?” Oliver’s voice finally reached her. He must have sensed something was off, because he brushed her hair away from her face “are you OK?”

“No” she whispered, trying to breathe through her nose “There’s something wrong with me, Oliver. I… I can’t… it’s still…”

“You need more?” he asked, peppering kisses over her neck.

Nodding, she let out a sigh of relief when he finally gripped her panties and pushed them down her legs, lightly tapping on her knee so she would lift her foot, freeing her.

The sound of the buckle of his belt, followed by the zipper made her spread her legs even before he had time to nudge them open. She could feel him shuffling against her ass, probably shoving his boxers down and she pressed back against him, her walls clenching on emptiness. That was what she needed. Him. Inside her. Stretching her the way only he could, bringing that delicious burn she had been desperately hungry for.

His hand pressed down on the desk right next to her face and he leaned in, whispering in her ear “I’m going to fuck the pain away.”

His words turned her on violently because yes, she was craving him in a way that gentle love making would never satisfy. She felt the tip of his cock nudge her entrance, rubbing and spreading her juices before he slammed into her, sliding right in with one thrust. Her mouth fell open on a soundless cry, her hands scrambling for purchase on the slick surface as Oliver let out a satisfied groan in her ear.

He always felt so big whenever he took her from behind, the angle probably enhancing the friction, allowing him to go deeper and she savored the moment, savored the way he was filling her completely, how snug the fit was.

Oliver eventually pulled out, only leaving the tip inside her and her walls clamped down, desperately trying to hold him back.

“Jesus Christ…” he breathed as he pushed back in, hard. Leaving his hand near her face, he gripped her ass with the other one, pushing her down on him every time he would thrust in. He quickly gained a punishing rhythm, and all she could do was lie down, let him take her the way he wanted to, trusting him to make it good for her and get rid of that painful tension deep inside her core. She was barely aware of the whimpers escaping her mouth, too focused on the way he was moaning each time he would bottom out. His hips were slapping against her ass, his strokes hard and deep, his
cock hitting the ache square on every time he would thrust in.

She was sliding up on his desk under the force of his thrusts, welcoming the relief they were bringing her. Her damp hands were squeaking against the slick wood, clearly audible despite the high-pitched mewls he was coaxing out of her. It felt so good, the way he was stretching her, slamming into her, hitting the right spots over and over again.

“Oh yes… yes… Oliver, don’t stop don’t stop don’t stop” she wailed as she felt the heat deep inside her swelling, her climax getting closer and she realized suddenly that he wasn’t using his fingers like he usually did. Her clit was throbbing but the pleasure he was giving her with his cock was enough to bring her to the edge and the thought turned her on violently. She was climbing, her orgasm just a few strokes away, when Oliver suddenly straightened up, grabbing her ass with both hands as he pushed inside her faster.

“Come on, Felicity… come on” he panted, his voice low and strained as he pounded into her, the desk trembling under her. She could feel him, feel every single inch of his length sliding in and out of her so easily, the tip of his sex rubbing against her g-spot repeatedly, making her see stars.

All she could do was moan incoherently, mewling words of encouragement that probably would have made her blush had she not been so lost in her pleasure.

“Oh fuck… fuck… it’s coming, Oliver. I can feel it coming.”

She just needed him to fuck her hard, hammer the ache inside her core and everything would explode. She had never felt that way, never felt that utter craving for roughness but here she was, her orgasm within her reach and God help her but she needed it hard.

She spread her legs as far as she could and it only took three hard thrusts, Oliver groaning with the effort, to make the coil of tension finally snap.

Her mouth opened on a gasp, a long tortured cry the only sound that managed to escape her throat as the orgasm crashed through her, so powerful she thought she was about to pass out. Wave after wave, she wailed her pleasure as Oliver slowed down his pace but didn’t soften his thrusts. Her walls clamped down on him, squeezing him as he kept on fucking her, prolonging her climax, finally replacing the dull ache with a blissful satisfaction.

She was a pile of goo when Oliver finally stopped moving, his head resting between her shoulders, his breathing as ragged as hers. He was still hard inside of her and she couldn’t even remember if he had climaxed or not, her pleasure way too intense for her to focus on anything else.

“Did you…” she trailed off, still trembling with the aftershocks.

“No.”

She didn’t know if her body was able to take anything more… and at the same time couldn’t wait to see if he could make it even better.

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Oliver waited until Felicity’s body finally relaxed, dropping his head on her back as he tried to get control over his senses. Her walls were still fluttering around him, massaging his cock and he grit his
teeth, forcing himself to pull out of her. He was painfully hard but he had waited for so long to have
her at his mercy in his office and he couldn’t take it any longer. Her first orgasm hadn’t even taken
the edge off and a part of him had felt like superman when he had seen the desperate need she had
for him and the relief only his body could give her. It had been rough, animal and the way she had
begged him… the words that had escaped her mouth in her despair… had almost made him climax
as well. But taking her in that position was for her. He knew she liked it that way, he knew how
much of a turn on it was for her. And God he loved it as well, loved how deep she could take him,
how her soft ass would press against his lower belly, cushioning his thrusts. Yet what he had
imagined so many times was Felicity on her back, opened for him. Face to face. He wanted to see
the pleasure in her eyes, see the way her breasts would bounce in rhythm with his hips… He needed
to take her that way.

Felicity was completely relaxed and she barely protested when he turned her around, took off her bra
and sprawled her on his desk. He pressed one of her thighs down on the wood surface, spreading her
to him, the other leg bent, her foot resting on his chest. He took about a second to admire her, the
way her breasts were rising up and down with her short breathing, the blush covering her body, her
eyes so cloudy and unfocused, still full of the pleasure he had given her. She was the most beautiful
thing he had ever seen.

“Oliver?” she murmured, confusion written all over her face.

“Shhh” he whispered, grabbing his cock, pressing it against her opening “I want to see you. I want to
see your face when I fuck you on my desk.”

She whimpered at his words, then moaned loudly when he entered her once more. He closed his
eyes as he slid right in, feeling her tight walls welcoming him back. She was so wet and snug, fitting
him like a glove. He took a deep breath, his eyes travelling from her face to where their bodies were
joined. He pulled out of her slowly, watching his cock glistening with her juices as he pushed it back
in, mesmerized by the way she stretched around him. She was spread out, her arms sagged around
her face, still catching her breath and knowing she was willingly giving herself, letting him use her
body for his own pleasure sent a flash of arousal down his spine and he sped up the pace. His
couldn’t take his eyes off her breasts which were bouncing in tempo with his thrusts and he couldn’t
resist the temptation to reach out and palm one, pressing the flesh between his fingers, feeling how
hard her nipple still was despite her two orgasms. His girl was definitely horny as hell because of him
and he smirked, his ego getting a big boost once he saw her licking her lips, the hunger reappearing
in her eyes.

Felicity shifted her foot on his chest and he straightened her leg, letting it rest on his shoulder, his
mouth already laving on her calf, biting the flesh. She squealed, her back arching as she wrapped her
other leg around his waist, pushing on his ass. The sound made him snap and he pressed her thigh
back on the desk, a dark, primitive part of him wanting to see her spread open for him, completely
naked in his office, submissive to the movement of his hips as he pushed inside her.

“Keep your legs open” he grumbled roughly, as he slipped her leg from his shoulder to the crook of
his elbow.

The new position allowed him to rub his pelvis on her folds, literally working her inside and out.
Soon her little whimpers turned into moans as he spread his hand flat on the inside of her thigh, still
holding her open but his thumb now able to trace slow circles around her clit. As soon as he brushed
the swollen bundle of nerves, a rush of liquid warmth coated his cock, a loud gasp escaping her lips
and she reached out, grabbing his wrist. He quickly looked at her but she was bowing her head, her
teeth biting harshly on her lower lip, her face showing nothing but tortured pleasure.
“Oh… ooooooh… oh God oh God oh God” she chanted as he pressed himself inside her, pushing in, pulling back, pushing in, pulling back, gritting his teeth when he felt her muscles desperately trying to hold him deep inside her. His pace was leisurely, letting him enjoy every single inch of their flesh gliding together, skin against skin. He took in every little detail, engraving the moment in his memory. The blush on her chest, the way she was biting her lips in an effort to muffle her cries, the way her breasts moved, how it felt to hold her spread open for his thrusts, to see in her eyes how good it was for her. How her breath would hitch every time he would fill her to the hilt, the small whimper when he would pull out of her.

Despite his best intentions, his needs eventually took over, his hips speeding up, soon starting a pounding rhythm and she pressed down on his wrist, urging him on. He followed her lead, his thumb rubbing harder around her clitoris and he almost swallowed his tongue when he realized she was mimicking his pattern with her own thumb on the back of his hand.

His balls were tensing, his thighs stiffening as the fire started at the bottom of his spine. He was slamming into her now, completely unable to hold back, ashamed at the idea that he was about to leave her unsatisfied but knowing there was no way in hell he could stop or even slow down. The pressure was growing impossibly tight, his fingers digging into the soft flesh of her thighs, his thumb losing any kind of rhythm.

“Fuck” he winced, desperately chasing his relief and unable to focus on hers “I’m sorry, babe, I’m sorry… I need to come.”

Felicity writhed on the desk, literally keening as she abandoned his wrist to rub herself frantically. He grabbed her hips, pulling her flush against him whenever he would bottom out, his body screaming for him to get as deep as possible the closer he got to his climax.

“Oh… oh yes… oh yes” she whined, her legs bending around his waist after a particularly hard thrust that pushed him against her fingers. Hearing her cries of pleasure was too much for Oliver. One, two hard thrusts and he was shouting his release, his cock twitching as he emptied himself deep inside her body, his eyes squeezing shut at the feeling of his seed filling her spurt after spurt.

He felt it then, the way she was clamping around him, milking him until he had nothing left to give her, her body seemingly as hungry for him as he was for hers. The buzzing in his ears faded away, letting him hear her screams of pleasure turn into moans of contentment.

- Thank God the floor is empty - he thought, because she hadn’t held back in the octave department.

He eventually let go of her hips, his arms shaking as he rested them on each side of her chest. His head dipped as he tried to catch his breath and he saw a drop of sweat fall on her stomach. She was trembling, little mewls of bliss escaping her as he let his eyes travel her body. Her hands were resting limply on her stomach, her legs hanging from the edge of the desk and their bodies were still joined, the little aftershocks of her orgasm sending tiny jolts of electricity to his dick.

Holy fuck. That had been… intense. Like earth-shattering intense. He let out a breathless laugh once he realized he had fucked her senseless on his desk, his pants rolled around his ankles, his boxers lowered on his thighs while she had been completely naked.

“Mmmhh?” Felicity murmured sleepily.

“I don’t know how I’ll ever be able to get any work done on this desk. I’ll keep remembering you naked on it” he shook his head, smiling.

“Good” she grinned lazily.
He was softening inside her and he pulled out, wincing when he left her warmth. He quickly grabbed a few tissues, cleaning her off and he noticed that this time she didn’t squirm or blush but accepted the gesture without reserve. He planted a soft kiss on her stomach as a thank you and she laced her fingers through his hair, humming in satisfaction.

Quickly taking care of himself as well, he tugged himself back in his boxers, putting his pants back on. Felicity sat up as he was buckling his belt, leaning in to kiss his heart. He handed her his shirt, helping her slide it on. He had gotten rid of it so quickly that he hadn’t taken the time to undo the buttons, and he smoothed the fabric over her figure thinking that she could never be more beautiful than when she was wearing his clothes. He softly pushed her hair back behind her ears, lowering his head until he found her lips. Now that their hunger was sated, he could savor her taste and the way her tongue felt against his as he explored her mouth tenderly, taking his time. He suckled on her lower lip, his teeth gently biting it until he slowly let it go, pecking her lightly.

Felicity let out a deep sigh as she slowly opened her eyes and he knew he wouldn’t be able to leave that office any time soon. She was looking at him with so much happiness, so much contentment that he cradled his face between his hands, kissing her one last time.

“So…” he murmured “did I deliver?”

Frowning, Felicity tilted her head “… deliver?”

He grinned “did I fuck the pain away?”

She groaned, dropping her head against his chest, mumbling “I can’t believe I said that.”

“Technically, that part was my line” he chuckled, pressing a kiss on her head “and you still haven’t answered.”

Yawning loudly, she snuggled against his chest “… yes. Yes, you did. Congratulations on your magic penis, Mister Queen.”

“You really know how to boost my ego, Miss Smoak.”

She hummed, her head growing heavier against him and he stroked her back, rubbing his chin on her hair before pulling away. She mumbled sleepily when he slipped an arm around her back and the other underneath her thighs, lifting her up.

He laid her down on the small sofa, snatching a pillow to put under her head. By the time he went to the small closet, she was already fast asleep. He covered her with two hoodies, stroking her cheek and pushing her hair out of her face. Putting on a fresh T shirt, he walked back to his desk, collecting Felicity’s clothes along the way.

Oliver picked up the pens and documents that were scattering the floor before sitting down. He glanced at her sleeping form one last time, thinking he could get used to this kind of late day at work.

Oh, yeah… especially since he hadn’t had time to go down on her.

_Next time._

***
When Felicity woke up, less than an hour later, the first thing her brain registered was that her bed was unusually uncomfortable. Then, the tingling in her body made her remember.

*Oh. I can’t believe multi-orgasms are slowly becoming my new normal.*

Slowly opening her eyes, she turned her head, seeing Oliver at his desk, scribbling away. She sat up, stretching, smiling when she felt that familiar soreness in certain parts of her body.

“What? Welcome back, sleepy head.”

Shivering, she got up, grabbing one of the hoodies that had been covering her, slipping her arms into the sleeves and zipping it up. She padded her way to him, surprised to see he was hard at work, back to the presentation that had had him in such grumpy mood.

“How long have I slept?” she asked groggily, combing her hair through her fingers and twisting it in a messy bun.

“Not even one hour” Oliver smiled, grabbing her hand and pulling her on his lap “it’s a bit over 7:00.”

Glancing at the papers in front of him, she raised her eyebrows “you’re done?”

“Yup.”

“I thought nothing made sense whatsoever?” she teased him.

“Let’s just say, like I actually told you, that I was able to focus better on the task.”

She giggled “you mean you really were grumpy because of the lack of sex?”

“You’ve been torturing me for days, Felicity. Excuse me if yes, it took a toll on my temper. By the way… I love your lingerie.”

“Duly noted” she winked, pressing a little kiss on his jaw.

“I mean, really. Feel free to wear it anytime you come visit me at work” he wiggled his eyebrows, his hand creeping up her thigh.

“As tempting as round 2 sounds… I’m starving” she smiled, resting her head on his shoulder.

“Come to the mansion, tonight?” Oliver whispered, his fingers tracing lazy patterns on her naked skin.

“I have no extra clothes, Oliver.”

“We’ll stop by your apartment tomorrow morning so you can change. There is plenty of food in the fridge, including pasta with salmon and green asparagus.”

“Did you plan this? Using my weakness for food to get me to agree?” she narrowed her eyes suspiciously, raising her head.

“Guilty” he smirked, not looking sorry in the slightest.

“… OK” she eventually murmured.

Oliver’s eyes lit up “really?”
Chuckling, she shook her head “yes, really. Why are you so surprised?”

“I figured you might prefer to sleep in your bed.”

“Yeah but food is more tempting.”

Oliver lifted her off his lap, shutting down his computer. She reluctantly took off the warm hoodie, slipping her dress back, not bothering with her underwear. Truth be told, the idea of putting a pair of maybe still damp panties was the least appealing thing in the world. She shoved them in her purse and put her shoes back on.

“No panties, really?”

Oliver held the hoodie for her and she sighed with contentment when the soft fabric slipped over her arms.

“It’s not like anyone else is going to know” she shrugged as they made their way to the door, Oliver unlocking it and letting her through. He switched off the lights behind them, carrying her tote bag for her. He stopped by Debbie’s desk, picking up a small plastic card.

“Debbie told me they dropped off a badge for you” he explained as he handed it to her “although I don’t think you were really paying attention to what she was saying…”

“I was pretty distracted, indeed… By the way… nice panels” she snorted as they stepped into the elevator “when did you change the decoration?”

He shifted on his feet, rubbing the back of his neck.

She perked an eyebrows at him “did you plan this? The whole sex at the office?”

Grimacing, he exhaled slowly “no… I had them installed when I arrived at work and there was an intern at your desk.”

“Oh” she breathed, not willing to be reminded of those ten days away “well… they were certainly a good idea.”

“One of the best I’ve ever had, I’d say” Oliver laughed “although I still don’t know how the hell am I going to avoid getting a boner every time I remember you on my desk.”

They were standing in the kitchen of the mansion less than thirty minutes later. Felicity had started to shiver in the car and as soon as they had arrived, Oliver had led her to his bedroom, giving her some of his clothes. She was literally swimming in a pair of sweatpants, but at least she was warm and comfy.

Oliver poured her a glass of wine, then proceeded to reheat the pasta in the microwave. Felicity jumped on the counter, savoring her wine as he started to slice some bread.

“You’re surprisingly domestic” she stated as she observed the room. It was gigantic. There were no other words to describe it. There was a marble counter in the middle of the room, a table big enough to fit about 8 people and every little piece of domestic appliance you could think of. The cabinets
were made of dark wood, copper saucepans hanging from several racks.

“There’s nothing very complicated about it, Felicity” he laughed as he opened the fridge, pulling out a dish. She took a peek, seeing it was a mixed salad. She recognized spinach, rocket, as well as a type of lettuce she was pretty sure she had never seen before.

“Maybe. But you look comfortable doing that” she shrugged, stealing a piece of bread and munching on it. She really was starving.

“It’s not as if I were cooking. All I have to do is assemble the meal, Raisa did all the hard part” he smiled, pouring dressing over the salad.

She watched him as he set two plates and cutlery on the table, side by side. She hopped off the counter, bringing the bread and her glass to the table as well. Oliver took a sip of her wine as she sat down on a chair, folding a leg underneath her butt.

“Don’t mind me!” she groaned, watching him drink from her glass.

He winked at her, putting the glass down when the microwave pinged. Her stomach protested loudly when she smelt the creamy sauce and she grabbed another piece of bread while Oliver set the dish on the table.

She helped herself generously, barely waiting for Oliver to do the same before taking her first bite. The food was warm, creamy and delicious and her plate was already half empty when she finally looked up, remembering the salad.

Oliver was eating much more slowly, an amused smile on his face “I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone wolfing down food that fast.”

She blushed, putting her fork down “I really was hungry. I’m not used to all this… exercising.”

“Honey, all you had to do is… lay down on my desk. You didn’t exactly do the hard part.”

“Three orgasms are no walk in the park, Oliver” she glared at him, shoving her fork in her mouth.

He chuckled, helping himself with salad “I wouldn’t know.”

“Exactly.”

After they were done with their late dinner, they went back to Oliver’s room, bickering about what movie they would watch.

“Last time I let you pick you started distracting me after half an hour, Felicity” Oliver shook his head “so this time, it’s my turn.”

“No scary movie, then” she pouted, sitting down on the bed while Oliver was looking through his DVDs. She set her alarm clock while he was busy, being thankful for the little nap she had taken in his office.

“Shhh” he hushed her “I asked Raisa to buy a few supplies for you. I left them in the cabinet on the right side of the sinks… why don’t you go check if you have everything you need?”

She snorted, not fooled once second by his tactics “you just want me to stop nagging you, don’t
“...yes, that too” he answered distractingly.

Rolling her eyes, she padded her way to the bathroom, stopping on the threshold.

O... Kay...

There was a huge bathtub in one corner, one that suspiciously looked like a jacuzzi. There were two sinks on a large counter that took an entire wall on her left, with cabinets on each side of it, a big Italian marble shower with what looked like a thousand different water jets and even a small sitting area, next to another door that probably led to the lavatories.

Why a sitting area? In a bathroom? Who decides to go read a magazine in the middle of their bathroom?

The floor was made of marble, like the counter and the walls of the shower apparently. Everything was neat, shiny, screaming luxury. She eyed the bathtub, wishing they’d have time to christen it properly. It was more than large enough for two people and also... for a bit of activity.

Shaking her head, she opened the cabinet, finding a basket with her name on it. Putting it on the counter, she felt her eyebrows reaching her hairline as she saw a toothbrush, her usual toothpaste as well as her shampoo and conditioner and even what she used to clean her face. All in all, every little thing she needed was there.

“Damn. Your observation skills are borderline creepy, Oliver” she mumbled to herself, opening the brand new toothbrush. She was just finishing brushing her teeth when Oliver knocked on the door in warning before stepping inside of the room.

“Do you have everything you need?”

“Duh...yeah. Did you take notes this weekend or something?” she asked, splashing water on her face before rubbing the soap on her skin.

“...maybe?” he smiled, grabbing his own toothbrush “I just wanted you to feel comfortable here. I was hoping you could stay over on Friday.”

“Only if we can take a bath” she answered once she had dried her face “this bathtub is now officially my number one fantasy.”

“What was it before?” he laughed, squeezing toothpaste on his toothbrush.

“...we actually made that one happen a couple of hours ago. Kind of.”

“Kind of?” he paused, his toothbrush an inch from his mouth “what exactly did you want to do on my desk?”

“Oh I didn’t want to do anything else... but maybe I have imagined you doing something slightly different” she pressed herself against his back, her arms circling his hips “like me sprawled out and you sitting on your chair...”

A sly smile slowly stretched his lips “oh you’re on... next time I’ll eat you out until you beg me to stop.”

Grinning, she pressed a kiss on his shoulder before walking back to the bedroom. She took off the
hoodie, settling it on the trunk at the foot of the bed. Making a small mountain with the pillows, she slipped underneath the sheets, waiting patiently for Oliver.

He joined her a couple of minutes later, taking off his shirt as he made his way to the bed, throwing it carelessly on an empty chair, his pants following. In only his boxers, he climbed into bed next to her, pulling her into his arms until she could rest her head in the crook of his arm.

“Just to be clear, you are not interrupting this movie under any kind of pretense” he warned her as he grabbed the remote control “except for sex. I’m always OK for sex with you.”

She giggled, lacing their fingers togethers, their hands resting on her stomach “Oliver, believe me… I don’t have enough energy for sex.”

“OK. Then no interruption at all and no complaining either.”

“Promised” she whispered as she snuggled into his embrace, her hand lightly stroking his chin, already knowing that whatever movie he had picked, she was way too comfortable to even think about moving an inch.

She was asleep before the movie even started.

Chapter End Notes

Sooo... they did have office sex ;)
I have noticed that comments were starting to drop (not so much last chapter, but the one before that was very obvious. It also was a smut chapter, so maybe you guys are tired of it or don't really like my smut. Which is OK lol), I do hope you guys still like it enough to stick around until chapter 51 (which should be the last one ;)).

The next two chapters will be smut and fluff too ;}
Hi guys!
Here is chapter 49. NSFW. Fluff happens, though. Nice fluffy fluff, IMO.

Special thanks to pidanka and mysticaldetectivepanda for their helps :)

Song: Sexual Healing - Marvin Gaye

Get up, get up, get up, get up!
Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up!

Oh, baby now let's get down tonight
Ooh baby, I'm hot just like an oven
   I need some lovin'
And baby, I can't hold it much longer
   It's getting stronger and stronger

   And when I get that feeling
   I want sexual healing
   Sexual healing, oh baby
   Makes me feel so fine

   Helps to relieve my mind
   Sexual healing baby, is good for me
Sexual healing is something that's good for me

   Whenever blue teardrops are fallin'
   And my emotional stability is leaving me
   There is something I can do
   I can get on the telephone and call you up baby

And honey I know you'll be there to relieve me
   The love you give to me will free me
   If you don't know the thing you're dealing
Ohh I can tell you, darling, that it's sexual healing

       Get up, get up, get up, get up
       Let's make love tonight
       Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up
'Cause you do it right

Baby, I got sick this mornin'
A sea was stormin' inside of me
Baby, I think I'm capsizin'
The waves are risin' and risin'

And when I get that feeling
I want sexual healing
Sexual healing is good for me
Makes me feel so fine, it's such a rush
Helps to relieve the mind, and it's good for us

Sexual healing, baby, it's good for me
Sexual healing is something that's good for me
Well, it's good for me and it's so good to me my baby, ohh

Come take control, just grab a hold
Of my body and mind, soon we'll be making it, honey
I'll be feeling fine,
You're my medicine, open up and let me in
Darling, you're so great, I can't wait for you to operate

I can't wait for you to operate

When I get this feeling
I need sexual healing
Oh when I get this feeling
I need sexual healing
I gotta have sexual healing, darling
'Cause I'm all alone
Sexual healing, darling
Till you come back home

Please don't procrastinate
It's not good to masturbate

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**Thursday, 2:45AM**

*Insomnia, you old friend.*
Felicity groaned, dropping her head back on the pillow. The first time she had checked the clock it was barely 1AM. Ever since then, her brain had been functioning non-stop. And not the good kind of functioning, where it would pop up with ideas and theories. No. It was full of random thoughts, such as how she needed to shave her legs today or that she hadn’t had a strawberry milkshake in years.

It wasn’t that Oliver’s bed was not comfortable, because it was. The mattress was firm, the pillows were soft, Oliver was pressed against her, his breathing grazing her neck. She should have been blissfully asleep.

Except she wasn’t. Was it because of the small noises she could hear in the house? It was an old wooden building and the small cracking sounds were not something she was used to. But Oliver was encircling her with his arms and she felt safe.

She exhaled slowly, forcing her eyes to shut once more, trying to relax her body through her breathing. Her fingers rhythmically stroked Oliver’s arm, the warmth of his bare skin usually enough to soothe her nerves. He mumbled in his sleep, letting out a small snore as he held her closer to him, his mouth brushing against her ear. She had never realized, before him, how sensitive her ears were. Anytime he would caress her ear, or kiss that tiny little spot right underneath it… it would send shivers down her spine. But her greatest weakness was when he would lick the lobe, or gently pull at it with his teeth. Damn. That was enough to bring her to her knees.

Trying to get more comfortable, she shifted as discreetly as possible and froze when his hand stiffened on her stomach, pulling her flush against him. Her butt was now snugly nesting against his hips and… other body parts. She suddenly remembered her little fantasy of spooning sex and before she could stop herself, she rubbed her backside against him. A little moan escaped his throat as he pressed back against her automatically. She stilled, listening carefully to his breathing. It was still deep and calm. He was still asleep.

He was still asleep. She repeated the mantra in her head over and over again, trying to force back a few very vivid mental pictures of how exactly she could relax enough to get back to sleep. She had dealt with insomnia before, she could deal with it again.

But there was a fire growing already. It had started with a little spark, but now… having him so close, pressed against her body so tightly… her breathing hitched as she squeezed her eyes shut.

*Oliver Queen is turning me into a sex kitten.*

She shifted, trying to get a bit of distance between their bodies but Oliver reacted instinctively, pulling her closer. Groaning, she gripped his arm in frustration.

“I’m trying not to molest you in your sleep, Oliver” she hissed as low as she could while she tried to lift his arm. With about zero success since he tightened his embrace even more, mumbling in his sleep. She moaned desperately when his finger grazed the skin of her stomach, right above the waistband of the sweatpants she was still wearing. Her T-shirt had rolled up in her sleep, leaving a small patch of skin naked and in all the shifting, his hand had naturally landed right on that small area.

*Of course. As if I needed any more stimulation.*

Being pressed so close to him was one thing… feeling their naked skin together was a whole other problem. Even if it was just barely a square inch of contact… she loved the sensation of his hands on her body. So warm, slightly calloused … she couldn’t help herself and ground her ass against him. Technically, she wasn’t molesting him, since she wasn’t using her hands… right?
Right. And if he, by some pure luck, woke up at some point, he would be conscious and willing.

*Please, be willing, Oliver.*

Her hand started to slowly travel up and down his arm. If only he would let her move, she could wake him up the same way he had that morning at her apartment. Even if it was, technically, the middle of the night. Hadn’t he told her she could always ask him to help her turn off her brain? And that he’d never complain about an interruption if it was for sex?

She bit her lips nervously, battling with herself. There was a tingle running through her body, there was no point in denying it. In the past, she would have gotten rid of it herself but now… knowing how good it was with Oliver...

“Oliver” she whispered, her voice echoing weirdly in the large room. A small grunt answered her as he buried his face in her hair, inhaling deeply, his hips shifting against her.

A small smile stretched her lips when she felt him through their clothes. He wasn’t exactly hard but… he clearly was bigger than when she had woken up. She salivated at the thought, pressing back against him, rolling her hips.

“Oliver” she repeated, silencing the little voice in her head that was telling her that waking him up in the middle of the night to literally scratch an itch was really not good girlfriend behavior. She’d deal with her conscience later. Hopefully after a very satisfying orgasm.

“F’licity… shhh” Oliver murmured against her skin, his hand slipping underneath her t-shirt, tracing lazy patterns against her stomach. Which… obviously didn’t help. She squirmed, trying to listen to the voice of reason and let him fall back asleep but he rubbed his growing erection against her ass.

“Mmhh…” he moaned sleepily “God I love your ass.”

Felicity froze because he suddenly sounded much more conscious. Sleepy, for sure but… coherent. She could work with coherent. She could push him on his back and ride him like the libertine she never knew she was. Unconsciously, her hand left Oliver’s arm, reaching for her breast, teasing the soft mound of flesh through the fabric, finding her nipple hardening.

Oliver let out a deep sigh and pressed a soft kiss on her shoulder “can’t sleep?”

“No. My brain just won’t shut up.”

“Want me to get you some warm milk?” he yawned.

Felicity almost laughed with the absurdity of the situation. Here she was, ready for some sleepy sex in the middle of the night and her hunk of a boyfriend was domestically offering to get her a cup of warm milk...

*Yeah... I don’t think milk is going to help.*

“... hon’?” Oliver nudged her, reminding her she hadn’t answered his question.

Gulping, she shook her head “do you remember our first morning in Vegas?”

“Hard to forget…” she felt his grin on her skin as his hand pressed her tighter against him “made me come in my pants.”

She stayed silent, temptingly rubbing her butt against his length. Length that had kept on growing,
she noticed. And had reached a very promising stiffness. Oliver paused for a second, then slowly
dipped his hand lower, passing the waistband of the sweatpants. She exhaled, her body relaxing
instantly, her legs giving him enough space to cup her sex. His finger wedged between her outer lips,
teasing her entrance, spreading the wetness that was already there.

“Holy shit… how long have you been awake?” he mumbled, trailing kisses on her neck.

“A while” she breathed, her hips rocking against his hand, trying to get contact between his palm and
her clitoris.

“Damn it” he groaned, slipping a long finger inside her, making her hiss as he finally brushed against
the hard little bundle of nerves.

He rubbed his cock against her backside, mimicking the way his finger was thrusting inside her.
Felicity raised her t-shirt above her breast, pinching the nipple, circling the areola.

“How do you want it?” Oliver’s throaty voice reached her. She licked her lips when she heard the
arousal in his words, loving how he was letting her choose the way he was going to pleasure her.
She might be slightly submissive to him in bed but in the end, it was always for her own pleasure…
however she wanted it. He freely gave her the real power, the one to call the shots.

“Felicity?” he repeated when she didn’t answer. He tried to turn her on her back but she resisted,
pushing her backside against him.

“Can we… is it possible, like this?” she panted, already focusing on the heat growing in her lower
belly. She didn’t want to move and lose that hold she had on her body.

Oliver didn’t answer, just shifting behind her. His hand left her and she keened, but he quickly
grabbed hers instead, pushing it between her thighs to take its place “keep touching yourself, baby.
For me. Get yourself ready for me.”

“Oh God” she let out in a strangled voice once she felt how stiff her clit was. Oliver had barely
touched her but here she was, more than ready, her body already weeping for him.

He suddenly lowered her sweatpants, pushing them down her thighs. She knew she should help him
or at least try to wiggle out of them but that would have meant losing the connection with her fingers.

“Push back against me” Oliver whispered as he slid down a few inches on the bed “stick your ass
out and arch your back.”

She tried to do as told but she wasn’t sure if she was positioning her body correctly. The room was
dark and she had no idea what Oliver was doing behind her. He wasn’t pressed against her anymore,
but she could still feel his body warmth.

After a few seconds, she felt him nudge her thighs and she tried to open them but he forced them
shut “wait. Let’s try this way first. You’re always so tight when you keep your legs closed.”

Her mouth opened in a little O, because she had thought she was the one feeling him differently…
not that it was actually different for him too. And to know that he liked it as much as she did… Oh,
she wanted him. The heat in her lower belly grew suddenly when his cock pressed between her
thighs, bringing friction against her folds, not penetrating her but gliding up until it grazed her clit.

He held still for a second, then breathed “OK… now put your hand over me, make sure I keep
rubbing on you.”
Her mouth dry, she nodded, pressing the head against her, moaning instantly. She wanted him inside her, desperately, but she also knew he loved to drive her crazy before slamming into her. And she couldn’t deny that it felt really good… especially when Oliver slowly pushed back, then thrust again, the tip of his cock bumping against the hard little bundle of nerves once more.

“Oh… oh” she squeezed her eyes shut as Oliver kept on moving between her closed thighs, the movements getting slicker, easier with each push. It took her a moment to realize it was her own juices, dripping from her core and coating him, that made the friction smoother. Her arm was starting to shake, Oliver’s fingers digging into her hips and holding her into place.

“Oliver…” she whispered, her voice pleading.

“I got you, Felicity. Keep touching yourself” he groaned as he suddenly stopped. She felt his hand slip between their bodies and one second later, he was rubbing his cock against her entrance, pushing it slowly in. He was right, it felt incredibly snug that way, the head having to wedge itself between her folds, and damn… the friction was delicious.

“Alright, there? Feels good?” Oliver asked, his mouth suckling on her shoulder. His tone was calm, collected, his arousal only betrayed by the little intakes of breath she could hear. The room was pitch dark and she couldn’t see him, her other senses being enhanced as a direct result. His ragged breath in her ear, the little groans whenever he would push inside her warmth, the heat of his chest, the hair on his legs… she could even make out his boxer briefs on the top of his thighs, the bundled fabric slightly irritating her skin. Oliver had lowered their clothes just far enough to allow him to thrust into her.

It suddenly dawned on her that the lack of visual might be the reason why Oliver was a bit more vocal than usual. Watching each other always turned them on and since they were deprived of that possibility, he was just using another tool to spice things up. And weirdly enough… the darkness was freeing. He couldn’t see her, couldn’t see the blush that was bound to invade her skin.

“Yes… yes” she breathed, her hand fisting the comforter beside her when Oliver suddenly brushed on a sensitive spot inside her.

“Right there? That’s the spot, right?” he asked, spreading his hand underneath her belly button as he pulled out then thrust back in, hitting the exact same place.

“Oh God yes!” she cried, pushing back against him. He couldn’t go very deep in that position but the angle was making her see stars. He was stroking her g-spot directly, the head of his cock rubbing against it repeatedly, his short and shallow thrusts making her mewl “oh God, Oliver… Oliver…”

“Baby… there is no one but us. No one can hear you” he encouraged her, his nose nudging her ear, his hips keeping the same steady pace “how does it feel? You like it like that?”

“Yes. Yes yes yes, keep going” she gasped, her toes curling, her legs bending and stiffening as the heat in her belly grew into a ball of fire “it’s so good, Oliver. You feel so good and you… you… you… there, right there.”

He hummed against her throat, slipping his hand just an inch lower, until the tip of his pinky grazed her clit when he pushed in.

“Fuck!” Felicity shouted, her feet pressing back on his legs while her hands were gripping the sheets tightly for leverage.

“That’s it, honey. Are you close?” he murmured against her skin.
She nodded vigorously, his strokes spurring the fire on and the way he kept a constant contact against the most sensitive parts of her core was bringing her to the edge at the speed of light. She felt the sudden need to spread her legs, to feel him push in deeper, but the pants were still around her thighs, limiting her movements. She still managed to rest a calf on his knee and the next thrust went deeper, causing her to whimper at the sensation.

“Aaah...” she buried her face into her pillow, Oliver’s hot breath caressing her cheek “Please... more.”

“Harder?” Oliver panted, dropping his head in the crook of her neck.

“No... yes” she shook her head “I don’t know!”

“Listen to your body. What do you need, Felicity?”

What did she need? All the sensations were messing with her head, confusing her. It was good, more than good and she knew she could climax that way, she was close enough to taste it. But she wanted to feel more of him.

“Deeper” she finally blurted out, her face flaming up.

Oliver groaned, his hips snapping roughly letting her know that he definitely liked her choice of word “I can’t... not in...”

He trailed off, then the next thing she knew, he was pushing a pillow against her belly, rolling her over it until she was lying on her stomach, Oliver still inside her. Her sweatpants were still rolled around her legs, she noted idly as he rested his weight on a forearm, his chest covering her back.

“Push your knees higher on the bed, baby” he grunted in her ear, his spare hand palming the flesh of her ass. She followed his commanding voice and keened instantly when he slid much deeper. She could feel the heat of his naked chest against her back and she grabbed her pillow with both hands, holding on for dear life as he started to gain a forceful rhythm.

She could hear the obscene sounds their bodies were making together, the slapping of his hips against her ass, the groans that were escaping Oliver and all it took was one hard thrust to send her flying over the edge, her mouth letting out a breathless moan as the orgasm crashed through her.

She barely heard Oliver’s groans as her orgasm exploded, but the way his hand gripped her ass let her know he was losing control as well. He was pressing in deeply, thrusting harder and astonishingly, before the last wave of her climax could die, it started to swell again. Her walls still fluttering around his cock, the coil of tension grew tight again and she almost panicked for a second because she still hadn’t caught her breath and she was already climbing, faster than she ever had.

What were barely whimpers of contentment rapidly turned into desperate cries, and soon enough her screams of pleasure were echoing in Oliver’s room. Her throat was burning and she had no idea if it was because she couldn’t breathe properly or because she was so loud. All she knew was that she was burning up, her entire body tending towards something familiar yet still unknown for some reason. The wave, the one she had gotten so used to, was taking her higher and higher, the heat that was usually confined to her lower belly spreading to her back and her thighs.

Oliver was whispering words of encouragement in her ear, telling her to let go, that he would catch her, that he would always catch her, pleading for her to give him her pleasure. His mouth opened on the back of her neck, sucking the flesh, his teeth biting her softly and it was enough to make her fall right into her second climax. For a quarter of a second, it felt like she was soaring, time suspended as
the coil of pressure suddenly sprung free… then the pleasure hit her. Hard. Her head snapping up, she screamed his name, loudly, her walls clenching on him, her body begging him to follow her. Her eyes squeezed shut with the intensity of a climax that seemed to go on and on, only spurred on by Oliver’s hard thrusts. The heat exploded in her core, wave after wave, her own hips rocking against him mindlessly as she rode it out until it finally calmed down.

“Oh my God…” she breathed, her voice shaking, feeling as if she was suddenly being pulled back to earth, once again aware of her surroundings: the sheets against her skin, Oliver pushing against her, the sound of her own breathing.

Literally buzzing with utter satisfaction, she collapsed back on the bed, unable to hold her position. Oliver followed her, but she was too numb to even try to accompany his desperate thrusts as he was chasing his own relief. Her body was offering little resistance to him, accepting him, accepting his pleasure the same way it accepted her own. His hips were losing any kind of rhythm, snapping against her backside, his breathing short and ragged as a few strangled grunts escaped his throat.

"Felicity… oh God, Felicity..." he panted in her ear. Her hand reached for his, covering it as she laced their fingers together. He squeezed them, dropping his head on her shoulder.

Two more thrusts and he was shouting her name, slamming into her one last time, holding still as he emptied himself inside her. The feeling of his warmth made her moan in contentment as she buried her head in the pillow. He crashed down, half on her, half on the mattress, making sure to not crush her under his weight, still inside her.

She was basking in pure bliss, her lower body having seemingly turned into a big pile of goo. They stayed silent, trying to catch their breaths, letting the air cool their overheated skin, their bodies still joined. Eventually, Oliver’s cock softened and slipped out of her.

He let out a deep sigh, then shifted, getting rid of the pillow that was still under her stomach. She felt him grab the sweatpants, sliding them up her legs and somehow, the gesture seemed even more intimate than when he had lowered them. He smoothed the fabric over her butt, his hand lingering probably a little bit longer than necessary.

“I really love your ass” Oliver murmured and she let out a tired giggle as he laid down next to her, covering them with the sheets.

“I might have noticed” she whispered, her eyes closing.

“Think you’re gonna be able to go back to sleep now? Is that big brain of yours finally going to shut up?” he asked, pulling her back into his arms and maneuvering her body until they were spooning again.

“... what brain?” she mumbled sleepily. Her body was now delicious relaxed, from her toes to the tip of her ears and she had difficulty forming any coherent thought.

“Good answer.”

Thursday, 3:45PM

“Parcel time!” Daniela yelled in the open-space, startling Felicity.
“You do know that those packages are supposed to be private, don’t you?” she deadpanned as her assistant was rushing Mary and Nancy inside Felicity’s office.

“Shhh… don’t ruin our fun. Besides it’s Thursday and we have a bet going” Daniela answered as she put the parcel down on Felicity’s desk.

“A bet?”

“Yup” Mary nodded “So far you’ve had a stapler, pens, and a milk-whisker thingy. This time, we think it’s going to be coffee or a mug or something like that.”

Felicity nodded distractingly, lifting the lid and paused, frowning, once she saw the content. That was… unexpected.

“… a duck?” Nancy asked, disappointment clear in her voice “why is he sending you a duck?”

“I’m not sure, actually” Felicity murmured, holding the innocent looking toy in the palm of her hand, trying to think of a connection with Oliver.

“… Not any kind of duck! It’s a… oh my God” Daniela giggled, hiding her mouth behind her hands “I knew there was something kinky involved in those gifts!”

Felicity gasped, her cheeks flaming up as realization dawned on her as well. Her mother’s collection of dildos. There had been a duck, one that had actually caught Oliver off guard when he had visited her at her place later that day.

“That is totally not what it looks like” she pushed the rubber duck back in its box, her hands shaking. Pinching her lips, she explained her mother’s gift a few months ago, letting a few details out obviously - like how Moira Queen almost opened the box.

“And anyway… this is my parcel, you’re not exactly supposed to see its contents.”

“Aww, come on. Have mercy. We’re living vicariously through you” Mary laughed as they all left her office, leaving her alone once more.

She quickly glanced at the rubber duck and, biting her lips, took it out of its box. Maybe they could have a bit of fun with it, one day?

It was slightly different from the one her mother had sent her, but she assumed it would perfectly fulfill its function. Not that she needed any extra stimulation whenever Oliver was involved, but a little play wouldn’t hurt. Quite the opposite actually, she thought, amused.

“Oh, good, you’re still here” Ray’s voice startled her as he entered her office, a stack of papers in his hands.

Yelping, the duck escaped her hands and she scrambled to catch it, the material suddenly slippery. Her cheeks were flaming red when she finally got a hold on it and she shoved it in her tote bag, her hands nervously straightening her slick ponytail.

Ray looked at her, confused “… was that a duck?”

“Hum… yeah it’s… it is indeed a toy duck. For… for my cat” Felicity stuttered, twiddling her hands on her desk “he likes ducks and… and rubber… things. Like… solid rubber, though. Not… not flexible… other rubber stuff.”
“Oh, you’re a cat lover, like Daniela! Awesome! I’m more of a dog person myself but Anna, my fiancée, loves those furry little things.” Ray grinned widely while Daniela peeked her face in the frame of the door, giving her the thumbs up, mouthing something that looked like ‘cat excuse’.

Felicity glared at her assistant while she sheepishly closed the door.

“Anyway, I was wondering if we could have a word? Do you have time?” Ray asked, sitting down on the chair opposite her.

It turned out that Ray had brought with him the last sketches for the battery, the classic model the engineers were designing. After much thinking, Felicity had decided to keep going in the direction the team had taken before she had arrived. She wasn’t exactly sure that imposing her views would be beneficial and since she unfortunately didn’t have the possibility to work on both projects at the same time, she had chosen the safe route. She was still working on the side on her own ideas, but that was merely becoming a back-up plan in case things either didn’t turn out OK or if she was somehow given the green light - or a bigger budget.

Ray had agreed with her, saying they would work on her idea next but that all the work the team had done couldn’t be just thrown away. Truth be told, they were progressing at a regular pace and everyone was satisfied - even if Felicity’s perfectionist mind was forced to take a backseat. She wasn’t used to settling for ‘fine’ or ‘good’. She always strived for outstanding. But that was also the price to pay when you were supposed to work with a new team.

It was past 5:00 when Ray walked her out of the building. They had spent the rest of the afternoon talking about other projects he would like to get her input on, whenever she’d have the time. She actually was quite flattered he would seek her opinion, knowing that when he had hired her, it was mostly to work on one project, and one only.

She saw Oliver waiting for her from the corner of her eye as Ray was telling her about his dreaded dinner with his future in-laws.

“ THEIR dog eats with us, Felicity. He has his own chair and everything. Cauliflower barked at me the first time I was invited because I took his place.”

Felicity laughed “His name is Cauliflower?!”

“ Don’t judge. Anna’s cat was Miss Beauty Pageant, so I guess the dog got lucky. Do you want me to drop you at your place on my way?”

“No, thank you. Oliver is already here” she pointed to her boyfriend who was waiting, leaning on the hood of his car. There was a frown on his face that surprised her because she was quite positive it hadn’t been there two minutes ago.

“Oh, I see him!” Ray waved warmly at Oliver who barely raised his hand, nodding curtly “I’ll see you tomorrow, then. Thanks for your help today, by the way. It’s always a pleasure to bounce around ideas with you.”

“Likewise, Ray” she smiled, turning around, literally dancing her way to the hunk waiting for her thirty feet away.

“Hi there, hot stuff” she grinned, throwing her arms over his shoulders, kissing him before he even had the time to answer. His arms slipped around her waist, squeezing her against him as he deepened the kiss, his hands travelling low on her backside. What she had planned to be a small, perfectly PG
peck quickly turned into a make-out session, Oliver chasing her lips every time she would try to pull away. Not that she was trying very convincingly, to be honest.

He eventually let her go and she rested her hands on his chest, catching her breath “OK… what was that?”

“I missed you that’s all” he smiled, the initial grumpiness she had noticed from afar fading away.

Felicity narrowed her eyes “you were frowning while I was talking with Ray… why were you frowning? Is there something wrong at work?”

Oliver pinched his lips “I wasn’t frowning.”

“You’re doing it again!” she exclaimed, laughing, poking his cheek “why didn’t you come say hi to… “ she trailed off, taking a step back and eyeing him suspiciously “Oliver… you’re not jealous are you?”

Shoving his hands in his pocket, he huffed “of course not. I trust you.”

“Then what’s the problem?” she rested her hands on her hips.

“It’s him that I don’t trust” he eventually grumbled, shifting on his feet.

Felicity took a deep breath, nodding patiently “we’re not going back there, Oliver. Ray is my boss and only my boss. Nothing changed.”

“… you were laughing with him” he mumbled, avoiding her eyes.

She tried very hard to not roll her eyes, Oliver looking very much like the spoiled child he had been until not that long ago “yes, Oliver. I do laugh with people and sometimes, those people are male.”

“I just… I know you have a lot in common with him. Probably more than with me” Oliver shrugged.

She softened, tilting her head “Oliver, I was laughing because Ray was telling me his future in-laws own a dog named Cauliflower. Cauliflower.”

“… he’s getting married?”

Felicity sighed “yes, he is. He has been engaged for a few months now. But even if he was single, it doesn’t change the fact that I am with you and you make me very happy. I don’t think I would even blink if he was trying to hit on me. Him or anybody else for that matter. Get that through your thick skull once and for all: you’re the only one I want to be with.”

Oliver held out his hands in peace “I get it. I just… it’s very new to me. Us, I mean.”

“It’s just as new for me, Oliver. And… I don’t want to sound harsh but I am the one who should be wary. Yet, I choose to trust you. I’m not saying a little bit of jealousy every once in a while isn’t… maybe a tiny bit sexy. But I work for Ray. I’d like to be able to invite you to work dinners without worrying you might pout like a kindergartener.”

“Pout like… I’m not pouting! But the guy was able to give you what I couldn’t give you and I’m not comfortable with that.”

“You’re giving me everything I need, Oliver. At least in my personal life. We’re not going to have this argument again, I don’t need you to give me things in my professional life” Felicity sighed as she picked up the tote-bag she had carelessly dropped on the ground, making her way to the passenger
Oliver rushed to her side but she glared at him “I can open my own door, Oliver. Unless it makes you uncomfortable as well?”

She sat down, fuming, not understanding how things could have shifted so fast between them. She saw the flicker of hurt on his face and a small pang of regret tucked in her heart, knowing she was lashing out at him.

Oliver eventually sat down behind the wheel as well, but instead of starting the car, he turned to face her. She kept her eyes stubbornly ahead of her, pinching her lips. The nerve he had. To be jealous while he had been the one who had slept around his entire life. She was the one taking the risk in their relationship, not the other way around.

“Felicity…” he breathed “I don’t want to fight.”

“Then maybe stop acting like a caveman!” she huffed, turning her head to face him.

Passing a hand over his face, he sighed deeply “I’m trying. I just… I feel like it’s too good. I don’t deserve something as good in that department and… sometimes I fear you’re gonna wake up and realize that you deserve so much better. That it will be my punishment for the way I was not so long ago.”

“With Laurel, you mean?” she frowned, resting her head on the back of her seat.

“And every other girl I’ve been involved with… but yes, mostly with her. I cheated on her constantly, Felicity” Oliver explained, lowering his eyes in shame.

“I know. I was there, remember? But…” Felicity licked her lips, choosing her words carefully “it takes two to tango, Oliver. I don’t know her, and I don’t know how your relationship was but… she knew. Sara told me. And she chose to stay. That decision is on her, not you. Should you have been more respectful? Hell, yes. Is cheating lame? Double hell yes. But please don’t let your mistakes affect what we have right now. The Oliver I met was a douche but the man who is in this car, with me? He’s the man I... I…” she stopped herself, stuttering as Oliver’s mouth opened in surprise. It was too soon, she thought, panicking. Way too soon. She needed to think and not rush things. Rushing was bad. Gulping, she eventually added “he’s the man I want to be with. And no one else.”

Oliver smiled, his warm eyes searching hers “I don’t want to be with anybody else either, Felicity. I’m sorry.”

“Just keep in mind that we feel the same thing, or I swear to God I’ll tattoo it on your hand or something.”

“Duly noted” he winced, picking up her hand, pressing a kiss on her knuckles “I’ll really try to behave better.”

“Good. Now, your place or mine?”

“Yours, to pick up some clothes, then mine?”

“OK” she smiled, opening the window “thank you for the duck, by the way... although now everyone at the office knows about my mother’s antics.”

“Make sure to pack it in your bag. I have big plans for that duck.”
“Oh God… yes” Felicity moaned, her head dropping back, her toes curling “right there, just keep… there.”

“Harder?”

She let out a breathless laugh, her eyes closing “I’m not sure I can take it harder, Oliver. Oh fuck… just keep going.”

Oliver hummed, going back to his task while her body was slowly turning into a pile of goo.

“It feels so good… that’s… oh yes… that’s what I needed” she babbled, her voice getting higher “I just had this long day and… oh my God do that again… Ray asked me to… ooooooh… Ooooooh!” she panted, squeezing her eyes shut “he asked me to check a few things with the new… “

“Felicity, honey… I’m not being jealous right now, I promise but… can you please not talk about your boss while I’m doing this?” Oliver paused, sighing.

“Why are you stopping?” she moaned “get back to it. And you’re giving me a foot massage, Oliver, it’s not like we’re having sex.”

“There are sounds coming out of your mouth that make me think we are kinda having sex in a way.”

She groaned, raising her head from the cushions. They were in Oliver’s room, and she had been working on her laptop when she had complained about how the heels she had been wearing most of the week were taking a toll on her. One minute later, she had discovered that her boyfriend was a professional when it came to foot massages.

Oliver placed a soft kiss on the inside of her foot, putting it back on his lap “dinner is going to be ready any minute, anyway.”

Felicity keened, closing her laptop and setting it aside “you are so doing this to me again later.”

“Promise” Oliver winked as he helped her on her feet. She had taken a quick shower at her place and changed into a pair of yoga pants and a crop top. Unfortunately, the mansion was always cold, probably a result of the thick stone walls and a very efficient air conditioning. It was fine for someone like Oliver, but she had been shivering almost as soon as they had walked into the house. Being busy in the kitchen, he had just taken off his shirt, handing it to her. It smelled just like him, the warmth of his body clinging to the fabric and she had been discreetly sniffing the collar every two minutes ever since then. After putting the lasagna Raisa had made for them in the oven, they had made it to Oliver’s room where she had hoped to get a bit of work done while he took a shower and got into comfortable clothes as well.

As they made their way downstairs, she let her eyes wander across the giant staircase, mumbling to herself “I’ll never get used to it.”

“What?” Oliver asked, taking a hold of her hand as they approached the stairs.

“Your house… it’s… it looks like a hotel. It’s so huge. You must have gotten lost when you were a kid.”
He laughed, shaking his head “if I did, I don’t remember. Hide and seek was so much fun, though.”

“We really had different childhoods… and lives. You’re not concerned about that?” she grimaced. She wasn’t used to the kind of life that was natural to Oliver. Making small talk in society, hosting dinners… all of these things seemed completely foreign to her.

“For us, you mean?” Oliver frowned.

“Well… yes. I grew up in Vegas with a single mom who was working up to three jobs just to put a meal on the table. I know which fork to use for a salad or fish but… my knowledge of high society stops there, I’m afraid.”

“I’m not dating you for that” he laughed, kissing the top of her head “I’m not exactly as interested in those circles as my parents were. I’m fine with just the two of us and a couple of friends in our life.”

“I doubt it’s going to be that easy, Oliver. Eventually, you are going to gain more and more responsibilities and your mother will need you to take your father’s place in many aspects, not just at QC. I’m sure he was involved in a lot of philanthropic projects or had a network of business relations you will need to get too. And I… I can’t help you with that.”

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get there. We’ll hire someone to help us deal with all those aspects, don’t worry.”

As they walked inside the kitchen, Felicity was still lost in her thoughts. For some reason, even though she had always known about Oliver’s status, it was only hitting her now that a serious relationship with the heir to the throne came with responsibilities she hadn’t been prepared to handle. She knew they were barely dating, but when she had told him about her future work dinners, it had made her think about his own future business dinners or receptions. Oliver was so used to having people handling things for him that he couldn’t understand how she could be struggling with something as trivial as that. She didn’t have the resources to pay someone to deal with the things she didn’t know how to deal with - unlike him.

Oliver must have sensed it was still bothering her because as soon as he had taken the lasagna out of the oven, he put the kitchen gloves down on the counter, cradling her face.

“I know it’s not something you are used to. But I’ll be there and we’ll get help. If you hate all those formal things, Thea will come with me. You won’t have to.”

“I just… I don’t want to embarrass you” she blurted out.

He raised his eyebrows “… where the hell does that come from?!”

Felicity shrugged, picking at a lone thread on his t-shirt “You’re used to putting on a mask. I am not. And you know I always put my foot in my mouth when I’m stressed.”

Licking his lips, Oliver leaned against the counter, his hand holding hers “Listen. First of all… I love it when you babble. I don’t give a fuck if it offends people. It’s one of the parts of you that I love most and I never want you to stop doing it. My girlfriend is a genius whose brain works at a 100 miles an hour. I’m bloody proud of that.”

“I’m not positive the whole babbling thing is linked to my IQ, you know” she giggled as she stepped in his embrace.
“Shhh… don’t contradict me” he scolded her, pecking her nose “and second of all... there is something I’ve been wanting to tell you for a while. I didn’t because we’ve been basking in pure bliss for the last week and I didn’t want to remind you of our fight.”

“... what do you mean?” Felicity frowned. She had assumed they had talked about everything and had left their argument behind them.

“When I told you I wanted you to fight for us. That was… that was completely unfair of me to ask that from you. After all, I never really had to fight for anything myself until a couple of months ago. So expecting you to do so was hypocritical of me. I’m sorry for that. That’s why I’d like Thea to meet you. Because she lives surrounded by privileged people and I’d like her to get the chance to see something different and not turn out the way I did. I want her to understand that what matters is what she chooses to do with her life, not her last name. I don’t want you to be uncomfortable in any aspect of our relationship but what you see as a flaw, I see it as a strength. You balance my life” he paused and she was surprised to see a light blush growing on his cheeks “and, you know… one day, down the line, if we decide to have children… they’ll get the best of both worlds. You’ll keep them grounded and I’ll spoil them rotten. Then you’ll be mad at me and we’ll fight and then… make-up sex” he wiggled his eyebrows, pulling her flush against him.

She giggled “best of both worlds, indeed. But very down the line, then. I’m only 21.”

“We have all the time in the world” he leaned in to kiss the corner of her lips, whispering “but just so you know… I’m gonna love knocking you up.”

“Oliver!” she gasped, hitting his shoulder with her closed fist.

“Come on, dinner is ready” he winked at her “you’re gonna need your strength, and I’d really like us to get to the dessert part as soon as possible.”

“You told me you didn’t like tiramisu?” she teased him.

“Honey. You’ll have your tiramisu after I make you come with my mouth. So I suggest you hurry your perfect little ass to the table so we can get started.”

She practically jogged to her seat.

Friday, 6:15AM

“Oliver, the alarm clock is going to go off soon” Felicity mumbled against his lips.

“We still have fifteen minutes” he breathed, settling in between her thighs as he peppered kisses on her lips “I have this perfectly functional boner, my very hot girl is naked in my bed and I really want to reinvent the whole concept of TGIF with her.”

Giggling, she let her hands travel down his back, the tips of her fingers stroking his spine.

“And… it’s our anniversary” he concluded, pecking her nose then leaning back, a smile stretching his lips “Happy one week.”

“Happy one week, Oliver” she grinned, taking him in. The sun was already bathing the room, catching highlights in his hair. His eyes were shining bright, so amazingly blue in the dawn light, full of life and laughter. He still had little wrinkles of sleep and his lips were slightly chapped - probably
a direct result of her enthusiasm. He had a very biteable lower lip, after all.

In short… he was absolutely impossible to resist.

Especially when he was nibbling on her neck.

“Oliver… I have to be at the office by 8:00. I’m leaving early today, remember? I have this lunch with…” her voice caught in her throat when he suckled on the soft muscle joining her neck and shoulder “…. with Dig.”

Groaning, Oliver raised his head, glaring at her “you really need to stop mentioning other men while I’m between your legs, love.”

“I’m sorry” she bit her lips, keeping her smile at bay “I keep forgetting how fragile your ego is.”

“My ego is extremely solid, I’ll let you know. And rock hard at the moment, shall I add.”

“I can feel that” she nodded seriously, her arms circling his shoulders while she locked her ankles underneath his butt.

“Soooo…” he trailed off, rotating his hips lazily “am I getting celebration sex?”

“Am I?” she asked back, perking an eyebrow, trying very hard to not get distracted by the sensations growing inside her. Which was easier said than done considering the way his ‘solid ego’ was brushing against a very sensitive part of her body.

Oliver huffed out a laugh as he shifted, resting his weight on his elbows “baby… if I’m getting it… you’re getting it.”

She snorted “oh God… how many girls did you pick up with that line?!”

“… a few” he smiled sheepishly “you know… back in the day. Before you.”

“It would have never worked on me, you know that? I mean even if we had met differently.”

“I know. I’m pretty sure it’s one of the reasons I fell for you, actually” he winked before pressing a soft kiss on her lips “none of my tricks would have worked with you. You saw right through me from the beginning.”

Smiling, she traced his jaw with the pad of her thumb, stroking the dimples his grin was causing until he swiftly turned his head, capturing her finger with his teeth. He tenderly bit on it, his tongue teasing the tip before releasing it, placing a small peck on it. Her heart swelled at the playful smile he gave her before letting his lips wander down her throat. She gave herself a few seconds to enjoy the feeling of his soft, warm mouth on her skin, savoring the nakedness of their bodies pressed tightly against each other. One of his hands slowly brushed her arm, going from her elbow to her armpit, making her squeal. He chuckled into her shoulder, continuing his journey, grazing the side of her breast.

Felicity let out a small gasp, her nipple getting harder at the -almost- innocent touch. He didn’t linger, though, his fingers bringing little sparks of electricity as he went lower, passing her waist, tracing the round curve of her hip and circling the back her thigh. He only stopped when he reached her knee, the whole journey having taken barely 30 seconds at most… but it was more than enough to wake up every single one of her nerve endings. Oliver’s mouth was still ravishing her neck, his stubble scratching her skin, and she moaned as she tilted her head to give him more space.
Taking a hold of her knee, he pushed it up over his side, rocking his hips against her.

“Oliver…” she breathed, her hand pulling on his hair, absentmindedly noticing that it really was the perfect length for her fingers to lace through.

He hummed, his hand freeing her leg and palming her breast instead. Her thigh tightened instinctively, keeping the position, and she rubbed the sole of her foot on his lower back. His ass clenched in reaction as he pressed himself closer to her and he lowered his head until his mouth covered her nipple. He let his warm tongue circle the hard little bud then sucked on it. Hard. She arched her back, pushing her breast further into his mouth and he obliged, parting his lips wider, his devilish tongue lazily caressing the small areola while his hand was making sure the other one wasn’t neglected. He flicked her nipple with the pad of his thumb, his nail grazing it delicately.

“Oliver…” she repeated, trying to get his attention. He moaned, the sound muffled by her soft flesh, but didn’t stop.

“Oliver, I don’t want celebration sex.”

That caught his attention and he released her nipple, sucking on it one last time, then softly kissed the underside of her breast. She let her nails scratch his skull as he raised his eyes to meet her gaze. There, she saw regrets, a tiny bit of frustration... and a whole lot of tenderness.

Smiling, she caressed the lobe of his ear, forcing him to lower his face until their lips were brushing.

“I want you to make love to me” she whispered in his mouth.

He paused for a quarter of a second before pressing his lips against hers more firmly, his tongue asking for entrance. She sighed in contentment as she let him inside, let him explore her mouth as if it was the first time he had the chance to. She stroked his tongue with hers, their kiss slow and lazy as if they weren’t both naked in bed with an alarm clock bound to get off any minute now.Oliver eventually let go, brushing their noses together, and raised his head, gazing at her “Felicity, whatever I do or say… with you, I’m always making love.”

She let out a trembling smile at his words, knowing he was speaking the truth. Whatever they were doing, no matter how rushed or rough it could get… it was always out of love. It was always a way to feel closer to each other, to build up their intimacy.

There was a question in Oliver’s eyes and she nodded quietly before pressing a small kiss on the corner of his mouth. His hand slid between their bodies, reaching for the apex of her thighs. She inhaled loudly when he brushed against her folds, his finger circling her entrance, entering her and making sure she was ready for him. Their gazes still locked, she chuckled, amused that he was still doubting the power he had over her body.

“I’m good” she murmured, caressing his lower back with the flat of her hand.

Apparently reassured, Oliver shifted a few inches lower, his finger leaving her, only to be replaced by something much more satisfying.

Felicity sighed with contentment as he slowly pushed inside her, her body welcoming his. It felt so right, so natural to be joined to him that way, nothing keeping them apart. He slowly filled her to the hilt, his forehead dropping on hers as he let her adjust to him. She stroked his cheek, savoring that unique feeling, the way his first thrust always burnt so good.

She tightened her legs around his waist, tilting her hips up, letting him know without words that she needed him to move. He pulled out, only leaving the tip of his cock inside her and captured her lips
in a kiss as he pushed back inside, his tongue invading her mouth. Her eyes closed as Oliver started a lazy pace, her hands roaming over his back. She could feel, under her feet, his ass clenching every time he would thrust in and a small pang of regret pulled at her heart that she couldn’t see it.

“We need a mirror” she blurted out against his lips, squeezing her eyes tightly shut as soon as she realized the words had escaped her.

Oliver paused, then lowered his head in the crook of her neck, a low rumble shaking his chest as he resumed his movements.

She bit her lips, wincing in shame “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to say that…”

“Duly noted. We’ll get a mirror when we live together” he chuckled in her ear before kissing the delicate spot right underneath it. She automatically reached for his hair, pulling him closer and he obliged, his mouth tracing open kisses along her throat. He was still moving inside her leisurely, as if he had all the time in the world and she focused on all the sensations he was causing deep inside her. There was a warmth growing, little by little. It wasn’t the usual hard coil of tension, just an overall pleasure from being so intimately connected with him. She wasn’t sure she could climax from that but the way he was moving against her, inside her, was making her see stars nonetheless. His solid chest was brushing against her breasts, the hard muscles of his legs encased by her thighs… her smooth skin rubbing against his rough one was bringing little sparks of a different kind of pleasure.

Suddenly, the alarm clock went off and she blindly reached for the snooze button, Oliver completely unfazed as he kept pushing inside her. He didn’t speed up the rhythm, but he thrust harder, tilting his hips until his pelvic bone would press against her folds whenever he would bottom out. Her breathing hitched as she let her hand travel down his back, feeling the tense muscles rolling under the damp skin. She raised her legs, bringing them higher on his sides, the new angle allowing him deeper inside her and a whimper caught in her throat at the new sensation, her eyes wide open now.

Oliver’s breathing was ragged, hot against her neck and never in her life had she been so moved by such a simple sound. Little moans were escaping him as his body started to tense above hers. Unable to resist, her tongue peeked out, licking a drop of sweat on his shoulder as her nails scratched all the length of his spine. He shuddered violently, goosebumps appearing on his skin and the muffled groan he gave went straight to her core. Exhaling loudly, she massaged the small of his back, spurring him on, encouraging him. She could sense he was on his last legs and she was craving the moment he would let go more than her own release. She wanted to please him so desperately, wanted him to find his pleasure inside her, wanted to be the one to bring him completion.

“Oliver…” she purred in his ear, her mouth searching his jaw, coaxing him to raise his head.

“Felicity” he panted heavily against her skin “touch yourself, baby.”

She shook her head, the idea of taking her hands off him suddenly unbearable. His skin was hot under her palms, slick with the sweat caused by his efforts.

“I’m good, Oliver... I’m right there” she keened, her mouth searching his jaw, coaxing him to raise his head.

He kissed her hungrily, their teeth almost clashing as their bodies started to rock against each other. They parted a few seconds later, trying to catch their breath and she was unable to look away from his face. His cheeks were red, his hair damp and his pupils were dilated as he stared into her eyes. In his, she could see the pleasure building, the tension taking over as he was seeking his relief and she
realized all of a sudden that his movements were not as rushed as they usually were whenever he would reach his climax. His thrusts were forceful, intense but not as fast as they would normally be. It allowed her to feel more of him, more of his length sliding inside and out of her body, the swollen head rubbing against the right spots.

The hand that was holding her knee suddenly left her as he rested it beside her head, gaining more leverage to push inside her. His cock started to throb against her walls and Oliver let out a strangled moan, his eyes still fixed on her as he pressed himself as close to her as he could.

“Felicity…. Oh God… Felicity” he chanted desperately as she cupped his ass, pushing on the hard muscles of the cheeks. He gave her two more deep thrusts before stiffening, his eyes grimacing, struggling to stay open. His face tensed up as if he was in pain, his jaw locking when he tried to hold back a grunt. She felt his pleasure spurt, coating her walls and her mouth opened in an O of surprise when her own orgasm took over. It wasn’t a wave, or a sudden and brutal release, but a slide of heat that warmed her from the inside. The tingling started deep inside her core, spreading to her thighs, depriving her of any strength she had. Her legs sagged open on the bed as Oliver was still riding his own wave, his hips jostling, bringing his pelvis directly against her clitoris. It sent such a brutal flash of pleasure in the stiff bundle of nerves that she let out a high-pitched cry, her fingers tightening on Oliver’s backside, burying her face in his shoulder. She bit him, hard, trying to muffle the sounds that were coming out of her mouth. She barely sounded human, her throat so tight that all that could escape her were strangled mewls of pleasure.

Oliver’s body relaxed on top of hers, his face nestling in the crook of her neck once more. She was as out of breath as he was and bit dazzled by the experience. That had been… different.

“Good different, or bad different?” Oliver mumbled against her skin.

“Ugh. What is wrong with me today?!?” she cursed “and good different… yeah, definitely good different.”

“You didn’t feel the usual way” he added sleepily, his finger stroking her ear.

Felicity froze “… what?”

Had something weird happened… down there? She had been so caught up by the sudden orgasm that her brain hadn’t been able to register anything else.

“You felt really warm all of a sudden and…” he cleared his throat “… wet. And just…really tight.”

Felicity’s eyes shifted as she finally let go of the hold she still had on Oliver’s butt.

“O… Kay…” she said, starting to feel uncomfortable. Oliver didn’t sound disgusted or weirded out but still.

“Hey” he breathed, raising his head and meeting her eyes “I loved it. I was just surprised, that’s all. Good surprise, by the way. It felt like… you were enjoying yourself?”

Damn right I was.

Frowning, she averted her eyes “yeah, no question about that. I’m just not sure how I feel about… not being even conscious that something is different in my own body.”

“Honey… it’s OK. Your body just reacted a bit differently this time. Maybe it’s because it’s Friday? Or because it knew that this was only a rehearsal of what I have in mind for the next 36 hours?”
She huffed out a small laugh, the tension slowly leaving her.

“It happens to me too, you know” Oliver pecked her lips, settling more comfortably on his elbows. He was still inside her, apparently in no hurry to leave her warmth at all.

“What do you mean?” she frowned. He had always felt the same to her, not that she was always in the right state of mind to exactly pay attention.

“The first times we made love without condoms, I didn’t understand why my toes were hurting.”

“... ugh?” she stared at him, completely at a loss. What did his toes have to do with them making love… and the lack of condom?

“I never had sex without condoms before. I didn’t know how different it would feel and… apparently I push myself on my toes in the end” he blushed slightly.

“You… push yourself… on your toes?” she asked, narrowing her eyes.

“It feels like I can get deeper that way” he shrugged sheepishly “only realized that after a couple of times, though.”

She bit back a smile, suddenly feeling much better. First of all, he had always used condoms before her. Second of all, it proved that Oliver wasn’t always super in control of his body and that she could be responsible for new reactions. She liked that. She liked that very much.

“Feeling better now?” he nudged her as he silenced the alarm once more.

“Yep” she nodded enthusiastically “although knowing I’m going to be late to work is kinda ruining your efforts.”

“You won’t” he winked “I changed the clock last night to make sure we’d have enough time to celebrate properly.”

She gasped, slapping his bicep “you didn’t!”

“I did” he grinned, obviously very proud of himself “to be fair we were up even before that, so really, it’s not entirely my fault. Also, you were naked.”

“Because we had sex last night!” she exclaimed, grabbing her cell phone from the bed table. It was indeed only 6:32.

“... still. You were too tempting.”

“Oliver, you’re the one who took off my clothes. Some of them with your teeth, if you remember” she glared at him.

His lips stretched into a goofy smile “oh yeah… I remember that part quite well. You were squirming all over the bed with the sexiest thong I had ever seen, how exactly was I supposed to resist?”

“It’s called will-power.”

“Shut up” he laughed before leaning to kiss her. She knew they couldn’t exactly afford to linger any longer, but couldn’t resist the idea of one last kiss. Especially this kind of lazy, afterglow kiss.

*Thank God it’s Friday, indeed.*
“Felicity… you’re day-dreaming again” Dig’s voice interrupted her reverie.

“Sorry” she mumbled sheepishly as he sat back down in front of her. They were at Big Belly Burger, having finished their meals. She was enjoying her vanilla milkshake while Dig paid a visit to the restrooms and her eyes had been staring into emptiness as she remembered her morning activities.

Dig sighed, shaking his head. His eyes were amused and soft as he took a sip of water “I honestly don’t know which one of you is worse. Oliver and his goofy smiles or you and your gazing into emptiness.”

She blushed, playing with her straw “I’m sorry. I used to hate it when my friends were like that.”

“Come on, you’re young and in love. I’m happy for you. Even though I had to warn Oliver that he’d better not mess it up or he’ll have to deal with me. Boss or no boss.”

Smiling, she nodded “I don’t think it’s really necessary, but thank you.”

“It’s not necessary but it’s a matter of principle” he said as checked his watch “we should get going.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. Here I was, taking my time, I completely forgot you had to head back to work” Felicity quickly grabbed her bag and jacket as she stood up.

“I don’t, but Oliver asked me to drop you at his office by 3:00.”

“… hum, what?” she froze, her straw an inch away from her mouth.

“Don’t ask me, I only have a deadline to bring you to him.”

“I… I wasn’t supposed to meet him, I was going to go shopping” she mumbled, confused. She searched her memory but she was confident they hadn’t made plans.

“Oh, right, he asked me to give you this, too” Dig fished out an envelope out of his inside pocket.

“Alright…” she frowned, tearing the paper open. There was a short note and she recognized Oliver’s handwriting right away.

_Felicity,_

*Ask Dig to stop by your place so you can grab a few things, light clothes, sneakers or walking shoes and probably a pair of shorts - not the white ones, though._

_Oliver_

_PS: don’t forget the duck, this time._

She blushed furiously when she read his last line, her eyes darting to Dig, making sure he couldn’t read it. _Why not my white shorts? What’s wrong with them?_
“So, it seems like we first need to stop at my place” she explained, hiding the piece of paper in her purse.

“He might have mentioned something like that” Dig winked at her as they walked out of the restaurant “he really wants to please you, you know. Boy has it bad.”

Smiling, Felicity nursed on her milkshake “the feeling is mutual.”

“Don’t I know it. So does Mrs Jones, by the way. She cornered me this morning, saying she had finally been able to get a good night of sleep.”

Felicity frowned, confused. What did their neighbour have to do with her relationship?

It was only when she was sitting in the car that she realized Mrs Jones’s apartment was directly under her bedroom.

“Oh my God” she grimaced, hiding her face behind her hands “I can’t… you did not just… Dig!”

“Hey! I’m merely a victim here. She even made me promise to stop and oil your bed” he smirked, starting the car.

She was still blushing when she stepped out of the elevator on Oliver’s floor.

His assistant wasn’t there, and the door to his office was wide open. Knocking on it, she stepped inside, checking that he didn’t have any visitor. He was on the phone and he welcomed her with a warm smile, waving her in.

“I have to go, mom. Yes. I know. I just can’t push it back any longer. Say hi to Thea for me, will you?”

He hung up, standing up from his chair and taking off his tie “I need to change clothes, then we’ll get going.”

“To your place?” she asked as he pecked her lips before walking to the bathroom.

“Nope” he winked, closing the door behind him.

Damn. I hate mysteries.

They took Oliver’s car and drove for about half an hour, leaving Starling behind. The top was down, letting them enjoy the sun. She had mentioned to him she was going to go shopping and her theory was that he was probably taking her to a shopping mall. But once he left the highway, he took smaller roads that apparently didn’t lead to any kind of civilization. As he drove down a bumpy road in the middle of woods, she eyed him suspiciously.

“... you’re not going to kill me and hide my body, are you?”

He burst out laughing, his hand softly caressing her thigh “I promise you that my intentions are pure. Or as pure as can be whenever you’re concerned. Besides… here we are.”

Stopping the car, he unfastened his seatbelt while Felicity took a look at her surroundings. It was a small parking lot and there were a few cars next to theirs. She could see a park on her right where a few families were playing. There were trees and benches as well as a few fountains. It was surrounded by woods on one side and a small lake on the other. She eventually opened her door,
stretching her legs while Oliver went to the trunk. He came back with a picnic basket and an icebox.

“A picnic?” she grinned, clapping her hands. She had grown up in Vegas, which wasn’t exactly the best place in the world for a picnic in the wilderness, since it was, literally, in the middle of the desert.

“Yup. I figured we could do with a bit of fresh air” he explained as he showed her the way. He led her away from the small crowd, until they were near the woods. They could hear children screaming from afar and their spot was completely deserted.

She suddenly realized why he had specified for her to not take her white shorts: it clearly wouldn’t have been practical to sit on the grass. Oliver had changed into a pair of cargo shorts as well as a blue T-shirt that brought out his eyes. She noticed the little wince on his face when he put down the icebox and the picnic basket next to a big tree.

Frowning, she sat down against the trunk “what’s wrong?”

“My back has been bothering me all afternoon” he mumbled, taking off his shoes and socks.

“Come on” she patted the ground in front of her “I’ll give you a back rub.”

“... really?” he asked with a big grin while she took care of her sneakers.

“Yes, really” she laughed, pulling on his hand until he sat between her legs, with his back to her front “take off your shirt.”

He obliged, throwing it carelessly next to him. She was slightly higher than him, thanks to the natural slope caused by the roots. She rummaged through her handbag, knowing she had some sunscreen that could be used as massage oil.

Opening the lid, she poured a generous amount in her hand, rubbing her palms together to warm the liquid. Unable to resist the temptation, she first pressed a kiss between his shoulder blades and he squeezed her knee in return.

“Ready?” she murmured.

“Oh yeah” he nodded vigorously, then froze when she put her hands on his shoulders. She spread the sunscreen on his upper back, then softly massaged the flesh. He was very tense, his muscles a mix of knots and kinks.

“Relax…” she whispered, her thumbs working on the base of his neck, noticing the goosebumps appearing on his skin.

“It feels fucking awesome” he huffed out a laugh, bowing his head, rounding his back. She kept on rubbing the flesh, adding more sunscreen whenever there was too much friction, slowly working her way to his waist, letting his little moans guide her.

“Next time, I’ll drive” she smiled after a particularly loud groan of appreciation when she pressed her thumbs down his spine. Her wrists were starting to hurt and she slowed down, until Oliver straightened up, rolling his head.

“You’re a magician” he said in awe as she wiped her hands on a tissue.

Giggling, she pulled on his arm, trying to get him to rest against her. He resisted, shaking his head.
“I’m too heavy.”

“Don’t be silly, it’s just your upper body. I’ve had you on top of me often enough to know what I can take” she snorted.

He leaned back against her carefully, until she circled his shoulders and pressed him down “Oliver, I’m fine.”

“You’re sure?”

“Mnhhmhh” she hummed as he settled more comfortably, his head leaning on her shoulder, letting his weight rest on her.

Oliver sighed, closing his eyes.

“Comfy?” she asked, kissing his forehead.

“Oh yeah” he nodded, his eyes still closed as her fingers laced through his hair. She let one of her legs rest on his thigh, her head tilting against his as her eyes travelled to a young boy playing with his dog.

Oliver stayed silent for so long that she thought he had fallen asleep until he mumbled “how was work?”

“Good” she grinned “thank you for the chocolate cake. My colleagues might like you more than I do, now.”

He chuckled “I figured you’d miss that cake. How are things going with the battery, by the way? Did you get to talk with Ray about it?”

Felicity frowned, remembering she hadn’t had a chance to tell him about that “yeah… I’m going to put my idea on the side. Keep working on what the team has already achieved. I don’t have the budget or the time to start from scratch over again. But Ray told me to keep everything, it might be useful in the future.”

“And you’re OK with that?”

“… I have to be. I just feel like maybe I’m being too ambitious. It’s probably better to play it safe for now.”

Oliver tilted his head, looking at her “there’s nothing shameful in being ambitious. If there’s one person who can pull it off, it’s you.”

“But I have to be a team player as well. If the board is satisfied with what we have, then I guess I’m doing a good enough job.”

“For the company, yeah. But for you? Is it good enough for your standards?” he asked softly, brushing a strand of hair out of her face.

Felicity winced “not gonna lie, I’d like to go deeper. I think I’ll be more comfortable on the next project, though.”

“You always want to do much more than what is being asked of you. In the end, it will pay off, you know. Don’t… don’t muffle that part of you.”

“I just get on so well with everyone and I know that… sometimes I drive people away when I…”
she trailed off, remembering how it had felt during high school whenever she would work on a team project. She was always the outcast, the one who would spend endless hours perfecting something that was already more than acceptable. People eventually resented her, feeling like they were not good enough for her. And everything was so great with everyone at PT that she didn’t want to recreate that kind of dynamics.

Oliver stroked her thigh, humming non-committedly “just know that I’ll be proud of whatever you do. I just hope that you’ll eventually be comfortable enough to be yourself. It might scare people off, but you shouldn’t let that diminish your abilities. That being said, I’m glad things are going well with your colleagues.”

“They really are. It’s a nice change for me” she laughed. Changing topics, she asked “what is there to eat, by the way?”

“Mmmhhh… Raisa made a nice little mix. Fruits, crackers and cheese, sandwiches, cookies, vegetables… that kind of thing. You hungry?”

“Yes and no… fruits maybe?” she mumbled, reaching for the picnic basket. There were several boxes, and the first one she opened contained grapes.

That will do.

She put one into Oliver’s open mouth, biting on a small fruit herself. It was juicy, and typically sweet and she was already grabbing another one before she had even swallowed the first one. She didn’t even have the time to bring it to her mouth, Oliver already biting the fruit from her fingers.

She gasped in outrage, but he straightened, the grape still between his teeth and approached her mouth with a gleeful look. Smiling, she dipped her head, grabbing the fruit he was offering her and she was surprised when he let it go without resistance, his lips still lingering on hers. She quickly swallowed, her hand caressing his cheek as she pressed her lips firmly on his. She tasted the sweetness in his mouth as her tongue leisurely stroked his. He shifted slightly, getting closer to her to deepen the kiss and she let him take the lead, tilting her head. He suckled on her tongue, their breaths mingling as he reached for her hand, entwining their fingers. He pressed a soft kiss on her lower lip when they finally parted, then on the tip of her nose. He pecked her quickly on the mouth again when she grinned, swallowing her giggle.

Picking up the bunch of grape, he presented it to her mouth and she laughed, tilting her head back, playing along. Closing her teeth on a juicy fruit, she pulled softly, frowning when she realized it wasn’t coming. She pulled harder and Oliver snorted when she ended up with a little branch as well. He quickly got rid of it for her, chuckling, while she tried to swallow without choking.

“And from now on, I’ll let you handle the sexy fruit stuff, OK?” she laughed, offering him the wine grape as well. He winked, pulling a grape with no problem, quickly chewing and swallowing.

“Not fair” she pouted when he grabbed another one easily. He pressed his mouth against hers, coaxing it open and her eyes grew the size of saucers when she realized that he was, quite literally, feeding her the grape he had just bitten off.

Damn it… that’s hot.

He closed her lips with a kiss, popping another grape in his mouth while she stared at him, slowly munching on hers. He eventually settled back in her arms, his thumb tracing slow circles on her knee.
They fell back in a comfortable silence, Felicity feeding him fruits every now and then while he read the magazine she had brought along. It was Cosmo, not what she usually read, but they had a nice selection of bathing suits she wanted to take a look at. Seeing Oliver so lost in his reading, she pinched her lips to hold back a smile.

“Do you have a pen?” he suddenly asked.

“Handbag” she nodded “why?”

“There’s a test to find out if your partner really satisfies you in bed.”

She burst out laughing, then sobered up once she realized he was serious “... you’re not kidding?”

“No. I wanna know!” he exclaimed while rummaging through her purse before fishing out a pen “there you go.”

“Is it for the both of us?” she asked, trying to read the page.

“Honey, it’s Cosmo… it’s for women, obviously. Now, please answer truthfully. If your first time together was named after a superhero would it be: A/ The Flash - It actually went so fast you’re still not positive you really had a first time or B/ Thor - Holy shit that’s a hell of a hammer you’ve got there or C/ Iron Man - He stayed hard for hours but mostly talked about himself.”

Felicity chortled “B. Obviously, B.”

“Why, thank you” Oliver grinned widely “Next question. Do you sometimes simulate your orgasm? A/ Yeah… don’t we all? B/ No, he doesn’t seem to mind anyway or C/ No and he would know it if I did. I think I know the answer but… don’t hold back, OK? I’m a big boy, I can take it.”

“You idiot. It’s C” she smiled, kissing his head.

“Phew. I knew that but… still feels good to be sure” he breathed, circling the right answer “and you’re right, I’d totally know.”

“Question number 3… oh… I really like that one. What turns you on the most? A/ When you do it in a forbidden place. B/ When he talks dirty to you. C/ When you dominate him or D/ When he dominates you.”

Biting her lips, Felicity narrowed her eyes. That one clearly wasn’t as easy as the other ones. To be fair, she liked all four.

“Hon’?”

“... I’m not sure” she whispered. She ruled out forbidden place because no matter how much she liked it, it wasn’t exactly something that would drive her wild. She liked to be in charge but then again… it didn’t drive her crazy. Now, the other two…

Oliver frowned “none of them or several of them?”

She gulped, blushing “Hum… B and D. But I also like the other ones.”

“... really?” he grinned smugly “let me help you. What would make you horny right now? Me throwing you on my shoulder to take you in the forest and bend you on a trunk with my hand pressing your back or if I told you that the skin of your thighs is very soft and it makes me think of how they squeeze my face when I make you come with my mouth?” he murmured, his lips brushing
her neck “or how much I love the way you taste, the way you tremble when I lick your-”

“B” she blurted out “definitely B.”

“That was easy” Oliver laughed “but good to know about the runner up…”

She slapped his arm “don’t let that go to your head.”

“… Which head are we talking about, exactly?” he wiggled his eyebrows, pinching her thigh when she glared at him “anyway… question 4: A fantasy you have yet to make true with him but don’t dare to admit… I’m gonna be all ears and making mental notes with that one, I’m telling you.”

She groaned, her cheeks flaming up.

“Ready? A/ Sex with someone else, whether it’s a three-some or swingers…” Oliver coughed, stiffening “B/ Anal sex. C/ Sex-tape or D/ BDSM?”

Hiding her face in his hair, she murmured “B.”

Oliver froze, the pen hovering over the magazine “seriously?”

He sat up suddenly, a goofy grin on his face “B? For real? You’re not saying that to please me, right?”

“Oliver, how exactly could I have known which one of those would please you?” she tilted her head.

“… right. Damn.”

“It’s… it’s not that I want to do it, OK? I don’t know… but out of all four it’s… probably the most accurate one” she grumbled, crossing her arms on her chest.

He set the magazine aside, shifting until he was completely facing her “hey… I didn’t want to… I mean hell yeah I kinda want to… it’s just that we have never really talked about these kind of things. But I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable about anything.”

“It’s just… you probably have done all of those things, haven’t you?”

He winced “well… yes.”

“And I haven’t. Well… I once did a sex-tape by mistake but I erased it as soon as I found out.”

“… by mistake?” Oliver perked an eyebrow.

“Don’t ask. I was recording something and… anyway. It wasn’t exactly explicit and it’s totally not the point.”

“I never asked you and you don’t have to answer but… how many partners did you have before me?” he asked softly “I know you had Cooper but…”

“Two. One before Cooper” she answered, shrugging “the thing is I’ve always been… classic? I guess. It’s just… it’s different with you but I don’t know if I really want to go far or if it just looks appealing because everything else is so good. And I don’t want to… I don’t want to lead you on.”

Leaning towards her, Oliver cradled her face, lightly kissing the corner of her mouth “you have the right to change your mind, Felicity. You have the right to want something one day and then decide against it the next day. I’ll never hold that against you, especially not when it comes to sex.”
She nodded quietly, her hand circling his wrist.

“I might pout or whine, though. Just so you know” he added with a small smile, his eyes laughing.

“I think I’ve already witnessed that.”

“So… anal sex?”

“I don’t know… maybe? One day?” she grimaced, still honestly unsure about it herself. It clearly wasn’t something she had ever really considered “you’ve done that before, right? I mean… it seems like something you like so I assume it wasn’t just a one-time thing.”

“Hum. Yes” he said carefully “but it’s not because I’ve done something that we have to do it too. You know that, right?”

Felicity gulped, feeling a bit nervous. She wasn’t exactly used to this kind of extremely open conversation, especially so early in a relationship. Not that it was a bad thing, it was just more proof that they were building their relationship on trust and honesty, which was really healthy. But still nerve-wracking.

“I know. It’s not even a real fantasy to be honest… just… a thought that I might have sometimes… I don’t even know how I feel about it. I just feel like it could be good. With you, I mean. I never really wanted to do it before. Not that I really want to do it now. Maybe one day. Down the line. Like way, way down the line. Once we’ve done… other stuff. Not BDSM stuff, just like other stuff. I’m not exactly opposed to BDSM but I don’t like the idea of being tied down and suspended or flogged or… gagged” she shivered at the thought “what I mean is that I’m not opposed to many things but I don’t exactly want to do them either. I think… I think one day I might want to try it? But not right now… in the future. Real future. Not that I picture ourselves in five years or something, I mean, no pressure” she added, her eyes wide, knowing there was no way she could stop herself now. Oliver was looking at her with a tender smile, slightly shaking his head as she kept on digging the hole she was currently in “I am talking about a hypothetical future. For us. Not for the planet. The planet should… should still be there in five years although I’d be OK if kangaroos disappeared because they kinda creep me out and-”

Oliver’s mouth silenced her and she mentally thanked him for putting her out of her misery.

*That was some serious rambling, Smoak. Class A.*

“God, I’m sorry” she groaned as soon as they parted.

“I love you” he murmured, gazing at her.

She blinked at him, her usual hyperactive brain completely useless for once.

*Did he just say what I think he just said…?*

“I did” he nodded seriously.

Her mouth opened in a small O but before she could reply because oh God now that the words were out she wanted to say them too, Oliver continued.

“I do. I love you. And I’m not saying it to hear it back. Actually… I don’t want you to say it back. Not right now. I had to tell you because I’ve been keeping this inside for days and it felt like I would explode if I kept quiet another second. And it’s not because of the talk we just had, or because it was about sex or even because you seem open to some of my fantasies. I don’t give a fuck about that. I
love it when you babble, when you put your foot in your mouth. I love that now I get to kiss you instead of just putting my hand on your shoulder. I love that I’ll be able to do it for as long as you’ll let me. I love that I’m not running for the hills thinking about a future with you. And you know what I love the most, why I know you’re the one for me?”

She shook her head, a gigantic lump in her throat preventing her from speaking.

“It’s because I know that even if I was freaking out, I could tell you. Or actually no, I wouldn’t need to. You would know. Because you always know what’s going on in my soul. And you have for a while, since way before we made love for the first time. I love you because you make me love the things I hated the most about me.”

Her smile trembled on her lips “Oh, Oliver, I lo-”

He cut her off, his hand on her mouth “oh no no no. That was my big speech. You’re going to have to find your own moment.”

Lowering his hand, she huffed “what?! That wasn’t a prepared speech, there is no way you could have known what was going to happen!”

“Still. I knew I was going to tell you today. I was going to wait until the sun starts to set down behind the lake, and then I would have told you” he smiled proudly “so now, you’re going to have to wait for your turn and hold it up inside like I have until it literally escapes you.”

“What exactly makes you think I am not already bottling it up?”

“You almost told me. Yesterday” he smiled softly “you stopped yourself. It’s OK if you’re not ready, Felicity.”

“Can I at least kiss you or is that also part of your prerogative?” she perked an eyebrow. She knew he had a point. Something had held her back. Not a doubt, oh no… she had no doubt concerning her feelings for him. More like a fear that she was rushing things and that he wasn’t there yet.

Oliver grinned “that’s clearly something I’ll always be happy to share.”

Smiling mischievously, she pushed back against the trunk, launching herself in his arms. He stumbled back, surprised by the sudden assault.

“Oomf” Oliver exhaled as he landed on the ground, Felicity smirking from her position on top of him “hey, I said OK for kissing not ass-”

This time, she was the one who silenced him with her mouth. She was about to deepen the kiss when she suddenly remembered something.

“Before we get to the make out part, which I like very much… just so you know. The whole other people involved… it’s a big no no for me” she panted against his lips.

He stared at her, obviously confused by her words “other people?”

“The test? The question about the fantasies?”

Realization dawned on his face and he looked at her with wide eyes, shaking his head violently “there’s no way I’d want anybody else involved in our relationship. No. Way. I’ll never share you.”

“Possessive, Mister Queen?” she whispered, biting her lower lip.
“With you? Terribly, I’m afraid.”

“Good” she breathed against his lips.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“Felicity?” he asked as she was about to kiss him again.

She rolled her eyes “Oliver, I’m trying to kiss you here. What?”

“I love you.”

“You’re doing that on purpose, aren’t you?” she smiled against his lips.

“Yup. Remember, I want to be wooed, too. I deserve to be wooed” he grinned, his eyes teasing her.

“As you wish” she answered softly.

“... you cheater” Oliver chuckled, wrapping his arms around her.

_I never said I’d play fair, Oliver..._

Chapter End Notes

I have a couple more chapters to write. Don't expect an update before at least a week/ten days. I had a rough week and am terribly behind on the writing. My cat had to be euthanized, very unexpectedly (he was only 10)... so it's been hard for me to get back to writing (haven't gotten back to it yet, actually). I prefer to take the time I need to end this story properly so... you might have to wait a bit for the next update. I'm just not in a very cheery mood lately.

Xoxo
Hi guys *waves*
This is the penultimate chapter... end of the road is near ;)
NSFW - twice O_O

Thank you all so much for your support, it really means a lot to me. I am sorry I didn't answer to your comments, each one of them warmed my heart but when I tried to reply a few days ago, I got all teary... so thank you, to all of you *hugs and kisses*

Song: My Girl - The Temptations

Special thanks to mysticaldetectivepanda who edited this chapter suuuuper fast and to pidanka who stared at an empty doc for ten days straight without wailing too much.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"My Girl"

I've got sunshine on a cloudy day.  
When it's cold outside I've got the month of May.

I guess you'd say  
What can make me feel this way?  
My girl (my girl, my girl)  
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl).

I've got so much honey the bees envy me.  
I've got a sweeter song than the birds in the trees.

Well, I guess you'd say  
What can make me feel this way?  
My girl (my girl, my girl)  
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl).

Hey hey hey  
Hey hey hey  
Ooooh.

I don't need no money, fortune or fame.  
I've got all the riches, baby, one man can claim.

Well, I guess you'd say  
What can make me feel this way?  
My girl (my girl, my girl)
Talkin' 'bout my girl (my girl).

I've got sunshine on a cloudy day
With my girl.
I've even got the month of May
With my girl
Talkin' 'bout
Talkin' 'bout
Talkin' 'bout
My girl
Ooooh
My girl
As long as I can talk about my girl...

They stayed like that until Felicity’s stomach started to protest loudly. They had been kissing leisurely, Felicity still on top of him, for what seemed like forever but at some point, as she reminded him, he had to deliver on the picnic he had promised. Knowing they were in public, they had kept things strictly PG, even if Oliver had allowed himself a bit of ass-grabbing. He was just a man, after all.

“Seriously, did you tell Raisa there was a war coming and we needed to stock up?” Felicity snorted as they put their leftovers back in the picnic basket and the icebox.

He laughed as he gave her a bottle of water “I wasn’t sure what you would want to eat so… I’m afraid my list was quite exhaustive.”

“I’m not really complaining” she said, taking a long sip “those cucumber sandwiches were delicious.”

Noticing she had started to shiver, he picked up the blanket they hadn’t used, wrapping it around her. She smiled in gratitude, dropping a kiss on the back of his hand. When he was done packing their leftovers, he sat down with his back against the tree, pulling her onto his lap. She insisted on sharing the blanket and he obliged, rolling his eyes. He wasn’t even cold, but the idea of Felicity snuggling into his arms was tempting enough for him to cave in. He rubbed her legs, noticing they were getting cold, her small shorts offering little protection against the small breeze coming from the lake.

Taking advantage of the blanket covering them, he let his hand wander underneath her top, lightly stroking her side.

She buried her face in the crook of his neck, murmuring “no funny business, sir.”

“Never. You know me” he chuckled, his lips grazing the industrial piercing on her ear, the little piece of jewelry reminding him of a question he had been asking himself for a while now.

“... did you really have another piercing when you were younger?”

Laughing, Felicity nodded “Yup.”

“... come on. You can tell me where, now” he nudged her, lightly pinching her waist.
“Where do you think it was?”

He frowned, honestly not knowing the answer. He hadn’t spotted any kind of scar on her body - and God knew he had made sure to memorize every single inch of it but maybe the scar had faded enough to go unnoticed “... belly button?”

“Typical…” she giggled “sorry to disappoint but no.”

“... no?” he raised his eyebrows. It was honestly the most common place for a girl to have a piercing. Or at least, to him.

“OK… the other ear? Or the same one?”

“Nope.”

“... eyebrow? But don’t you have a scar when it’s on your eyebrow?”

“No and usually, yeah. Which is why I didn’t.”

“I assume it wasn’t your nose either, then?”

“You assume correctly.”

Oliver folded his lips against his teeth, deep in thought. Since she hadn’t picked a piercing that could leave a visible scar, he ruled out her face. It must have been hidden. He smirked at the thought that maybe his girl might have been kinkier than he had first thought…

“If you were still wearing it now, would people be able to see it with the way you’re dressed?” he asked slowly, willing to check his theory.

“No…”

He took a short intake of breath “... no? Not… Your nipple?”

“Ew. No” she raised her head, grimacing “I mean… it’s sensitive… and no.”

“... I guess not… lower either, then?” he teased her, his hand travelling to the apex of her thighs.

She gasped, squirming on his lap “oh my God, Oliver! No! Just thinking about someone poking there… no!!”

“... but where, then? There’s no usual place left!”

Felicity tilted her head, glaring at him. She sighed then brushed her lips against his, her tongue tracing his lower lip. He didn’t have the time to open his mouth before she was already pulling back.

“... you said it wouldn’t be…” he mumbled, until he finally understood “your tongue?!”

She nodded mischievously, sticking her tongue and he narrowed his eyes until he could see a tiny little scar in the middle. He gulped, his mind going straight to the gutter.

“Damn. On your tongue. Why did you take it off?” he all but whined, his head full of vivid mental pictures “we could have had so much fun, Felicity.”

Felicity giggled “I had to have my wisdom teeth removed and it was easier without a piercing in the middle of everything. I never put it back afterwards.”
“... damn” he repeated, his eyes fixed on her mouth, picturing her on her knees while he would thrust his-

“Oliver, are you picturing me pleasuring you with my mouth right now?”

“Hell yeah” he breathed, his eyes fixed on her lips. The piercing was now almost gone from his mind, but the image of Felicity’s mouth wrapped around him was much harder to get rid of. Pun intended.

“May I kindly suggest you start thinking about something else?” she lifted his chin with her index finger, forcing him to meet her eyes “you are obviously getting… in the mood. And I don’t think it’s a good idea, seeing we are in the middle of a family park.”

He blinked several times, replaying her words in his head several times until they made sense. He groaned once he realized she was right, he was getting aroused. The power she had over his body was frightening sometimes. A look, a few words, a smile… and a fire was already starting down his spine. Despite all the sex, it still felt like he never had a taste of her. He couldn’t get enough of touching her, kissing her, loving her. It was like he would never be close enough to her, like every second spent not touching her was tearing his heart apart. He had known lust in his life. Sex and pleasure were old friends of his. He had also known love. Not the kind of love he was feeling for her, because he was now confident that the heart can love so deeply only once. But he had never known such a perfect balance of both where his love for her would constantly feed his lust and his desire would be just another way to show the depth of his feelings.

“It’s your fault, you keep turning me on” he moaned, dropping his head on her shoulder.

She lightly patted his head “I’m sorry. I’m a terribly insensitive girlfriend.”

He nodded, nuzzling her neck “and cruel.”

“And cruel.”

He inhaled deeply, his lips brushing her throat while she lazily laced through his hair. He had never really been a cuddle guy before, except for the compulsory post-coital snuggling that is. But there was something so inherently right in being in Felicity’s arms, something that was awakening a need he had never been aware even existed. Intimacy. The more time they spent together, the more he was craving her touch, and not necessarily in a sexual way. The lust had been there for a while and he was mostly used to it, after all. What he was unconsciously seeking was tenderness, and finally being able to let his walls down. All his life he had been the provider, the wealthy companion who took care of everything. With Felicity, he was discovering a much more balanced relationship, where she would be the one he could rely on as much as the other way around. And he loved it. He loved how there was no pretense between them, how he could be weary one minute and the next be the one to offer her a backrub. Not to mention, Felicity’s arms were his weakness. She was so soft, so warm and welcoming that he couldn’t even imagine not wanting to spend as much time as possible in her embrace.

“Oliver…” she whispered in his ear after a few minutes.

“Mmmh?” he moaned, burying his face in her neck, not willing to move at all.

“I’m getting cold and the sun is getting lower” she murmured, her nails scratching his skull as she pressed a kiss on his forehead.

He let out a deep sigh as he raised his head, noticing that most of the families were almost done with
their dinner.

“We haven’t finished our test” he grumbled as she stood up.

“I think we both know the results anyway.”

“Maybe the general answer, but I’m pretty sure there are a few interesting things I could have learned along the way” he smirked as he remembered the fantasy question. It had clearly caught him off guard, being almost sure she would go with sex-tape, especially after her little comment about the mirror. Not that he would ever complain. Because that was certainly a fantasy he wanted to share with her, but would have never approached the topic so soon in their relationship. Or maybe even at all if she hadn’t seemed interested.

Yawning, he eventually stood up as well, stretching his arms above his head. His back was still bothering him a little and he knew his very enthusiastic sex-life was starting to take a toll on his body. He had noticed a slight pinch between his shoulders last night when he had rolled over on his back, letting Felicity take charge - at her own request. God knew he had had his fair share of crazy adventures in the bedroom department but apparently the small bubbly blonde would be the one to bring him to his knees.

Not that he would ever admit it to her face. He was supposed to be her hunk, after all. And seeing Felicity so carefree, witnessing her literally peeling off every single one of her insecurities and doubts, only to fully embrace her own sensuality and grow into that confident partner… there was no way in hell he’d ever have her second-guess her enthusiasm in bed. Even if that meant dealing with the occasional back ache or raw scratches on his shoulders.

Damn, I love it when she scratches my back.

They quickly made their way back to his car, Felicity rambling about how the picnic would also be perfect for a late snack in bed.

“Can we take a bath?” she asked as he put the basket and the ice-box back in the trunk “once we get home? And by home I mean… yours. Your house.”

He closed the trunk, smiling when he saw her twisting her hands nervously. Unable to resist, he pecked her lips “why do you think I asked you to bring that duck?”

She blushed violently, biting her lips “you were serious?”

Laughing, he handed her the car keys “Felicity, when it comes to sex… I’m always serious.”

She didn’t answer, staring at the keys in her hand with wide eyes “you want me to drive?”

“Yup” he nodded as he walked around the car, hopping inside “it’s not like you never drove it, in case you forgot.”

Smiling proudly, she unlocked her door and sat behind the wheel, moving the seat forward and fastening her seatbelt “hard to forget that time where your boss sent you on a personal errand just to get back at you.”

“And failed miserably” he chuckled as he observed her adjusting the rearview mirror.

“Well, I don’t exactly play fair” she shrugged a shoulder cheekily as she started the engine “last
chance… are you sure you want me to drive?”

“Yes” he nodded seriously. He trusted her, and what was his was hers.

“No whining, no gasping, no grumping, no nothing, OK?”

“Promise. Just… be careful.”

“Don’t worry, I only had two accidents in my life and no one was hurt” she smiled, patting his leg
“well… not really. That old lady was already supposed to have a hip replacement, I just sped up the process.”

“… what?” he snapped his head, his smile slipping from his face as her words registered with his brain “you’re not serious, are you?”

“Maybe, maybe not” she sing-sang as they were already leaving the parking lot.

Five minutes later

“Careful… caaaaaareful…” Oliver hissed as she changed lanes on the highway.

“I am careful, Oliver” Felicity groaned “not to mention there’s barely any traffic, what exactly could happen?”

“There’s a car in front of you!” he yelped, half covering his face.

“Well yes, that usually happens on highways. There are cars in front of you, behind you and beside you. Not to mention it’s at least two hundred feet away from us!”

“It’s still in front of you!” he insisted “maybe you should slow down?”

“Oliver… I’m at 50mph… I can’t go any lower!”

“Maybe I should drive” he panted when another car sped by on their left.

“I can’t stop in the middle of the highway” Felicity snapped “and I told you, I was only kidding, I never had any accident.”

“You had one three minutes ago!”

“… a bird crapping on the windshield hardly qualifies as an accident, honey” she gritted through her teeth.

Oliver crossed his arms on his chest, pinching his lips “I’m sure it wouldn’t have happened with me.”

“I have to agree with you because I sure as hell wouldn’t have been squealing in fear at the idea of you driving at 60mph, and probabilities say that it would have hit the car behind us instead.”

“I… I did not squeal” he huffed “it was an extremely manly sound.”

“Manly?” she snorted “my voice was less high-pitched when I was an 8 year-old little girl with pigtails.”

Oliver smirked “you still get a high-pitched voice on certain occasions, you know.”
She glared at him and he gasped in horror “Eyes on the road!”

Felicity inhaled loudly, her hands twitching on the wheel “I swear to God, Oliver, you either shut it or no sex tonight.”

He opened his mouth, ready to defend himself when she cut him off “I mean it.”

Quickly glancing at her, he saw her eyes stubbornly looking ahead of her, her mouth set into a firm line… and he shut it until they made it back to the mansion.

“See? It wasn’t so bad, was it?” Felicity sighed as she parked the car “everybody is safe and sound and in one piece.”

“It could have been worse” he grumbled, opening the trunk.

“Yep. Like your girlfriend strangling you with your seatbelt and dumping your body on the side of the road” Felicity grinned innocently as she picked up her bags.

Oliver pinched his lips, knowing he had been slightly over the top. Truth be told, he had been more than fine at first. Letting her drive his car was just a proof of his commitment. But he knew that the engine could be tricky sometimes and the sudden idea that something might happen to Felicity had quite literally freaked him out in a very irrational way.

“I’m sorry” he mumbled, his eyes dropping on the floor “I think I panicked.”

“You think?” she chuckled “I swear to God you better not behave that way next time.”

“Next time?” he winced, not really looking forward to another trip. Felicity was a good driver, but he’d very much prefer if she was driving something a bit more solid and safe… like a tank.

She glared at him, her hands on her hips.

“... I promise I’ll be more… collected next time” he caved in under her stare, promising himself that said next time would happen in the Mansion’s alley and only there. He just needed a bit of time to get used to the idea.

“Aaaaand?”

“And I’m sorry for over-reacting.”

Felicity smiled, reaching up on her toes and pecking his cheek “I forgive you. Mostly because this little field trip was nothing short of perfect. Also, I’m thinking about getting a car, so you really need to get used to it.”

*I am so buying her a tank. A big, big tank.*

“Not to mention, Thea will be sixteen soon… how are you going to handle that?” she laughed, shaking her head as they made their way to the main door.

He stopped behind her, gulping at the idea of his baby sister hitting the roads with all the crazy drivers.

*Make it two tanks, then.*
“Are you sure you don’t need my help?” Felicity shouted from his bedroom. He had left her at his desk, where she was busy checking her emails. If there was one thing that Felicity couldn’t stay away from, it was either her cellphone or her tablet. Having disconnected for a few hours was apparently testing her limits because the first thing she had done once they had made it to his bedroom was to fire up her Ipad, mumbling about work and some important report she was supposed to get while Oliver had stood there, unable to get the kiss he wanted.

He rolled his eyes as he opened the bottle of wine he had brought “I can handle filling a tub with hot water, you know.”

“And I can handle driving a car, but that didn’t stop you, did it?”

He shook his head, smiling at the teasing in her voice. Setting two glasses on the large edge of the tub, he gave one last look to the promising bath he had run.

“Candles, wine, glasses, towels. Only missing the girl” he muttered as he took off his shirt. He stripped the rest of his clothes on his way to the bedroom, throwing them carelessly on the floor.

“Felicity?” he called out from the threshold.

“Mmmhh?” she answered distractedly, her eyes glued on her tablet.

Chuckling, he padded to his desk, stopping by the chair “Hon. Bath is ready.”

“I’ll be right there” she patted his stomach, her eyes suddenly frowning. Slowly turning her head, she squealed, squeezing her eyes shut “Oh God you’re naked.”

Oliver burst out laughing “Felicity we’re supposed to take a bath, of course I’m naked. Not to mention, why are you even blushing? It’s not like you’ve never seen me before.”

“I just wasn’t expecting it!” she tentatively opened her eyes, taking a deep breath “OK. Better now.”

Grabbing her hand, he pulled her to her feet, guiding her to the bathroom. He closed the door behind them and turned on the stereo, settling for a soothing jazz music.

“Wow. You really do know how to impress a girl” Felicity giggled as he stepped behind her, his arms circling her waist.

“You’re the one who wanted a romantic bath” he mumbled against her neck “but you’re slightly overdressed, I’m afraid.”

“Is that so?” she tilted her head, giving him more room and he obliged, pepper ing kisses all the way to her ear.

“Yup” he slowly turned her around in his arms, his hands hovering over the hem of her shirt until she lifted her arms. He swiftly got rid of the piece of clothing for her, already reaching for the button of her shorts. She shimmied out of them, and he took a second to appreciate the view. She was wearing a simple pair of black underwear, the dark fabric offering a deep contrast with her creamy skin. He gulped, his eyes travelling from her breasts to the curve of her hips, her soft stomach and her adorable belly button. Her waist looked so tiny that he couldn’t help but circle it with his hands, his
thumbs stroking her belly.

He smiled once he saw the trail of goosebumps erupting across her skin and he leaned in, kissing the corner of her lips, travelling down her jaw and neck until he reached the strap of her bra. Biting the fabric, he slipped it off her shoulder, letting his lips graze her skin. Felicity let out a breathless laugh when he did the same with the other strap and he winked at her when he slipped his thumbs underneath the hem of her panties.

“I could have undressed myself, you know.”

“No way. That’s my favorite part” he grinned as he palmed her now naked behind. She stepped out of her underwear while he unhooked her bra and let it fall on the floor.

“Really?” she giggled “out of all the things we’ve done, undressing me is your favorite part?”

“... OK, one of my favorite parts” he conceded as he held out a hand to help her get into the bath. She sat down, resting her back against the tub, her legs stretched out before her. He quickly stepped in as well, taking place across from her while she took a sip of wine. Her legs were between his, her toes teasing the inside of his thighs.

“When are they coming back? Your mother and sister, I mean?” Felicity asked him as he took hold of her foot, his thumbs massaging the sole.

“On Sunday.”

“Oh. You’re leaving tomorrow night, right?”

“Yes” he nodded, tracing small circles on her heel. He saw her little intake of breath as she dropped her head back and he pressed down a little harder, rewarded by her little moan of pleasure “are you sure you can’t call in sick and come with me? Think about all the sex we could have...”

“I’m sure Andrew would love that, being stuck with a couple of rabbits for two weeks” she snorted “not to mention, my boss would be just as pleased if I missed work for such a long period of time.”

He sighed, knowing she was right. Yet, he really wasn’t looking forward those fifteen days away from her, especially after that heavenly week they just had.

“Also, I really need a bit of time for myself... and for a mani-pedi” Felicity continued as she wiggled her toes.

“I did notice the lack of nail polish lately” he smiled.

“I seem to run out of time for such things, these days. I have a very demanding boyfriend.”

“I’m not the one who woke the other one up in the middle of the night” he smirked at the small blush that invaded her cheeks. He had never seen Felicity as shy as the following morning, even hiding her face in his shoulder to avoid his eyes when he had teased her about her midnight craving. It had made him laugh that she would be embarrassed by something that, quite honestly, was hot as fuck. What kind of man would complain about his girlfriend waking him up with her perfect little ass pressed against his crotch?

Despite his reassurance, it had taken quite a lot of tickling and small kisses to finally force her to leave the bed and stop hiding beneath the sheets.

“We agreed to not talk about it anymore” she grumbled, grabbing her glass.
“Oh, no. You said you didn’t want to talk about it anymore. I never agreed to anything” he put down her foot, lifting the other one in the palm of his hand “and I seem to remember, I actually offered to do it again any time you would deem necessary.”

Felicity coughed and he shook his head, realizing she was still slightly uncomfortable. One day, he would get down to exactly why she felt embarrassed about it, but he had other plans in mind for tonight. It was, after all, their last night together before two long weeks and there were a few things he wanted to achieve. Like making sure her body would not forget him.

He focused on massaging her foot, watching her slowly but surely relaxing once more, sagging against the edge of the tub. When her eyes started to get drowsy, he softly bit her big toe, then rested her leg on his thigh as he poured himself a glass of wine. He took a long gulp, noticing how Felicity’s eyes were fixed on his lips.

“I thought it was a jacuzzi kind of tub?” she eventually murmured.

“It is” he smiled mischievously “but if you want the bubbles, you’re gonna have to come much closer to me.”

“Is that so? I wasn’t aware there was a price to pay for bubbles” she grinned, slightly kicking his leg.

“My tub, my rules” he stated, spreading his arms in invite.

Giggling, she crawled towards him, turning around until her back was pressed to his front “I have done my part of the deal.”

Reaching on the side, Oliver quickly found the button he was looking for and pressed it down, a small buzzing sound preceding the water bubbles. Having left her glass on the other side of the tub, she took a sip of his, dropping her head on his shoulder.

“This is nice” she murmured, nuzzling his throat with her nose.

“This is really nice” he nodded, his hand tracing lazy circles on her stomach, enjoying the shivering light the candles were casting on her damp skin. He pressed a soft kiss on her forehead, his fingers lacing through hers against his thigh and he swore to himself that they would always take the time to enjoy a bath together no matter how crazy their lives would become.

Her lips trailed on his neck until she could nibble on his jaw and he turned his head just in time to accept her kiss. He tasted the wine on her tongue as he leisurely invaded her mouth, capturing her sigh of contentment. Would he ever get tired of kissing her? Would he ever stop feeling the tingling under his skin? How could something as simple as a kiss make him feel so many things? Tenderness, lust, desire, love, longing, protectiveness.

A little moan escaped her as he suckled on her tongue, her hand squeezing his in retaliation. He was still caressing her stomach, his palm slowly but surely trailing south to her thighs, massaging the soft flesh.

With one last peck, his mouth eventually left hers but he lingered, breathing her in as she caught her breath and softly bit on his lower lip. Tilting her head back, she slowly opened her eyes, her pupils so dilated they almost seemed black. Their breathing synced as he brushed his nose against hers, and she shifted, trying to turn in his arms. He stopped her, his head dipping to her shoulder, pressing open-mouthed kisses while he let go of her hand, his fingers travelling the inside of her arm until it reached the side of her breast. She shivered in his arms as he kept his touch light and teasing, once again in awe of the way her body was responding to him. It was enough to arouse him - as if having
her pressed against him completely naked hadn’t already put him in the right kind of mood.

Felicity didn’t need fancy lingerie or sexy outfits to turn him on. The simple touch of her skin, the scent of her hair, the way she would blush or bite her lips… every little thing about her was pulling him in.

“Oliver” she murmured in a throaty voice, her head dropping against his chest. Her hand dug into the muscles of his thigh as she arched her back, pressing her breast in his palm. He marvelled at the way the soft flesh fit perfectly in his hand, the hard nipple making his mouth water. He loved the contact of her breast against his tongue, the way he could flick the little bud and suckle on it until she would lose all control and pull his hair roughly. But before he could indulge in his guilty pleasure, he had other plans for her.

Still massaging her breast, he let his other hand travel to the inside of her thighs, brushing the extremely sensitive skin at the apex. She tensed in his arms as she rocked her hips, trying to get closer to his fingers.

“Tsk, tsk” he clapped his tongue, keeping his touch light and away from where she obviously wanted him. He circled her belly button, dipping lower and lower until he could stroke her mound but never reaching her outer lips. To her great frustration, apparently.

“Damn it, Oliver” she hissed after another unsuccessful attempt that made him focus on the patch of skin between her upper thigh and hip.

Chuckling, he rolled her nipple underneath the pad of his thumb, then softly blew on the damp areola. He could feel her nails biting his legs, her breathing getting ragged against his cheek.

“You wanted something, Felicity?” he asked innocently as he pinched her nipple, the hand between her legs now focusing on the inside of her thighs, just inches away from her sex.

He heard her small whimper of frustration as she gripped his wrist, pulling on it. All thoughts of play suddenly vanished from his mind as he let her guide him between her legs, until the heel of his hand was directly in contact with her lips.

If he was getting in the mood merely a few minutes ago, the movement was enough to make him impossibly hard against her backside. He groaned as she pressed him harder against her, her legs spreading to give him more space.

He was already violently turned on, seeing her so assertive, so daring, willing to use his body for her own pleasure in any way she could. He let her take the lead and guide his hand, rubbing it against her folds, her hips rolling and bringing a delicious friction against his erection. The breathy moan that escaped her throat when he made direct contact with her clitoris made him grit his teeth, trying to keep control of his body. There was nothing like hearing her coming undone in his arms, the sounds spilling out of her lips unlike any other she would usually make. Knowing he was the only one allowed to hear them, the only one able to easily bring her to completion and let her discover exactly what her body was capable of in terms of pleasure… it was the best fucking feeling in the world.

One that he’d never get tired of, fully aware that it was a gift she was giving him freely, trusting him with that side of her that only belonged to them. He treasured that trust, that bond between them that they would never share with anybody else.

Sex had always been a game for him. Being a good lover was mostly a way to make sure he’d never run out of willing partners, his reputation usually preceding him. But with Felicity, no matter how playful they could be, it was never about competition - well, apart from trying to outdo the number of orgasms he could give her in one go. He was craving that intimate connection with her, and every
single time they made love was mind-blowing in its intensity, the depth of his feelings for her only heightening the experience.

Hearing her moan his name forced him out of his thoughts and he quietly hummed in her hair as he shimmied his hand out of her grip.

“What… Oliver?!” she protested loudly, her head snapping up.

He turned her head, his lips searching for hers and silencing the rest of her words. Lifting one of her thighs, he pressed it against the side of the tub, his calf keeping her in position as he did the same with her other leg until they were sandwiched between the slick surface and his knees. She was spread open now and she tore her lips from his, a question in her eyes. He winked at her, pressing another button on the side of the tub and slowly forcing her to slip lower under the water until…

“Oh!” she gasped, her eyes growing the size of saucers, a delicate blush starting to cover the top of her chest. Her hands scrambled on the edges as he went back to caressing her breasts, knowing the bubbles coming from the bottom were delicately massaging the most sensitive part of her body.

Opening his mouth on the muscle between her neck and shoulder, he sucked on the flesh, hard, knowing he was bound to leave a mark. In a very primitive way, he wanted to leave his trace on her body, wanted her to remember exactly how and when she had gotten the bruise.

Covering the small mounds of flesh, he rolled her nipples against his palms, his mouth nibbling and suckling on every single inch of skin he could reach. Felicity was slowly circling her hips, obviously struggling to keep her legs still, forcing him to press harder with his knees.

“Aaaah” she breathed when he delicately pulled on a little bud, one of her hands leaving the edge to grip his hair. He knew her breasts were sensitive and let her moans guide him, the sound like music to his ear. He had given up the fight against his own body’s needs and was rubbing his length against the small of her back, the bubbles bringing an extra pinch of stimulation but not feeling as good as when he was inside her. The way she would fit him like a glove, so tight and wet around him, how he could bury himself deep inside her, her body wrapped around his making him see stars… the sensation was unlike anything else he had ever experienced.

He gulped, sensing he was getting really worked up and Felicity’s little mewls were not helping him. He focused on her breathing, the way her breasts were rising in rhythm with the rocking of her hips. She was clearly enjoying herself, but he could tell that she wasn’t close to her release, mostly by her lack of rambling. A part of him wanted to take his time, see if she could climax that way, but another want also wanted to play dirty.

He quickly grabbed what he had kept hidden underneath a towel, Felicity barely having the time to voice her protest as his hand left her before he was pressing the buzzing little object directly between her thighs.

She shouted, her legs automatically trying to close but he locked his knees, forcing them apart once more as he rubbed the small vibrating toy against her folds.

“Oh God… oh…” she panted, gripping the edge of the tub so hard her knuckles turned white “oooooh… oh that’s… yeah…”

“Mmmmm” he hummed in her neck, kissing the soft spot underneath her ear “you like it?”

She nodded vigorously, keening when he slipped the duck closer to her clit “Oliver, please…”

He dipped the toy lower again, smiling at her frustrated whimper “higher?”
“Yes” she hissed, squeezing her eyes shut as if she was preparing herself “yes, higher”

He travelled north again, stopping right before he could graze the little bundle of nerves. He could see the pleasure was building fast, the tension in her neck giving her away as much as the words escaping her lips.

“Oliver… oh God Oliver please… please… touch me.”

“But I am touching you” he murmured, tracing circles, teasing her entrance.

“Not… I need… higher. Touch me higher” she moaned, pressing her hips against his hand.

*Tell me the words, baby. Tell me the words…*

He was painfully hard now, his cock begging for attention but witnessing her pleasure was a delicacy he couldn’t resist.

“Where? Where do you want it?” he asked in her ear, his teeth pulling at the lobe.

“My clit… please touch my clit” she finally blurted out and he felt a flash of pride warming his heart. Every single time she was pushing her boundaries with him, whatever they were, it was like winning an Olympic medal.

He rewarded her, bringing the vibrating toy up, letting it graze her citoris as delicately as possible, knowing she must already be extremely sensitive and not wanting to bring any discomfort. She tensed instantly in his arms, letting out a long wail as she bit her lower lip.

He paused, wanting to be sure he wasn’t applying too much pressure.

“Yes… yes” she groaned, bending her legs and reassuring him in the process that she was in no pain at all. He resumed his small circle movement, slowly applying more and more pressure, until he could rest the vibrator directly over the little button. He started to move it up and down, always making sure to maintain contact with her clitoris and she cried out his name, spurring him on. He pressed harder, rewarded by a strangled moan as he kept the same pattern. She was having a hard time staying still, thrashing against him as she chased her release and the hand that had been kneading her breasts was now forced to pressed down on her stomach.

“Come on Felicity… come for me. Show me how good it is.”

“I want you… Oliver I want you” she gasped as he started to rub faster.

His dick jerked against her back at the pleading tone, begging to fill her. He locked his jaw, knowing they would get there shortly but craving her scream of pleasure first.

Three, four more circles and her thighs tightened as a breathless whimper caught in her throat. She threw her head back, a loud scream finally escaping her lips as her body started to tremble in his arms “oh God… oh Oliver… oh…”

He swiftly got rid of the vibrator, pushing her forward until she was on her knees, her hands gripping the opposite edge of the tub. He allowed himself about a quarter of a second to admire the perfect ass on display just for his eyes before he mirrored her position, already taking a hold of his cock and pushing it between her legs. He brushed against her folds, searching for her entrance and sighed loudly when he finally pressed in, her warmth welcoming him.

Felicity bowed her head, still out of breath from her climax, her stretched arms supporting most of
Oliver groaned as he filled her with one thrust, her walls still fluttering from her orgasm. He closed his eyes, savoring the way she was massaging him deep inside her body. Pressing the firm globes of her butt between his hands, he pulled out, only leaving the tip, his eyes dropping to where their bodies were joined. He sank back into her heat and slowly started to gain a rhythm, pulling her flush against him with each thrust, grunting when he finally bottomed out.

He licked his lips as he saw her juices covering him, the proof of her pleasure and arousal starting a fire low in his belly. He had been the one who made her lose control. The one who knew how to touch her, where to touch her to bring her to the edge. The one who made her scream and moan her pleasure several times in a row, until her voice was hoarse and her body limp.

She started pushing back against him, moaning his name and the vision of her plump ass bouncing back against his hips almost made him swallow his tongue. He already knew her body so well, knew exactly which spots to hit to make her see stars and he slowed down, keeping his thrusts shallow, making sure to rub against her g-spot repeatedly.

“Oooooh…. Ooooh” she whined “right there, yes right there.”

“You close, baby?” he exhaled loudly, his fingers tightening on her hips, keeping his pace steady.

“Yes… oh yes” she panted, arching her back “just… keep going. Keep going. Keep…”

“Do you need…” he trailed off, keeping his own pleasure at bay, knowing that in this position, she could climax very fast.

“Uh-uh” she shook her head, whimpering “I’m almost… almost there. Don’t stop… please don’t stop, don’t stop.”

Despite his body screaming for him to go deeper, to pound into her and find his relief, he maintained the same rhythm, her breathing letting him know that she only needed a few more thrusts. Her moans were getting louder, her fluttering walls trying to suck him deep inside until they suddenly clamped down on him. She gasped violently as she reached her climax, her long strangled wail echoing across the room as he felt a rush of liquid warmth bathe his cock.

Gritting his teeth, he pressed in deeper, his eyes closing as she milked him, her body sneakily trying to coax him into completion as well. Breathing through his nose, he stroked the small of her back as she rested her head against the edge of the bathtub, still mewling her pleasure.

She eventually turned, meeting his eyes “you didn’t…?”

He shook his head, lovingly caressing her trembling thighs as she licked her lips, still trying to catch her breath “OK… OK. Hum. How do you want us to proceed?”

He chuckled at her choice of words, so formal, as if he wasn’t buried inside her after making her come twice. “How are your knees?”

Frowning, she shifted her legs “good. Yeah, good. Why?”

Sighing, he slipped out of her, wincing once he saw the angry purple shade of his tip. He really was on his last legs.

He sat back, pulling her towards him until she was facing him and straddling his lap.
“You want me on top?” she asked, perking an eyebrow. He understood her surprise because no matter how much he liked letting her take control, he usually always finished on top. He liked the sensation of pushing between her thighs as he sought his release, his thrusts rapidly turning into a furious pounding, his mind no longer controlling his body. But tonight he wanted her to be the one to bring him over the edge.

“Yep” he whispered, guiding her down. She slipped a hand between their bodies, circling his cock and he hissed when she brushed the head.

“Sorry” she grimaced, kissing his forehead. She placed him at her entrance and slowly sank on his length. He closed his eyes, his head dipping until it rested on her chest, his arms circling her waist and holding her as close to him as possible, taking the time to enjoy how soft and warm she was around him.

She eventually slowly started to move, her hips rolling lazily while he peppered kisses over her chest and throat. He felt her lace her fingers through his hair, tilting his head back until she could press her lips against his. He sighed in her mouth, letting their tongues leisurely dance with each other as he accompanied the movements of her hips, rocking back against her.

She pulled his lower lip between her teeth before releasing him with one last peck. He gazed into her teasing eyes, drowning into them, into the blissful pleasure that was still lingering. He grinned when she kissed the tip of his nose, a few strands of her hair falling on his face.

Giggling, she pushed them back behind her ear, then rested her hand against the wall behind him, getting more leverage to move above him. He grabbed her hips, speeding up their movements as the coil of tension in his lower back started to grow tighter. His breathing quickened and he leaned his head until his mouth found a nipple, suckling on it like he had been dying to do earlier. He rolled the little bud over his tongue then released it with a little pop before doing the same to its neighbour. Felicity’s little moan of contentment under his ministrations was enough to peak his arousal as she pulled on his hair, her nails digging into his skull.

He suddenly felt something brushing his arm and his eyes caught a glimpse of the small purple duck innocently floating next to them.

One more.

Grabbing it, he switched it on, slipping it between their bodies unknown to Felicity who was busy nibblingling on his ear. She yelped when the vibrator brushed her folds and he laughed against her throat when she reflexively let go of his hair to rest her other hand against the wall as well, her hips gaining a forceful rhythm under the new simulation.

She rested her forehead against his, closing her eyes, their breaths mingling.

Their bodies being pressed so tightly, the vibrations were having an effect on him as well and, one arm bending around her hips, he guided her movements, pushing her up and down faster. The muscles of his neck tensed as the pleasure started to build at the base of his spine, and he knew he couldn’t hold back much longer. Her breathy moans, the tension in her arms as she pushed back against the wall to meet his thrusts, her wide eyes staring into his were becoming too much for him.

A buzzing sound started in his ears as the fire spread low in his belly. He bent his knees, his feet laying flat at the bottom of the tub to get more leverage, snapping his hips against hers. He tried to keep the little vibrator against her despite his sloppy movements but it eventually slipped out of his hand when the coil of tension suddenly sprung free.
He groaned, pushing her down as far as possible as he emptied himself inside her, his eyes closing as he found his relief. He slowly came back to earth to Felicity still riding him, pinching her lips furiously as she sought her third orgasm. There was something incredibly hot in basking in post-coital bliss and seeing her still tensed, chasing her own pleasure almost desperately. He was about to circle her clit when she suddenly shuddered, her mouth opening on a soundless cry. She collapsed in his arms, her head nesting in the crook of his neck as she mumbled incoherently against his throat.

He caught several “thank you's” and he couldn’t help but laugh as he rubbed the palm of his hands against her back.

Only Felicity would thank him after having done most of the hard work.

_Dancing queen_

_Young and sweet_

_Only seventeen_

Oliver groaned at the annoying music, his eyes battling to open. Felicity whined in his arms, hiding her face beneath the sheets as he tried to gather his bearings. They were in his room, tangled in his bed and the sound was coming from his right side.

“Make it go” Felicity moaned, her voice muffled by her pillow.

He blindly reached for his nightstand, grabbing his phone more out of habit than anything else. Pushing a random key, he brought it to his ear, mumbling a rough “hello.”

“Jesus Christ, finally!” Tommy’s loud voice reached him, making him wince. Rubbing his eyes, he checked the alarm clock. 9:17AM. It wasn’t exactly early, but it felt like he had just gone to sleep. Memories of last night surged his mind and he smirked, remembering exactly what had kept him - or them, actually- up for a good part of the night. After the bath, they had grabbed a bite and watched a movie. By the time they had made it back to bed, they had both regained enough energy for some lazy goodnight sex. It was way past midnight when they had finally fallen asleep.

“Ollie? Are you there?”

“Yeah, yeah. Sorry” he grumbled, passing a tired hand across his face “what do you want, Tommy?”

“What do… Dude, I haven’t heard from you for a week! You don’t answer your phone, you don’t text back… I was this close to calling in the national guard.”

Oliver rolled his eyes “I’ve been busy. Sorry.”

Felicity rolled away from him, grabbing a pillow to cover her ears.

“Tommy? Give me a minute.” Holding the phone against his chest, he pressed a kiss on her shoulder before slipping out of bed. He put on the sweatpants he had worn last night and tip toed out of the room, closing the door silently behind him.

“OK, what do you want?” he repeated as he made his way to the kitchen.

“Oh I don’t know… maybe to check if you’re still alive?” Tommy answered sarcastically.
“I’m still alive.”

“And?”

“And kicking.”

He heard Tommy inhaling slowly on the other side of the line and he bit back a smile.

“Did you make things right with Felicity?”

“... yeah” Oliver grinned as he opened the fridge. He had made things right for sure. Several times. Like I’m-Pretty-Sure-We-Broke-A-Record kind of several times.

“That’s it? That’s all I get? A ‘yeah’?”

‘... Yeah.”

“After all my hard work! Please at least tell me you got laid. I’m begging you. Dude it’s been so long, I was getting worried you might have to put it out of order permanently.”

Pouring himself a glass of orange juice, Oliver shook his head but couldn’t keep the huge grin off his face “That’s none of your business.”

“... You did. Hallelujah, you did!”

He gulped half of the glass in one go, the cool liquid soothing his throat “fuck off.”

“Don’t lie. I can hear it in your voice. My boy got lucky. I’m so emotional, I feel like eating some chocolate. That’s what you’ve done to me, all that drama with your love life. You made me PMS.”

“You’re a guy. We don’t PMS.”

“I read a lot of things about PMSing and let me tell you that I’m feeling things that make sense with the raging hormones. Apart from the sudden urge to assault people with toilet brushes, of course.”

“I honestly think that that kind of behavior is pretty uncommon, PMSing or not.”

“Thank God. I asked my date last night if she could give me a calendar of her cycle, you know, better be safe than sorry, and she slapped me. She slapped me, dude” Tommy whined “my poor face. It’s my best asset, you know.”

“... maybe she was PMSing?”

“Damn!” Tommy cursed “I didn’t even think about that.”

“Or maybe she thought that was incredibly rude and sexist?” Oliver offered again, leaning against the counter.

“... nah. She must have been PMSing. I’m not sexist. Or rude.”

Oliver pinched his nose, chuckling “sure. You’re totally not.”

“So when can I hope to see my best friend?”

“I’m leaving tonight… when I come back? I’d like to spend the first night at Felicity’s place but we can go for a few drinks the next one?”
Truth be told, he actually missed seeing Tommy. Even if he could spend every single minute of his existence with Felicity, he liked the careless moments he could share with his best friend. And knowing he would come back to her would always make things extra special. His nights weren’t his own anymore, and even if he missed her, there was something utterly comforting in the idea of either finding her asleep in her bed and snuggling beside her or just making plans to meet for lunch the next day.

Tommy sighed “ah, young love… when the heart rules your world and the other becomes the center of your existence.”

“You’re getting poetic.”

“That was a polite way to say you guys are probably going at it like rabbits.”

Oliver opened his mouth, then closed it. He couldn’t exactly deny it, after all. His sex life had been on the crazy side lately, even by his own standards.

“So, tell me. How is it?”

“I am not talking about my sex life, Tommy.”

“Nooo… being in love? Butterflies in the stomach and all that jazz?”

Smiling, Oliver traced a non-existent spot on the counter “yes. It’s fucking amazing. She’s so… she’s just perfect. She makes the cutest little sound when she wakes up in the morning and she hates getting out of bed on Mondays, apparently. I would have never guessed, she was always so cheerful at the office. We went on a picnic yesterday and everything is just… so easy. So simple. It’s just the two of us and she doesn’t give a fuck about who I am, who my family is. I honestly think she’d very much rather I wasn’t a Queen, actually. We were talking about kids the other day and-”

Tommy cut him off, gasping “wait, what?! KIDS??”

“No, nothing serious. The topic just popped up and I mentioned that with our different backgrounds, we would probably make a good team as parents if we ever wished to have some.”

“Oh God you scared me for a second. I’m not sure I’m ready to be Uncle Tommy.”

Oliver laughed “don’t worry. No plan in the near future. At all.”

“So, all in all… it was worth it? All the pining, the poor coffee maker, the writing poetry in the middle of the night, my poor innocent laptop completely destroyed?”

A small noise on the threshold made him raise his head and he smiled when he saw a barefoot Felicity wearing only one of his dress shirts. She yawned, rubbing her eyes, her messy hair framing her frowning face. She was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.

“... yeah. She was so worth the wait” he whispered, his throat suddenly tight, once again thinking that he was probably the luckiest guy on the planet.

He quickly hung up afterwards, promising to call Tommy as soon as he got back home so they could have a ‘manly evening’. Felicity only stepped in his arms once he put the phone down, burying her face against his chest. He caressed her back, his chin resting on the top of her head, knowing she still needed a few minutes to be fully awake. She eventually stepped back, her eyes much more alert.

“I’m hungry” she pouted, her hands reaching for the string around his waistband, tying it for him.
“I was going to make you an omelette and bring you breakfast in bed, actually.”

She groaned, dropping her head against his chest “can I still have the omelette?”

“That depends...” he murmured “... do you plan on keeping your promise?”

“What promise?” she asked him, frowning.

“You told me last night that you would...”

Gasping, she playfully hit him on the chest “are you trying to trade food for sexual favors?”

“Hey, you’re the one who told me you’d do it!” he raised his hands in defense, laughing “and it’s hard to not think about this kind of stuff when you’re only wearing my shirt.”

Truth be told, just seeing her in that outfit had been enough to cause a certain part of his body to stir.

“That’s all I could find and don’t you dare use it as an excuse” she scolded him, pressing a finger into his bicep.

“But Felicity... two weeks. Two long weeks. What if I forget how to use it??”

“Somehow, I strongly doubt that” she glared at him, crossing her arms “unless I’m severely mistaken, you went celibate for several months before we got together and it’s clear as day that it was like riding a bike.”

He grinned, flattered but unable to resist teasing her “I wouldn’t say a bike, per se. More like-”

She cut him off with a hand on his mouth “don’t you dare!”

“So no blowjob then?” he sighed deeply, saying goodbye to his fantasy of having Felicity dropping on her knees before him.

“Well, I never said that” she smiled cheekily, slowly lowering down in front of him “but it better be a hell of an omelette.”

Oliver gulped as she kneeled, her hands pushing his sweatpants down.

Two minutes later, he was burying his hands in her hair, his hips lazily pushing into her mouth.

His last coherent thought was that a simple omelette clearly wouldn’t cut it.

“... a hike?” Felicity asked him with wide eyes “you mean, like in nature?”

Oliver huffed out a laugh “well, yes, honey. Usually a hike in the woods implies that it happens in nature.”

After what would probably remain one of the best blowjobs of his life, they had made breakfast together. Well, he had cooked and Felicity had babbled and tried to help. He wasn’t exactly a chef, but could make a mean omelette and a decent breakfast and loved the idea of cooking for her. Felicity, on the other hand, could barely boil water and loved watching him get busy in the kitchen. It was a match made in heaven.
“But we already went into the wilderness yesterday” she pouted as she slipped on a pair of panties. They had quickly showered after cleaning up the kitchen, and that was when he had told her of his plans for the day. The mansion was located in the middle of a huge park, surrounded by woods. The entire property was deserted, very secluded and private and he wanted to take advantage of the fact that they were quite literally alone to give her a fuller tour.

“... we went for a picnic in a family park, Felicity. That’s… not exactly what I would call wilderness” he chuckled, shaking his head as he tied his sneakers “and our woods aren’t full of wild animals either, you know. There’s a small river, and it’s quiet, just a few birds chirping.”

“I’m not the most athletic person, you know” she bit her lips nervously, buttoning her summer dress. He tilted his head, enjoying the view of her creamy skin against the dark green fabric. She was going bra-less, a decision he would never go against, her hair tied up on the top of her head, and no glasses.

“Hon, you usually walk all the way to work, I promise you it’s not even that far” he lightly pecked her nose, gently pulling on her hand.

After grabbing a few necessities -water, a blanket, a few protein bars mainly-, they made their way across the gardens, Oliver telling her random stories of the games he used to play with Tommy and, when she had been old enough, Thea.

Fortunately, Felicity was wearing a pair of walking sandals, which proved useful once they stepped inside the small forest. Keeping her hand in his, he guided her on the uneven ground, making sure she wouldn’t trip on some fallen branch or knotty root. They stopped in front of a tree where Tommy had engraved his initials with the ones of his 4th grade crush inside a heart. Felicity laughed as he told her that he hadn’t dared to do it at his own home, because his dad was much more strict than Moira and Robert.

“What about you?” she asked as they resumed their walk “is there a poor tree bearing the mark of your love?”

“Nope. I was going to do it but then I found her kissing another boy.”

“Aww. I’m sorry. That must have been hard” she teased as he helped her step over a fallen tree.

“... I ratted them out to our teacher” he admitted sheepishly.

“Oliver!”

“I was 9, OK?” he defended himself “and it was against school rules anyway!”

“Oh, I’m sure you cared a lot about school rules” Felicity snorted “a model student from the beginning, right?”

Coughing, he swiftly changed topic, not really willing to go down that road. They eventually found the small river and they followed it until it grew wider, the banks covered in rocks instead of mud. It was barely 5 feet wide, the bottom of the river still clearly visible, but the place was sunny and looked quite comfortable.

Felicity sat down on a big rock right away, sighing deeply as she took off her shoes. Dunking her feet in the cold water, she leaned back on her arms, wiggling her toes.

“OK… this is actually divine” she murmured, her eyes closed, an almost ecstatic expression on her face.
Getting rid of the small backpack he was carrying, he sat beside her and handed her a bottle of water.

She took several long gulps and he couldn’t help but smile at the way she wiped her eyebrows as if they had just climbed up a mountain. His eyes travelled down to her toned legs, remembering exactly how it felt when she wrapped them around his hips. Unable to resist, he leaned in, brushing a kiss on her knee.

Felicity giggled, stroking the back of his neck “I knew I should have worn pants.”

“You have amazing legs. It would be a crime to cover them. Especially when I’m the only one who can see them” he grinned, letting his fingers trail to the inside of her thigh.

“You’re insatiable” she exclaimed, a small smile tugging at her lips.

“Look who’s talking” he winked, patting her knee one last time.

They eventually left the river to lay down on a small patch of moss, watching the sun play in the tree leaves, until Felicity decided to take a nap. She instinctively turned to him as she tried to find a comfortable spot, rubbing her cheek against his chest until she nestled her face in the crook of his neck, her hand resting over his heart.

He breathed in deeply, inhaling the scent of her hair as he slowly stroked her back. He felt a pinch in his heart when he realized he wouldn’t spend the night with her for at least two weeks, his body already so used to having her pressed tightly against him. His mind started to drift away, imagining all the things they’d be able to do once he’d come back. His thoughts travelled to an idea he had had a while ago, before his father passed away. He had pushed it away during all these months but suddenly it was back again, his relationship with her being the final push he had needed to make the decision.

“Are you asleep?” Felicity whispered suddenly.

“No” he shook his head, squeezing her hand as she shifted in his arms until she could meet his eyes.

She frowned, her finger stroking his eyebrows “you have thoughtful face.”

He grinned, stupidly moved by the fact that she could read him so easily “I was thinking about… getting my own place.”

Raising her eyebrows, she sat up beside him. He mirrored her, reaching out to push back a strap of her dress that had fallen on her shoulder.

“You mean… a home? Like a real house or apartment?”

“Probably apartment” he grimaced, not seeing himself living alone in a big house. Now, a nice duplex… inside the city, near her place… that was something he could actually picture.

“Oh” she said “I… I had no idea you had that kind of plan.”

“I thought about it before my dad passed away. But then… with everything that happened… it just didn’t seem that important anymore. And I didn’t want to leave Thea and mom alone.”

Felicity pinched her lips, nodding quietly. He knew her well enough to understand she was struggling to find the right words and he tilted his head, confused by her reaction. He had thought she would be enthusiastic, being able to sleep at his place without worrying about his family being nearby.
“Is there something wrong about this?” he eventually asked, her silence starting to unnerve him.

“No” she smiled reassuringly “I think it’s a great idea. It’s just…”

“Yeah?”

“When you first wanted to move out… was it because you and Laurel were supposed to find a place to live?”

He raised his eyebrows in surprise that this could be what had her nervous “Hum… no. Things weren’t going smoothly with my parents and I needed space. Too much pressure, too many fights. I…” he shook his head, huffing a dry laugh “to be totally honest, I never even considered Laurel when the idea first struck my mind. She had some plans, though… in the future. I just always avoided talking about them.”

“So it wasn’t a… next logical step? Like an ‘I’m in a serious relationship so I should move out’ kind of decision?”

“No. I’m not proud of it but… I honestly don’t think my past relationships ever mattered enough for me to care about this kind of thing” he winced, not exactly comfortable with the memory of his past behavior.

“Then… why now?” she asked softly, her eyes searching his.

“I just… I want my own place. I want to be able to cook breakfast for my girlfriend or chase her around the apartment without worrying about who could interrupt us. I want her to feel comfortable enough to only wear my dress shirts - or nothing at all, I’m not picky” he leaned towards her, his mouth brushing her jaw “and I want her to be able to be as loud as she wants to.”

Laughing, she pushed him away “of course it comes back to sex.”

“Well, you said it yourself: I’m insatiable.”

“You’ll have to make sure there is a big bathtub.”

“I’ll also buy a bed with a padded headboard, don’t worry” he smirked, remembering the complaints of her neighbour.

Felicity groaned, dropping her head “don’t remind me of that conversation ever again.”

“So… you think it’s a good idea? Moving out, I mean?” he smiled, changing topics.

“Yes… yes, I think it is. If you want to, then you should do it” she nodded seriously.

“I just don’t want Thea to feel abandoned” he grimaced, concerned about the way his little sister would react. He knew she was a teenager now, and he was slowly approaching his thirties so it made sense to have him moving out - especially since he had almost gotten married.

“She’s almost 16, I’m sure she’ll understand. Just… make sure there’s an extra bedroom so she knows she’ll be able to visit you and that your home always has a place for her?”

“… yeah. That’s a good idea. I’ll ask Tommy, he used to sleep with a realtor. Still does occasionally, actually” he frowned, suddenly hoping his best friend was still in in touch with her “you’ll come with me? For visits, I mean?”

Felicity winced, scrunching her nose. His smile fell from his lips at her hesitation and a sudden fear
grew in his chest. Was he moving too fast for her? Even if the apartment was only for himself, maybe she wasn’t comfortable being involved in such an important decision?

“I’d love to” she eventually said “but…”

“But?”

**OK, don’t freak out. You guys have only been dating officially for a week and a day, after all. Even if it feels like months.**

“I think you should ask Thea” she said hesitantly, her hand reaching for his “I mean… she would feel involved. She could help you decorate if she wants to, you told me she loved shopping. It would also prove to her that you don’t see her as a kid anymore.”

Oliver froze, letting her words sink in. Yeah… yeah that would make sense. It could be something he could share with his sister, instead of him just moving away from her.

“But I’d love to give my opinion!” Felicity reassured him “although judging by how you’re the one who actually helped my find my own place, you probably have good instincts. I mean, I didn’t even have to pay a security deposit. Not that you would mind that, obviously, but when I arrived in Starling, it was such a relief to know I could avoid spending that money.”

Oliver felt his cheeks burn, his eyes avoiding hers. Which of course, only raised her suspicions that he was hiding something.

“… Oliver?”

“I paid the security deposit” he blurted out, risking a glance when she didn’t answer. She was staring at him, her mouth slightly agape in surprise.

“You what?”

“I paid the deposit. I made a deal with the landlord. I mean… I knew you had just arrived and just got out of school, with a scholarship so… you probably didn’t have much savings” he mumbled, embarrassed. He hadn’t thought twice about it when he had asked Dig to give him the landlord’s phone number, the money meaning very little to him.

“But… that was… a few days after I started working for you and… and you were such a dick back then!” she exclaimed, the disbelief clear in her voice.

“Jeez, thanks” he grumbled “by all means, don’t hold back.”

“… why? Did Dig ask you?”

“No. Of course not. I just… listen, I think you deserve every single dollar I spent by putting up with me, anyway.”

“Oh, that’s for sure” she snorted.

He glared at her “I told you… I assumed you probably could live without spending too much money until your first paycheck, that’s all.”

“… were you ever going to tell me?”

“Honestly? I kinda forgot about it until you mentioned it two minutes ago.”
He had never thought back about it in all those months and then their relationship had slowly shifted into something completely different and her apartment had become the last thing on his mind concerning her.

“I didn’t want you to live in a shady place just because you couldn’t afford a deposit and I knew you’d probably be too proud to accept anything you hadn’t earned yet” he explained calmly.

She stared at him for a moment, blinking repeatedly. He was getting uncomfortable and was about to apologize - even though he didn’t see why he should, but better apologizing and having his girl back than that awkward silence between them - when she suddenly threw herself in his arms, pushing on his torso until he was lying on his back.

The shock took his breath away for a second and he groaned “you really need to stop doing that.”

“I just want you to know that I will repay you. Every single dollar. But… that is probably one of the sweetest things anyone has ever done for me” she smiled at him and he was surprised to see her eyes getting teary.

He frowned, his hands automatically reaching for the small of her back “Honey… it’s not... I mean I didn’t do anything extraordinary. Just…”

“Just a simple gesture in order to make sure I was safe, and not expecting anything in return. Thank you” she kissed the corner of his lips “you were just a closeted gentleman, after all. You really fooled me.”

He chuckled, his hands sneaking underneath the skirt of her dress “I think it’s safe to say I really fooled a lot of people, then. Including myself.”

She smiled against his lips, her small chuckle making him grin as well. Her teeth bumped against his and he laughed at the small frustrated groan she made. She eventually nibbled on his lower lip until he couldn’t take it anymore and slipped his tongue into her mouth. His hands were squeezing her ass, firmly massaging the globes, then stroking delicately the small patch of skin that wasn’t covered by her underwear.

A small moan escaped her when he let his fingers wander to the inside of her thighs and she pushed back far enough to mumble “we’re not having outdoor sex.”

“.. why?” he whined “we don’t need condoms, you’re here and willing, I’m here and willing… there’s no one around…”

“What if a wild beast finds us?”

“They’ll get a great educational show.”

She narrowed her eyes at him, pinching her lips.

“Felicity, there is no wild beast here. Maybe a deer or two and a few birds and squirrels, but that’s it. Come on, you can feel I’m already in the mood. And…” he paused, his fingers swiftly slipping underneath the hem of her panties “I’m clearly not the only one” he concluded with a smirk.

Felicity huffed, moving up from her position until she was kneeling. She let her eyes travel over his chest, licking her lips, before shaking her head resolutely “No.”

He watched her as she eventually stood up and straightened her dress. Sighing, he sat up as well, wincing at the uncomfortable tightness in his pants. He leaned against her leg, nuzzling his nose
against her skirt, his fingers tickling the inside of her knee.

She yelped, her knees buckling “Oliver!”

He bit back a smile when she caught herself by grabbing his shoulders. He let the nail of his index finger travel to her inner thigh and she giggled, trying to wiggle away from him while still holding him for balance.

She eventually managed to step away from him, pressing herself against the trunk of a tree to make sure he couldn’t reach her, shaking a finger at him “behave!”

A sly smile slowly stretched his lips as he met her eyes and for a few seconds neither of them moved, too engrossed in their staring contest. He knew he was going to make a move, and she knew it too, yet she was still staying well within his grasp, her eyes sparkling and daring him.

Something must have given him away because she suddenly squealed, turning away and made a beeline for the trees. Cursing, he jumped to his feet, already running behind her. He could have caught her in an instant but he kept his pace purposely slower, giving her the illusion of the advantage. Where would be the fun in catching her right away, after all?

She was surprisingly agile, jumping over rocks, avoiding branches, as if the adrenaline helped her coordination. He could hear her laugh as she tried to escape him and he suddenly sped up, his body having decided that the chase had lasted long enough. She had just stepped in a small meadow when he got close enough to catch her by the waist, lifting her against him. She turned her head and he suddenly let go, caught off guard by a sudden pinch of pain.

“You bit me?!” he gasped, his eyes travelling from the small imprint of her teeth to her smug face.

“Yep” she nodded proudly, slowly walking backwards “that’s for all the hickeys you gave me.”

“You sneaky little…” he grinned, absolutely unable to be even slightly mad at her, not when she was looking at him with such a cheeky smile “you know I can’t let that one go, right? I’m gonna have to punish you.”

He tried to sound as dominant as possible but miserably failed, knowing his eyes were probably giving him away.

Her eyes quickly left his to look at the sky and he took advantage of the opportunity, slipping both arms around her hips and pulling her flush against him, seeking her mouth.

She breathed against his lips “it’s going to rain.”

“No” he mouthed, his hands taking a hold of her behind and lifting her until she could wrap her legs around him. She dipped her head, kissing him and he forgot all about the rain, the fact that he had left their backpack near the river and didn’t even have a blanket. He forgot everything but her and the way she felt in his arms, the taste of her lips, her breath against his cheek.

He slowly lowered them on the ground, their lips still locked in a messy kiss. With a hand over her back, he guided her until she was lying down, his body covering her. His hand travelled down to her knee, pulling it up until it rested over his hip, his mouth now ravaging her neck. She pressed small kisses over his head, her fingers reaching for the hem of his shirt, trying to pull it up. He quickly kneeled back, getting rid of it for her and he licked his lips when he saw her undoing the first buttons of her dress, baring a triangle of skin on the top of her chest.

He moaned at the sight, his lips already grazing the soft valley between her breasts, his nose pushing
the fabric back little by little until it uncovered a nipple. He softly blew on it, Felicity shivering underneath him, her hands reaching for his hair. His tongue circled the sweet little berry and he closed his eyes, savoring the taste of her skin as he opened his mouth, sucking on the soft flesh. He brought up his hand to the other breast, swiftly pushing her dress away, his thumb already teasing and taunting the areola.

Felicity’s hips rocked against him, seeking friction, small whimpers escaping her mouth. He pushed back against her, feeling her heat through their clothes and the way she was rubbing her foot against the back of his thigh let him know she was already as turned on as she was.

Sitting back on his heels, he undid the remaining buttons that shielded her body from him, his breathing quickening with every inch of naked skin appearing. He pushed the fabric on each side of her, his mouth lowering over her belly button, his tongue circling it, his teeth nibbling, his lips suckling. He could smell the divine scent of her arousal and he let a finger trace the hem of her underwear while he rubbed his stubble against her sensitive skin.

He straightened up, grabbing her panties and sliding them down. She helped him, lifting her hips, raising her legs until he reached her feet. He let the already damp fabric fall on the ground next to him, getting rid of her sandals as well. He gulped at the view he had in front of him. She was naked, sprawled out in the grass, offered to his eyes, and his eyes only. She licked her lips as her thighs squeezed his waist, her heels pressing on his ass.

He wedged a finger between her outer lips, teasing her soaked entrance before sliding up until he could bump against her clitoris. She arched her back, her hands gripping the grass by her sides, her thighs falling open over his hips.

She looked at him with hooded eyes, murmuring his name in a desperate voice.

It was his undoing and suddenly he couldn’t wait one more second. He needed to be inside her, he needed to feel her around him and his trembling hands shuffled with the button and fly of his pants until he could finally lower them far enough to pull his cock out. He locked his jaw as he pushed his boxer briefs down, not even bothering to get fully undressed. Grabbing her thighs, he pulled her closer to him and he stroked his aching length a couple of time to relieve the pressure before pushing in slowly, letting out the breath he wasn’t even aware he was holding back.

Slowly untangling her hands from the grass, he laced their fingers together, still kneeling between her legs. She nodded her head to the question in his eyes, letting him know he could move and he sighed, pulling out of her, only to thrust back in, inch by inch, taking his time. She squeezed his hands, biting her lower lip when he filled her to the hilt but her eyes never leaving his.

He started a lazy pace, holding onto her, lost in her eyes, hypnotized by the love he could see shining in them, a love he knew was only mirrored in his own. She let out a trembling smile, her fingers stiffening around his before letting go, her hands reaching for his sides instead. He leaned forward then, resting his weight on his outstretched arms, his hands by her shoulders. It relieved his knees, allowing him push slightly harder and the way she dug her fingers in his flesh let him know she didn’t mind.

“Yes?” he asked nonetheless, knowing that with all their intense activities, she had woken up quite sore that morning.

“Yes” she whispered back, nodding her head, sliding the palms of her hands lower until she could press against his ass, pushing his clothes lower.

He felt the first drops of rain fall on his back then, small pearls of cold gliding on his skin as his hips
resumed their movement. He inhaled deeply, the smell of rain mingling with the grass and her own unique scent, invading his senses, warming him up from the inside. Making love had never felt more right than it did in this moment, when their bodies were joined in the middle of a lost meadow, the sky the only witness.

He followed the lead of her hands, accepting her rhythm, guided by the small moans escaping her lips. The few drops were getting heavier, now enough to cool his overheated skin and her mouth opened on a little O of surprise when she finally felt them too. Her eyes quickly left his and she took a look at the sky, a small smile tugging at her lips.

He chuckled, bowing his head, still thrusting inside her, the heat of her body forming a stark contrast with the cold water slowly falling upon them.

She laughed then, the most beautiful sound he had ever heard “don’t you dare stop.”

Never. I’ll never stop. I’ll never stop loving you, I’ll never stop making you laugh. As long as you’ll let me, I’ll love you, with my heart, with my body, with everything you’ll accept from me.

There will never be another one, my heart will never love anybody else the way I love you. You’re the one for me, the one who makes me feel whole, the one who makes sense of every single path I have taken, because they all led me to you.

Her breathing hitched suddenly, her nails digging into his thighs, her legs stiffening around him. She arched her neck, offering her face to the rain, her tongue peeking out to lick the few drops that had reached her lips. He could see the way her nipples were pointing towards him, a trail of goosebumps erupting in the valley of her breasts where the raindrops were lazily gathering.

“Aaah… yes… yes” she chanted, her eyes dropping to where they were joined. He followed her gaze and swore under his breath, the vision raising his arousal to dangerous levels. He snapped his hips against her and she gasped loudly, her nails digging into his lower back, hard enough to leave some marks.

He tried to focus on her, to keep his pleasure at bay, but he could see she was climbing fast, the rain falling on her body seemingly enhancing the sensations.

“Baby… come for me” he begged her, the fire in his belly growing wilder with each thrust, the drizzle now growing thicker, dampening his hair, making the grass slippery under his hands. His fingers dug into the earth, anchoring himself as his entire body was now aiming to bring her pleasure, to hear the tantalizing sounds of her release.

Her little mewls were growing louder, her face now wincing with tension and he couldn’t muffle his needs any longer. Speeding up the pace, he felt his balls drawing up tighter, the muscles of his thighs stiffening and he groaned through his clenched teeth at the way his insides were tying up, knowing his climax was only a few thrusts away.

She suddenly let out a small wail, biting her lip, and it built up and up until she opened her mouth wide, taking a big gulp of air, her eyes completely unfocused and cloudy. Her head snapped up as she suddenly bent her legs, spreading them to accept the final push that would send her flying over the edge.

“Ooooh…” she panted desperately, her voice getting higher “ooooh… yes. Yes yes yes yes… Oliver just…”

The rest of her words got muffled in a long strangled moan as she finally fell head first into her
climax.

“I love you” he whispered, gazing at her, knowing she probably wasn’t able to hear him but unable to keep the words to himself “God, I love you.”

Watching her come undone around him, her dazzled eyes struggling to stay open, made him forget everything else. He knew then, with a blinding clarity, that she had just erased from his mind every single one of his past adventures, every meaningless one-night stand. Every partner he had had would be faceless from now on, empty memories of a past life he once had thought he’d never be willing to leave behind.

It was with her name on his lips that he finally let go, the pleasure so intense it felt like it had melted his bones. He blacked out for a few seconds, or minutes, he didn’t know, but when he finally came back to earth, he was lying on top of her, his face buried in her neck while her fingers slowly laced through his hair.

He would have stayed there forever, rain or no rain, but Felicity shivered and he knew that she must have been getting cold, despite his own body heat covering her. Reluctantly, he pulled out of her, lifting himself on shaky arms.

“It’s raining” Felicity stated once more, her eyes twinkling.

He huffed out a laugh, readjusting his clothes while she tried to button up her dress, the damp fabric offering resistance. She grimaced as she stood up, giving up with the very last buttons. The rain was falling much more heavily now, and her panties were almost soaked.

“Hum…” Oliver scratched his head as he picked up her underwear “I guess you don’t want to put them back on?”

She scrunched up her nose in disgust, shaking her head. He put them in the pocket of his pants while she slipped into her sandals. They quickly walked to the woods, sighing with relief once they were under the shelter naturally created by the tall trees.

They didn’t waste time and Oliver guided her back to where they had abandoned the rest of their belongings, quickly hiking back to the mansion. They could hear the thunder, still far away from them but the sound only convinced them to walk faster. By the time they emerged out of the small forest, it was pouring, and they both paused as they took in the small mist created by the water falling on the warm ground. Felicity shifted uncomfortably on her feet and he turned to face her.

“I’m sorry… do you think you can run?”

“Yeah” she nodded “that’s… that’s not a problem.”

“Then what’s wrong? You’re wiggling like… are you in pain?” he asked, paling suddenly at the thought that maybe he had been too rough. He mentally cursed himself, because he knew she had complained earlier about her ‘private parts’ being a little bit over-used.

Blushing, she refused to meet his eyes when she mumbled “no that’s fine. It’s just… messy.”

He let out a sigh of relief “you mean the rain?”

“No. You. You made a mess… you know. Hum. God don’t make me say the words” she mumbled, her cheeks heating up.

“I made a… Oh” he smiled, suddenly understanding “I’m sorry, babe. We’ll take a shower as soon
as we’re home and I promise I’ll make sure I un-mess everything.”

She side-eyed him when he grabbed her hand. Pressing a small kiss on her knuckles, he asked her “ready?”

“Well…” she winced, looking at the buckets of water that were currently dropping from the sky “not really but I guess I don’t have a choice.”

“Nope” he grinned as he pulled her behind him, running towards the house, Felicity trailing behind him.

She squealed loudly when the rain finally soaked the rest of her dress, drenching her to the bone “Oliver Jonas Queen, I blame you for this!”

He led her to the side of the house, the private entrance being the closest they could reach. She was cursing like a sailor, blaming his stupid male DNA and the traitorous weather and he laughed, a full belly laugh at the colorful words that were coming out of her mouth. They had barely made it to the door when he spun around, his hands cradling her face, his lips already on hers, not giving a care in the world about the weather or his DNA as long as she was beside him. She protested loudly at first, a furious groan that made him grin even more before her arms circled his shoulders, her lips pressing back against him, suddenly just as hungry and enthusiastic as he was.

“Heck no, Miss Smoak, I’m trying to get us inside” he chuckled as she chased his lips for a second kiss, turning her around and typing the code for the electronic opening. They stumbled inside a small utility room, Oliver kicking the door closed behind him.

He snorted as he took her in, her drenched hair hanging limply, her dress clinging to her body “you look like a wet dog.”

She slapped his arm “and whose fault is that?!”

“Come on, let’s go take a shower, it will warm you up” he pushed her towards another door, noticing how she was shivering.

“Oliver, I can’t walk inside… my shoes are gross, I’m dripping water everywhere” she stopped him, horrified. It might have stopped him if her teeth weren’t chattering from the cold.

Sighing, he bent on his knees, pushing his shoulder against her stomach and swiftly got up, his arm behind her thighs. The whole thing barely took a second and he was already walking, Felicity thrown over his shoulder, when she seemed to realize what had happened “Oliver!”

He ignored her, a one-sided smirk on his face as he made his way across the first floor, each of his steps making a squeaking sound on the wooden floor.

“Oliver! Put me down!” she slapped his ass when he didn’t reply and he retaliated right away, his palm landing on her butt with a loud smack.

“What… you… oh goodness that’s high” she squeaked as he started to climb up the stairs. Her hands reached for his hips, holding on for dear life “oh God, oh God, don’t drop me. Oliver, I swear to God if you drop me…”

He rolled his eyes as they made it to the second floor, his steps getting wider as they approached his room. A few seconds later, he was dropping her sandals then putting her down, his fingers already undoing enough buttons so he could slip her dress off her. Quickly turning on the shower, he helped untie her hair, combing his fingers through the messy locks, then pushed her under the hot water.
He got naked in record time, joining her right away, holding her against his chest as he added the side water jets. They stayed a few minutes in each other’s arms, their bodies gradually warming up. Felicity eventually raised her head and he pressed a soft kiss on her lips before reaching out for her shampoo. She turned around in his arms as he poured a generous amount of liquid in his palm, gently massaging it into her scalp. He guided her under the jet, helping her rinse, then conditioned her locks.

Despite his protests, she washed his hair as well and, after a bit of bickering, they mutually scrubbed the grass stains on various body parts.

“We still haven’t had shower sex” he sighed regretfully as they finally stepped out, the entire bathroom full of steam.

“It’s only been one week” she laughed, wrapping a towel around her head.

“Best week ever” he grinned lazily, kissing her cheek before grabbing a towel for himself.

“You know… you could help me” Oliver pouted as he sorted through his clothes.

“No way. Let that be a lesson for you: last-minute packing is the worst” Felicity looked at him from her position on his bed. She was sitting on the edge, doing God-knows-what on his tablet.

Groaning, he went to his walk-in closet, picking up his suitcase. When he came back inside his room, Felicity had put the tablet aside and was sitting with her legs-crossed, peeking through his shirts.

“White shirts. I approve” she nodded.

Dropping the suitcase on the bed, he smiled “I’ll keep that in mind.”

Opening up his luggage, he started to pile up his clothes, relieved that he wouldn’t really need any formal outfit. He paused when he opened a side pocket, his eyes falling on a small bag. Grinning, he picked it up, swinging it in front of Felicity’s face.

She frowned, obviously confused and tentatively reached for it. He let it go and quietly observed her when she peeked inside, a small giggle escaping her “you kept those things?!”

“Yup” he nodded proudly as she grabbed the box of condoms.

“Still unopened?” she asked, perking an eyebrow.

He laughed, remembering that night when he had sent her away to buy him a box of rubbers “I didn’t need to use them. You had me so infuriated and… flabbergasted that I automatically walked back to my own room. I only remembered about those girls when I got to bed and by then… let’s just say they had lost their appeal.”

“Good. And I see you never needed the treatment for genital herpes. That’s a relief” she smirked, patting his leg. She then handed him the tablet she had previously worked on, already back into its case “Here. It’s all set up. There’s everything you might need, including skype. Also, I made sure you could catch a wifi signal for as long as possible, even when you’re in the middle of nowhere. It might not be 100% efficient, but it’s still much better than the basic stuff.”

“Oh, thank God. I really want to have to some heated skype sessions with my girl.”
She shook her head “Oliver, we’re not having cyber-sex while I know Andrew will probably be sleeping in the room next to yours.”

“Ok, then you just have sex on your own and I’ll watch. With earbuds” he offered innocently “and I know your mom’s collection should keep you busy for a while.”

Pinching her lips, she glared at him, tilting her head.

“Let’s make a deal” he whispered, grazing her lips with his “you try it once, and I’ll make sure to buy a giant mirror to put above my bed when I move out. What do you say?”

She grinned “I say you really improved your negotiating skills since you hired me, Mister Queen.”

“Son, thank you for taking me with you” Andrew said as he stepped on the Gambit, Oliver greeting him from the deck.

“I should be the one thanking you” Oliver shook his head, smiling “I’m glad I actually have company. It will also give us plenty of time to discuss that new contract without having to wear a suit.”

Andrew laughed as Oliver guided him to the small room he was going to occupy during the next two weeks or so. “After a few decades, suits become your new normal, you know.”

Once his guest had settled in, they toured the boat, Andrew having a passion for sailing that he had never been able to completely fulfill before. Between the company, his children and then his wife passing away, he had never had the chance to go on a cruise across the oceans. When Oliver had mentioned that he was supposed to deliver the Gambit in Asia, he had naturally offered his business partner - now closer to a mentor, to be honest - the opportunity to come along.

It was already dusk when they raised anchor and finally cast off, both men enjoying a bottle of wine as they watched Starling City harbor disappear behind them.

“How are things going at work? I noticed it wasn’t your lovely assistant answering your calls anymore” Andrew asked as they munched on a selection of cheese and crackers.

“She… quit. A few weeks ago.”

“Oh. Damn, that’s too bad.”

“Not really” Oliver grinned, popping in a grape “we’re dating now and she leads her own team in a promising tech company.”

“Following my advice, I see?” Andrew smirked, tipping his glass at him “told you: you marry that kind of girl, you don’t let them slip through your fingers.”

“We’re not there yet, but… yeah. Hopefully, one day” Oliver narrowed his eyes, his fingers tapping impatiently against the table “I was wondering… you started working with your wife, right?”

“Yes. She was my secretary. Then we dated, and we got engaged quite fast actually.”

“When… when did you know? That she was the one?”
“I think a part of me knew even before we went on our first date. It was just there, in the back of my head… I just… I could see myself with her. Down the line, buying a house, sharing a bathroom, getting yelled at because I forgot to unplug the sink… starting a family. It wasn’t something sudden, just little pictures that kept piling up until I just thought ‘fuck this, I need to know.’ And I asked her out. Everything that happened afterwards proved two things to me: one, she was the love of my life and two, those little pictures in the back of my mind never did justice to what we shared during those thirty years. Despite the pain of losing her, I don’t regret a single thing. She gave me beautiful, healthy children, the warmest home a man could dream of and her unconditional support.”

“I’m sorry” Oliver winced, suddenly uncomfortable at the idea he might be waking up painful memories “it must be hard for you to talk about it.”

“No. Not anymore. There are not a lot of men who get to have what I had. I treasure those memories of her. She made me the happiest I have ever been and I’ve never looked too close at another woman since our first dinner. Oh sure, I’m a man, I still can enjoy the sight of a beautiful lady, but… I’ve had my fair share of affairs before her and when you know how rare it is to find that kind of connection, you actually become terrified of losing it. Even after she passed away, I never could see myself with anybody else. God knows my kids tried to hook me up with that online dating thing they use to meet nowadays” Andrew grumbled, waving dismissively.

Oliver pondered his words, trying to put himself into Andrew’s shoes, the mere thought of having to live in a world where Felicity didn’t exist twisting his guts. Funny how things could change in a matter of months. One year ago, he had been perfectly content with his life, enjoying parties and girls and good wine, thinking that a life of carelessness was probably the most beautiful gift his parents could have offered him. He didn’t know she existed back then, he didn’t know she was there, somewhere on the east coast, trying to move on with her life, unaware of how she was going to twist his world upside down and change everything. She didn’t know he was going on with his empty life, trying to fill voids he was too self absorbed to see, those same voids that would become blindingly clear during a reception at the mansion, months later, when she had bravely stood up for him and given him the courage to do the same.

“How… how did you even survive that? I mean, I’ve only known Felicity for a short while and just the thought of losing her is… it’s unbearable” Oliver eventually asked.

“I had to be there for my children. And I knew I was going to see her again one day and the last thing I wanted was to be welcomed with a rolling pin” he chuckled, taking a sip of wine.

Oliver huffed out a laugh, the image of a furious Felicity waiting for him with a toilet brush dancing in front of his eyes.

Yeah… I wouldn’t want to piss her off either.

The next week passed in a relative routine. They would usually share their meals with the small staff that was travelling with them, spending the morning working either together or in their respective rooms, enjoying a nap on the deck after lunch if the weather was dry. They would also play chess or poker with two members of the crew, or simply sit down and enjoy the salty breeze. One thing was consistent, though: he always retreated back to the master bedroom early, ready to fire up a skype session. He had been surprised to see that his connection was still working properly after so many days, but he knew it was bound to end sooner rather than later and was hell bent on enjoying every single minute of conversation he could have with Felicity. Conversation or… other things. With a lot of teasing and pleading, he had finally managed, on the fourth night, to convince her to take off what she was wearing -one of his shirts, unsurprisingly since she all but raided his wardrobe the previous
weekend- and one thing leading to another… he had slept like a baby that night, already planning on buying a gigantic mirror to place above his bed. And also maybe above his future bathtub, if that was possible.

He was lying in his bed, one week exactly after their departure, his wide eyes staring at the ceiling. He had stayed online with Felicity until she had slowly drifted into sleep. If it was after 11PM for her, it wasn’t exactly time for bed for him. He had read a book, watch one of the movies she had downloaded on his tablet but still wasn’t feeling tired. It was well past midnight and he was unable to get to sleep himself, his body probably getting restless due to his lack of activity.

Sighing deeply, he eventually turned on the bedside lamp, thinking that maybe a drink would help him relax. Padding his way across the room, he opened what he knew was the drawer where his father used to hide his bottle of scotch. Pouring himself a generous amount, he put back the bottle, mentally making a note to make sure he wouldn’t forget to check the rest of the room at the end of the trip. Rolling the glass in his hand, he sat down on the comfy chair near the desk. A sudden wave rocked the boat, the drawer he had just closed reopening and he cursed, leaning to push it back again. That’s when he realized the bottom of it was moving as if the wood panel was broken.

Frowning, he took out the bottle of scotch and the few glasses, as well as an ugly corkscrew that he remembered making at school for father’s day.

Lifting the bottom, he realized that there was a hidden compartment, one he had never been aware existed. Inside, he found a small zippered bag with what looked like a notebook. He held out the unassuming object, frowning, until he made his way to the bed, where the light was brighter. Opening the plastic bag, he saw that apart from the notebook, there was also an envelope with a simple name on it.

His name.

Gulping, he passed a trembling hand over his chin, recognizing his father’s handwriting. He twisted the innocent piece of paper between his hands, unsure if opening it was a good idea. He sighed, eventually putting it beside him, and then opened the notebook instead. It was small, barely the size of his hand, the cover made of a thick dark leather. He opened it, his eyes narrowing once he saw the empty pages. Turning it, flipping through the pages, he saw there wasn’t a single word written.

“What the…” he murmured, utterly confused. Why would his father hide a notebook if nothing was written in it in the first place?

Licking his lips, he took a deep breath, his eyes falling to the unopened letter, sensing that the answer to his question might be found inside.

With a shaking hand, he ripped the envelope open, pausing for a few seconds before unfolding the single sheet of paper it was holding.

Oliver,

I wish I could tell you everything face to face. Like a man. I do hope I will never have to explain anything to you, but if this letter reaches you, then I have failed.

I am not proud of the man I have become. You think that I’m disappointed in you because you are not following my footsteps, while the truth is that I saw you heading in the exact same direction I took years ago and I know now that I am not an example anyone should follow. Especially not my son.

I built our wealth using your mother’s connections, following the rules, sometimes twisting them but
always trying to not cross a line.

I did cross that line, eventually. I didn’t realize how close to it I was, until I was stepping over it, not looking back, not thinking twice about the implications for other people. For Starling. We made profits over profits, millions and millions of dollars that we will probably never even have the use for, all of that by stepping on people who were just trying to make a decent living for their family.

When I first started working in business, I had visions of grandeur, of how I could be admired, envied for my success. I never thought that my own ego would make me do shameful things. Closing factories, moving jobs to China or to a random place on earth where we would pay our workers a few cents an hour. Stealing retirement plans from hard, faithful workers, just so our benefits could gain a few hundred thousands dollars. The city became poorer because of me, and because of our circle. We ruled over it, not with magnanimity and care, but with greed and a heart cold as ice. In return, half of our hometown became so miserable that crime went up, people slowly losing everything they had, just so we could get even more.

I lost my soul along the way and I have no one else to blame but myself. I am not the only one. I am far from the only one, most of this city’s elite being in on this project.

Last year, some of us met, and we all agreed the situation couldn’t last anymore. Our streets weren’t safe anymore, our children were in danger as soon as they were stepping a toe outside of our protected homes. I was failing to see that this situation we deemed unbearable had been caused by our very own actions.

As I see you now, I’ve come to realize my shortcomings. I see you trying to step away from me and I couldn’t be more proud because I know now that I’m not a model for you. I don’t want you to become me, blinded by the power of money, the success. I wish I could guide you, I wish I could have told you why I was backtracking concerning you and your place in the company. But I am a coward, my son. I don’t want to see the shame and disappointment in your eyes.

I am going to make things right. For you and your sister, and for the other children in our city. The people I deal with are our friends, our partners, our employees. They represent the high society, members of the upper class that you would never suspect. Don’t be fooled, Oliver. They are ruthless and will show no mercy and if I’m not around anymore, it’s probably because they sensed I was trying to pull away from them.

I will leave this letter in Walter’s possession, if anything were to happen to me. I trust him and you can trust him too. He is unaware of all the schemes that have been going on in the underground of our houses, where charity galas were just a facade for something far more sinister.

If you read this, then you will know I have failed. Protect your mother and sister, maybe leave town before they get their hands on our family. I would never be able to forgive myself if anything happened to any of you because of my choices. You and Thea are my greatest pride, I wish I could have been a better parent for the both of you and be there for the next steps of your life. I’m sorry I won’t be, but I know deep in my heart that you will be wiser than I ever was and make the right decisions.

I love you,

Your father.
the date on the top right corner. He took a shaky breath, picking up the innocent looking piece of paper that had just torn his world apart. His thumb traced that one single line over and over again, mentally doing the math.

His father had written that letter a few days before his death.

Suddenly, everything became clear. The gas explosion, how the insurance had largely compensated the company for their loss while so many families were now jobless, QC not having to offer any severance pay. Somehow, Oliver doubted his father would have ever done something like that, condemning people to death. Maybe that had been the wake up call for him, maybe that was when he had realized that things were going way too far.

… only one thought remained, circling over his head again and again until everything became blurry except for two sentences.

His father didn’t die in a freak accident.

He had been murdered.

Chapter End Notes

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*whistles*

Find me on twitter @PimsiePim or tumblr pimsiepim.tumblr.com
Don't be shy come say hi ;)
It Must Have Been Love

Chapter Notes

Hi guys!
This it it. This the final chapter of HGW.
There is no smut, nothing of the sort but it's emotional. You have been warned.

Just make sure you read until the very end (and no cheating ;))
Gigantic thank you to all the ones who have helped: yellowpretendingtoberead, my very first beta; Pidanka, my beloved delta, mysticaldetectivepande my second beta, Nadia, for your little pieces of advise. And each and every single one of you who commented, reached out, sent kudos... It has been an amazing journey for me, something that makes me really proud of myself. I managed to write what could be considered as a giant novel (in terms of size).

Song: It Must Have Been Love - Roxette

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"It Must Have Been Love"

(it must have been love but it's over now)

Lay a whisper on my pillow,
Leave the winter on the ground.
I wake up lonely, there's air of silence
In the bedroom and all around

Touch me now, I close my eyes and dream away.

It must have been love but it's over now.
It must have been good but I lost it somehow.
From the moment we touched, 'til the time had run out.

Make-believing we're together
That I'm sheltered by your heart.
But in and outside I've turned to water
Like a teardrop in your palm.

And it's a hard winter's day, I dream away.

It must have been love but it's over now.
It was all that I wanted, now I'm living without.
It must have been love but it's over now,
It's where the water flows, it's where the wind blows.

It must have been love but it's over now.
It must have been good but I lost it somehow.
It must have been love but it's over now.
From the moment we touched, 'til the time had run out.

Yeah, it must have been love but it's over now.
It was all that I wanted, now I'm living without.
It must have been love but it's over now,
It's where the water flows, it's where the wind blows.

(must have been love but it's over now)

“Are you sure you’re OK?” Felicity asked for what seemed the hundredth time that night. Oliver had called her through skype an hour before, and he had been oddly quiet, the dark circles underneath his eyes portraying his lack of rest.

“Yeah… I just… I found something last night” he eventually admitted “it’s about my dad. He left me a letter that he never got the chance to send me and… it shook me up.”

“Oh. Was it bad?” she winced, knowing that Oliver’s relationship with his father was still, in many ways, an open wound.

“No… not really. I mean… he told me he was proud of me and I found out some things about… he wasn’t exactly the man I thought he was…” Oliver trailed off, his voice trembling. He cleared his throat “I’ll tell you about it when I see you, OK? I think it just messed me up a bit.”

She bit her lips, feeling awfully useless, thousands of miles away from him. She wanted to reach through the screen, stroke his hair and let him rest his face between her breasts - his favorite nuzzling spot, according to him, although shortly followed by her stomach.

“Alright” she eventually nodded, sensing he was probably not comfortable talking about it right now. Lying down on her stomach, her feet swinging behind her, she then proceeded to tell him about her day in an effort to lift his mood. His small laugh warmed her heart even if she could see he wasn’t his usual happy self - his lack of teasing concerning the collar of his shirt that was hanging so low that it literally put the top of her breasts on display was a clear proof of that.

“God, I miss you” he sighed when she finished telling him about how she had dragged Dig along to buy a new pair of walking sandals - the ones she had worn during their small hike being completely ruined.

“Do you know when you’ll be home exactly?”

“The captain said we should reach Hong Kong in about 6 to 8 days. A little bit longer than we thought, the weather has been unpredictable lately. Then the crew will clean the boat one last time, I officially deliver it to its new owner and catch the first flight home.”

She yawned, her inner clock protesting the late hour. It was almost midnight but she didn’t want to hang up yet.

“Go to sleep, babe” he smiled softly “just so you know… we passed Hawaii and I’m not sure how the signal is going to hold on, apparently it’s very weak in the area. Don’t be surprised if you don’t hear from me until we approach Japan.”
Groaning, she dropped her head “why couldn’t that buyer live in Seattle or something.”

“That would have been my preference as well” Oliver snorted “come on, get under the sheets, I’ll stay until you fall asleep.”

She swiftly stood up, sliding under her duvet, getting comfortable on her side and setting her tablet against his pillow. He told her about how they had tried to fish most of the day, their attempts completely unsuccessful.

“I thought you hated fishing” she mumbled sleepily, her eyes closing.

“I do, but there really isn’t much to do on a boat. It’s driving me insane, actually. If I could, I would take a dip into the ocean, sharks be damned.”

She smiled, the sound of his voice slowly lulling her and she heard his small chuckle but couldn’t find the strength to open her eyes.

“I love you” he eventually whispered and the last thing she heard was the usual disconnecting blip.

“I love you, too” she breathed in the emptiness of her room, snuggling into her pillow, letting the darkness embrace her.

“Felicity?” Daniela’s voice reached her and she raised her head, dropping the small screwdriver she was holding in her hand.

“Mmh?”

“I’m getting a sandwich, do you want something for lunch?”

“Oh. It’s lunch time already?” Felicity asked, surprised. She had spent the entire morning in the lab, dissecting cables and wires -her personal guilty pleasure.

“Yup. You spent hours doing… whatever you do. Are you OK?”

“Yeah” she rubbed her forehead “yeah, I’m fine, just… it usually helps me empty my brain.”

“When is Mister Hot Stuff coming back?” her assistant asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

“In a few days” Felicity laughed, knowing better than to ask her to not call him that “actually, if I’m not mistaken, he should reach Japan soon, so I should hear from him today or tomorrow.”

“Awesome. If you could ask him to send us more chocolate cake, we wouldn’t complain, by the way.”

Grinning, Felicity shook her head “I don’t think it’s polite to actually request presents.”

“One would argue that sending toilet brushes isn’t exactly good manners either, but apparently it didn’t stop him” Daniela smirked, crossing her arms and leaning against the door.

“I told you it’s-”
“A private joke that involved you finding what you thought was a pervert in the bathtub of your hotel room” Daniela continued for her “one of these days you’re gonna have to tell us you managed to get Oliver Queen and Tommy Merlyn to share your room.”

“It’s a gift” Felicity winked.

“Sure, sure. Don’t share with your friends! Anyway, turkey sandwich with guacamole, as usual?”

Felicity scrunched her nose in disgust “no, the guacamole made me sick yesterday. Grilled chicken with eggplant caviar. And rocket. Oh and also a side of hummus and celery chunks.”

She gave a few bills to her assistant, then went back to untangling her wires.

“We need to simplify this” she muttered to herself “those damn watches are going to break down at the slightest shock.”

So absorbed by her task, Felicity didn’t even realize that it took much longer than usual for Daniela to come back with their lunch. She didn’t hear the small commotion outside of the lab, the people hesitating by the door or throwing a curious glance at her. She didn’t realize that something was wrong until Ray appeared on the threshold, clearing his throat.

“Felicity…” he said quietly, trying to gain her attention.

Frowning, she sighed, putting down the pliers “what can I do for…”

She stopped herself once she saw the expression on his face “Ray, is everything OK?” She glanced at the clock, realizing that Daniela had been gone for almost one hour now and a terrible feeling sank in the pit of her stomach “where’s Daniela? Is she OK?”

“Oh God, you scared me” Felicity let out a deep breath, relieved “you should see your face, I swear it’s like something… something bad happened…” she trailed off as he stepped closer to her, leaning on her table.

“Felicity, you don’t have your phone with you or… didn’t check the news, did you?”

“No. We have bad reception here anyway and… I haven’t been online since I woke up” she explained, and the way he avoided her eyes made her gulp, a giant lump forming in her throat “OK, Ray you’re freaking me out. What’s wrong?”

“I’m sorry, Felicity but apparently there has been an accident. Oliver’s boat has been missing for days now and they just confirmed that—"

... An accident? Oliver? The Gambit?

“What?” she cut him off, shaking her head “what are you talking about?”

“I’m so sorry. It’s all over the news, Queen Consolidated just released an official statement. Felicity… there are no survivors.”

Felicity stared at him, her mouth slightly open. She could hear the words coming out of his mouth, each and every single one of them making sense - separately. Noun, pronoun, verb, adjective. She categorized them mentally, sorting them into neat little folders. But put all together… they made no sense. She tried to grasp them, to put them in another order, to twist them anyway she could think of
but they still were not making sense.

“No” she eventually said, blinking “no, no. That… you’re not making sense, Ray. Oliver is fine, he’s about to reach Japan’s coast. He actually should have yesterday but… but” she stuttered, her trembling hand rubbing her forehead “but… he told me the weather was… unpredictable. Yes. That’s the word he used, he said unpredictable. He’s going to arrive soon, he told me he wouldn’t have a signal. The boat didn’t sink. They’re not missing.”

She could see in his eyes that he didn’t believe her and she insisted, the strength of her conviction making her voice stronger, “Oliver is not missing.”

“Another ship received a mayday call four days ago” Ray explained softly, his hand reaching for hers “they haven’t been able to locate the Gambit and lost all signal from it. It vanished from all radars.”

“That just… it must be a giant misunderstanding. If it went missing four days ago, we would have heard about it sooner!” she gripped his hand, her eyes pleading with him “Ray, I would have heard about it sooner!”

*I would have known. I would have felt it!*

“The coastguards were apparently unaware of whose boat is was… it took a couple of days until they could trace it back to the Queens, and then… I guess they wanted to be sure before… I think they only got the confirmation today.”

“But… the press… they always find out whenever the Queens are concerned” Felicity shook her head, unable to grasp the reality of the situation. Too many things didn’t make sense. There were too many plot holes and Oliver was going to call her today anyway and everything would just be a gigantic mistake. He would be back in a few days and she’d pick him up at the airport, she had already made arrangements to be able to take a day off, having worked extra hours ever since he had left. Then they’d head back to her apartment and he wouldn’t give her the time to undress before stumbling to her couch. She’d force him to take off his shirt nonetheless because she had missed the feeling of his muscles rolling underneath her palms. And they’d make love until they eventually fell asleep and they wouldn’t move from her living room ever again because the world outside was dangerous and she had gotten so scared when all those people had tried to convince her that he would not come back.

“You’re wrong” she gritted through her teeth, letting go of his hand as if had burnt her “I don’t know whose sick idea this is but Oliver is not gone. He called me four days ago. I talked to him, I saw him and he was alive and tired but he smiled at me and he told me he loved me and he’s not gone, Ray. He is not gone.”

“Do you want me to call someone? A friend, maybe? You should go back home, Felicity” Ray said softly.

“... why? It’s the middle of the day. I still have work to do. Those bloody wires just…” she took a deep breath, exhaling slowly as she picked up her pliers “I can fix them, Ray. I need to fix them.”

“It can wait. Let me drive you home, at least” he gently took the pliers out of her hands, putting them down “come on, let’s go.”

It was as if her body was an autopilot. Later, days later, she’d realize that her muscles, her veins, her blood, her bones… they had already understood. They had already accepted that unspeakable truth, the unfathomable reality that her life had been changed forever. Her skin had been touched by him
for the last time two weeks ago. Her ears had heard his voice for the last time four days ago. Her eyes had fallen asleep that fateful night to his tender smile, his face so soft, so full of love that it had warmed her from the inside, knowing she was loved by this man, loved unconditionally and that their journey was only beginning and it was going to be beautiful and they were going to be so happy because they had finally found each other.

But she wasn’t there yet. Her brain could sense that the pain of accepting this would be so violent, so deep, so intense that it would cause irreparable damage. It was rejecting the information like the body rejects a transplant or a foreign body, fearing the infection. She was numb, and as Ray walked her to his car, she didn’t even notice how the hallways were empty, or how her bags were waiting for her by the door. She didn’t realize they were in his car until he stopped it in front of her building.

She saw his lips moving, the way he was trying to catch her eyes but his words were just a white noise and she knew he wouldn’t leave her alone until she would at least say something.

“I’m fine. I’ll call someone” she said in a flat tone, opening the door, quickly shutting it behind her. She walked up the stairs, her heavy steps echoing into the empty space. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight… eight… that’s where he kissed me when he picked me up from work the first time.

Turn to your right. Your door is the one with the purple carpet. Take your keys - they’re in the front pocket of your purse. It’s the big one, with a blue little rubber thingy around it. Stick it into the keyhole, don’t forget to pull the door towards you because with the heat, the wood got thicker and it’s tricky. Close the door now. Drop your bags, take off your shoes. That’s it. You’re home, honey.

And it’s his voice that guided her until she was standing in her living room, her keys hanging limply from her hand. The voice that she would never hear again was still echoing in her ears, still making sure she’d make it home safely, because she knew that’s what he would do if he could. Something, deep inside her, knew that what she needed now was him and since he couldn’t be by her side, her memory was trying to fill in the void that was already forming in her soul.

It was the buzzing of her phone that finally brought her back to reality. More out of habit than anything else, she picked it up and pressed it to her ear once she saw the identity of her caller.

“I’m fine, Dig” she said in a monotonous voice “I’m home. I’m fine.”

She didn’t wait for his answer, hanging up and throwing the phone on her dining table. She went to the sink, poured herself a glass of water. She took a small sip, her eyes staring at the empty bowl she had left there that morning. She had run out of her favorite cereals, having once again forgotten to stop by the grocery store. She’d have to make a list, though, because Oliver was going to be back soon and he preferred bagels for breakfast.

There was a small voice in the back of her head, whispering things she didn’t want to hear and she pushed it back because she was home, she was safe. It was their little cocoon, nothing bad could happen in here. It was where they had made love for the first time, built up a little world where pain and loss and grief didn’t have any place. All she needed to do was to stay here, the door tightly closed, and he would come back to her.

She took a deep breath, eventually turning around, making her way back to the living room. She stopped by the couch, grabbing his hoodie, the one she had thrown there in the morning. Slipping her arms in the sleeves, she breathed in deeply, his scent still lingering. He was there.

She was turning around when she stepped on something solid that dug into the sole of her naked foot. Bending, she picked up a small piece of cardboard, frowning in confusion until she turned it between her fingers, one side a dull brown colour, the other a shiny mix of black and silver.
A puzzle piece. Her eyes travelled to the coffee table, where Oliver’s unfinished puzzle was still spread out.

She stared at it, stared at the big chunk he had already completed, the small piles he had made with the other pieces. The frame was a perfect rectangle, but with a gigantic hole in the middle.

The little pieces he had assembled, patiently, despite her nagging and teasing, were staring back at her, as if she was at fault that they would forever stay incomplete.

And that’s when it hit her. Oliver would never come back.

She gasped, her lungs burning with the need for air, a lump forming in her throat as a sob fought to escape. She wobbled on her feet, her hand reaching out for the back of her couch, trying to stay up, but the pain hit her with the force of a freight train and she collapsed, squeezing that damn puzzle piece in her hand with all her strength. The tears came then, unstoppable, as if someone had suddenly opened the gates and there was no way to hold them back. She wailed, the sound of her grief as loud as the ocean that had taken him away from her, had stolen a piece of her that would never be replaced. She wept for the loss of her soulmate until her throat was hoarse and the only noises that could escape her were small whimpers. The tears didn’t stop, flowing until her skin became raw, until her mouth was dry, until she passed out from exhaustion.

She woke up to the sound of her phone vibrating against her table but she stayed where she was, lying on the floor, her body curled up in a small ball, wondering how she was still breathing, how she was still alive, how could she have survived the pain, how could she have lost him days ago and not felt it.

It wasn’t right. She should have felt it, she should have felt her soul being torn in two as she was abandoned on this earth. His last breath should have been hers because she didn’t think she deserved to be thrown in hell, forced to face a world that he had left.

It wasn’t fair. Someone should have warned her. Someone, out there, should have sent a sign that he wouldn’t come back and that she had to tell him goodbye. That she had to tell him how much she loved him, because they were already running out of time.

There were so many things she still needed to tell him. How she had secretly hoped that their children would have his eyes. How his laugh was her favorite sound in the world. How he had enchanted her life. How those few days with him had been the happiest of her life. How much she would miss him. How much she was already missing him.

That’s how Dig found her an hour later, still prostrated, still unable to move. He sat down next to her, taking her in his arms, her body offering as much resistance as a ragged doll.

“He’s not coming back, John. He’s not coming back” she blurted out as he held her, ugly sobs tearing through her throat. His voice, usually so steady, was now broken and trembling as he caressed her hair with a shaking hand. She could feel his tears falling in her neck, both joined in their pain, and both alone in their grief as they had never shared Oliver with anybody else.
She woke up the next day with a pounding headache. Dig must have carried her to her bedroom because she was underneath the duvet, still fully dressed. She sat up, wincing and covering her eyes, taking a few breaths. She was just about to get up when the door opened softly, and her mother’s face appeared in the frame.

“Oh, baby” Donna whispered, entering the room.

“Mom” Felicity tried to smile but she could only manage a grimace as her eyes started to swell up again. Her mother was next to her in an instant, pressing her head against her chest like she had done so many times when Felicity was still a little girl. Except this time it wasn’t an ouchie, it wasn’t something that could be fixed with a lollipop and a magic kiss.

“I’m right here, baby. It’s OK. I’m right here” Donna chanted, cradling her. Felicity tried to control her breathing, the perfume of her mother soothing something in her, the scent so familiar and reassuring in the middle of the storm she had been thrown into.

“There is this gentleman, Tommy. He stopped by… he wanted to know if… I’m not sure he actually really knows why he came but he said that if you wanted to, he’d come back.”

Felicity shook her head violently, the idea of seeing anyone almost repulsive.

“Alright, alright” Donna hushed her “he left me his phone number, I’ll call him, don’t worry.”

Felicity eventually managed to gather her bearings. She took a long shower, and when she stepped into her living room, she was surprised to see Dig sitting at the table with her mom, the two of them talking quietly in front of cups of coffee.

“Hi John” Felicity greeted him as she sat down next to them, reaching for the third cup that was waiting for her, letting the warm liquid soothe her sore throat.

Dig nodded at her, presenting a box filled with donuts. She shook her head, not sure she could stomach anything.

“You have to eat something Felicity. When was your last meal?” he asked her softly, after sharing a look with Donna.

Frowning, Felicity searched through her foggy memory “Hum… yesterday. Breakfast.”

“You need to swallow something, sweetie, or you will pass out” Donna chimed in “look there’s one filled with raspberry jam, it’s your favorite.”

Reluctantly, she accepted the round pastry, nibbling on it. She was surprised when her stomach didn’t protest and suddenly realized that she was indeed feeling very light-headed. She eventually finished her donut in record time, already reaching for another one, barely paying attention to her guests who resumed their conversation.

“There won’t be a funeral… not any time soon, at least. I know they plan on maybe a small ceremony later but… Moira is still shaken up and it’s not a priority right now. Maybe in a week or two” Dig was explaining, munching on his own breakfast. He cleared his throat then turned his attention to Felicity “Ray Palmer called me yesterday. He said you could take all the time you needed. He would check up on you in a few days.”

She nodded, the sudden thought that she would have to go back to the world of the livings, step out of her safe haven, suddenly leaving a bitter taste in her mouth. She put her unfinished pastry back in the box as she stood up.
“Mom… I’m gonna go back to bed” she said quietly, pushing her chair back.

“Alrea…” Donna stopped herself, a small smile stretching her lips “sure. I’ll stay here. Mister Diggle has been kind enough to do some grocery shopping for us.”

She padded back to her bedroom, slipping under the sheets on his side of the bed, hugging his pillow tight against her. She felt the usual burn in her eyes and she bit on her cheek, trying to keep the tears at bay. She drew in several shaky breaths as she nuzzled her nose against the pillowcase. She eventually drifted back to sleep, her brain shutting off, offering her that peaceful rest.

The next few days followed the same pattern. Her mother would try to get her to eat something, force her to shower, and she would crawl back to bed. Dig would stop by, checking upon her and even though she appreciated the attention, she couldn’t find it in herself to thank him. She was numb, she was cold, she was dead inside. The only thing she was able to feel was the pain of his absence. And it was the only thing she would give anything to make disappear.

One week exactly after Oliver had been declared dead, the Queens held a small, private ceremony at the mansion. Tommy had tried to reach her several times but she had dodged his calls, letting her mother deal with him. She couldn’t see him. She couldn’t bear the thought of seeing him, talking to him while every single thing about him reminded her of Oliver.

Dig picked her up that morning and the two of them made their way to the Queen mansion in silence. She was wearing a black dress that her mother had bought for her and it felt so utterly wrong to visit Oliver’s house one last time in mourning clothes. When Dig stopped the car at the end of the alley, she saw that there were a dozen limos parked in front of the house, and she could see, further on her left, a few rows of chairs and a single tombstone. She gulped, closing her eyes and suddenly she knew she wouldn’t be able to walk to that empty grave. She wouldn’t be able to face all those unknown faces, all those people who didn’t know her, who didn’t know what Oliver and she had shared. She was a nobody to them, his former assistant, maybe a friend at most.

She could see Moira welcoming Oliver’s friends from afar, the matriarch easily recognizable even from that distance.

Laurel passed by their car, supported by a man who seemed to be her father and when Moira opened her arms and hugged her, Felicity closed her eyes shut. She didn’t belong there. It wasn’t her place.

“Dig…” she murmured “please… let’s go.”

“Felicity, I think you should stay. It’s important to say goodbye” Dig put a comforting hand on her arm but she shook her head.

“It’s not… he’s not there. All those people, they are mourning someone who was not my Oliver. I’m not… I don’t know them and they don’t know me. Please” she whispered, her voice weak but confident that staying would only hurt her more, only deepen the pain, a cynical reminder of the little amount of time she and Oliver had been granted.

Dig stayed silent but started the car and headed back to the city. He drove her directly to Palmer Tech, as she had asked. She had to keep living, she had to try to get back to her own life or she would just drown in her sorrow. Oliver would have never wanted that for her.
Her job became her salvation. She threw herself into it, without reserve. She would stay at the office until her eyes could barely stay open, then call a cab and drop on her bed. It became her life, the center of her existence. Without meaning to, she cut herself from her team, still leading them, still doing her part but mostly working on the side. After four months, she was able to present her own prototype to the board, the one using the solar battery that Oliver had inspired her to create. She had suggested launching two kinds of watches, a simple one, using the research of her team. It could be marketed for a younger public, with a cheaper price and fewer applications. And her watch, the one she had created, cradled, the one that had kept her from drowning so many times, could be sold to demanding customers, the kind of clients who wanted something revolutionary.

And it was. Palmer Tech started to reproduce her battery for other products, becoming a worldwide leader in the area within the next two years. People bought her watch, by hundreds (at) first, then thousands and soon millions. It warmed her heart to know that millions of people were wearing a watch around their wrist and had no idea that inside of that watch, there were three tiny letters engraved. OJQ. It was her mark, his initials, her own way to make sure he was still a part of her world.

After finishing her project, she asked to be moved to New York. Once she had achieved what she wanted, there was nothing to keep the memories at bay anymore. Oliver was everywhere. The park in front of Palmer Tech. The farmer's market. The coffee shop, the bakery, every place reminded her of him, reminded her that now she was alone. She would make her own way, just by herself, and she would make him proud. He had loved her brain above everything else and if that was the only way she could honor him, then she would never stop inventing and creating.

The day she was supposed to leave Starling, not for good, but for long enough to give her wounds time to heal, she called a cab and gave the driver the address of the mansion. It was a wednesday, a beautiful morning of May and as she stepped in front of the tombstone she had avoided all those months ago, she let the tears fall one last time. She stared at his name for what seemed like hours, saying her goodbyes, telling him that she wasn’t running away and that she would come back.

She cried when she told him she loved him for the first time, staring at a cold empty grave instead of his beautiful eyes. She would carry that regret for the rest of her life, that she had held back her words. If only she had known back then. If only she had known that they didn’t have years and months but merely hours and days. Yet, she could sense that this regret would shape her.

Loving him had made her stronger, had awoken a fire inside her, a will to live for the two of them. He had opened her eyes, had changed her life for the better. He had made her happy.

When she finally walked back to the cab, there was a pot of white daisies, the ones he had given her for her birthday, exactly one year ago. And a memorial plaque.

It was quite simple, just a black piece of marble and two sentences that she had picked from her favorite book, because she knew that, eventually, it would fit.

The days will always be brighter because he existed.

The nights will always be darker because he’s gone.
One day she would be able to enjoy the sun again, and it would remind her of his smile.

One day.

*I promise you.*

---

**Eight months earlier**

He was alive. He didn’t know how, he didn’t know why. But he had survived. Long enough to reach the stony shore of what seemed to be an island lost in the middle of the ocean. Or sea. He had no idea where he was.

All he knew was that he was alone.

And that he had to find a way back home. He had to find a way to survive, to make it out of there, and to go back to his town, to his family… to her.

He squeezed his eyes shut, his fist closing protectively on the small object that had kept him sane for the last few days. It was the only thing he had left, apart from the small survival pack that had been stocked in the life raft. Why he had stored it in his pants pocket, he would never know. Why he had chosen to wear those pants that day, he would never know either.

But it was a sign. It had to be one.
Felicity. He would come back to her.

Wait for me.

Chapter End Notes

... soooo... who's in for Part 2? ;)

Of course Oliver is *not* dead. Of course he is going to come back Of course, of course, of course...

I have quite a lot of things to explain. When I first started to pitch HGW I had in the idea a much shorter fic (about 15 chapters) where it would end with Felicity leaving Oliver (as I did), but her leaving being what Olive needed to realize he was in love with her. He'd grow a pair, would ask her out for a date then... step on the Gambit. The ending would have been open (he comes back and they live HEA or he doesn't... and that's when the idea for part 2 started. It wasn't something sure at first but it quickly changed. Hence why the story got longer. This is also why it was *such* a long slow-burn: they had to be completely, 100% madly in love with each other before their relationship started because he was going to be stranded right after.)

Why? Why couldn't I finish it on a happy ending? Many reasons. The first one was that their beautiful journey ending on a happy note, with a wedding... was nice. But not epic. Their love *is* epic but telling it isn't enough. I have to show it. And showing their love literally resisting everything even death itself... Damn. That is epic. That is the kind of love story I want to write. One where despite everything, despite the years apart (not five, spoiler alert ;p)... they're still it for each other.

I love writing emotions. That's what I do best, I think. That's why I love writing humor: it makes people laugh. But that is also why I loved writing this final chapter: it is emotion at its finest. I hope it was emotional for you, because it really was for me. I had to show Felicity's utter devastation and heartbreak. ANything less than that would have been diminishing their love and after such a build up such a beautiful relationship growing under our eyes... I couldn't settle for anything less than devastating. My main goal wasn't to go for "angst porn". No, that's not my style. I don't think anyone could say that Felicity's reaction would be less brutal.

Also this ending is going to twist many characters... Felicity. On the show we often complain about how much of mainpain there is. This is going to be, quite clearly, the opposite. She is the one who lost him, Oliver still knows she's alive, somewhere. The girl she was until this last chapter is going to turn into a strong woman, one who knows exactly how bitter regrets can be, how much love can hurt and how she can quite literally survive anything life will throw at her. Be ready, if you follow me into Part 2, to meet a Felicity Smoak slightly changed. Matured.

Oliver, obviously... What will happen to him? Is it going to be like on the show? Completely different? A bit of a twist? ... you'll have to wait and see but he is going to be different. Matured as well and... let's just say he might gain some abs.
Moira... I think I planted a few seeds... Moira is going to become a bit different too. Thea, Tommy, Dig... all of those characters will remain the same as they are in this verse but, in a very organic way, will also be slightly different in some aspects.

Part 2 will be darker. But I love writing humor so... there will be humor. More OTA. More Delicity.

Honestly, I have talked about part 2 with Pidanka and a bit with mysticaldetectivepanda. They are very -very- entusiast. Pidanka had a hard time accepting it (she... unfollowed me, blocked me and muted me on twitter when she found out...) but... we honestly think it will be worth it. It just opens up an new world of possibilities and I can't wait to get my hands on that.

I know some will be very disappointed about this ending. I feel sorry about that but... I couldn't do justice to the story or characters by forcing myself to write something I don't really believe in.

I often stayed vague or purposefully misleading in some of my answers to your comments... I'm sorry, I was really being my inner Guggie. Some of you did have the feeling this would happen though, which doesn't really surprise me.

Fun fact: First and last chapters are both named after a Roxette song. I didn't even do it on purpose... but I've had this chapter title since the beginning.
Fun fact number 2: No one cried more during this chapter than me. I can promise you that.
Fun fact number 3: yeah I'm aware there's nothing funny about those facts. Blame the English language, OK?
Fun fact number 4: The quote at the end is from my favorite book, by Tiffanie Debartolo (God-shaped hole or The shape of my heart, depending on the edition.)
Fun fact number 5: I am still struggling with a title for part 2... I know you don't have many info but... hit me with your ideas ;) (if I pick one from you... chocolate giveaway yay!)
Interlude

Chapter Summary

Hi people!
This is a small drabble I wrote for the Ship Of The Year. It is the message Oliver and Felicity left to Dig when they were drunk as hell in Ivy Town.

Also, this is my way to let you know that the sequel has been posted and you can find it here:

http://archiveofourown.org/works/7693105/chapters/17526601

See you on the other side for those who want, and for those who don't, I hope you enjoy this little scene that was cut from HGW ;)

7 missed calls. 1 voice mail. Diggle frowned when he saw that Oliver had tried to call him, in the middle of the night, while he was hundred miles away. Slightly nervous, he quickly listened to the voice mail, hoping the situation wasn’t too serious.

A high-pitched giggle was the first thing he heard.

“Dig! Diggle! Diiiiiig… Diggladeee Diggладаaaаа Diggadeedadaaa!”

“Felicity, stop screaming, I can’t hear him!” Oliver hissed in the background.

“It’s an answering machine you dimwit!”

Dig raised his eyebrows, understanding right away that there was no emergency. He sat down more comfortably on his chair, taking a sip of coffee. *This should be good.*

“He’s always so serious. And strong. Have you seen his arms? They’re huge!”

“I have big arms too!”

“Well, yes… but his are bigger. And he is very tall.”

“I’m tall too!”

“But he’s taller. And he doesn’t have that awful haircut.”

Damn right I don’t.

“But you have a nice penis, I’ll give you that.”

Woaw. OK I didn’t need to know that, Felicity.

“You saw Dig’s…?!?”

“Ewww no! Of course not! Gross, gross, gross! I don’t want to see his… his thingy!”
“Good. By the way, you have a fantastic ass.”

“Aww, thank you! It comes from my mom’s side.”

“Why are you holding my phone again?”

Dig heard some ruffling sounds, as if the phone was being passed from one hand to another.

“I dunno… we wanted to call Dig. Oh yes we are calling Dig! Hi Dig!”

“Hi Dig! We’re in Ivy Town and… and…”

“And we wanted to say hi!”

“Yes! Also, Felicity likes my penis,” Oliver continued, his voice full of pride.

“And Oliver likes my ass. But we’re not having sex. Don’t worry.”

“Yup. We’re being completely adult and responsible and appropriate.”

“As if it could happen,” Felicity giggled. “You and me, I mean.”

Oliver snorted “Yeah, never… are you a natural blonde?”

“Are you?”

“Yeah. Your hair is so soft.”

“Your hands are warm.”

_Oh my God, they didn’t call me so I could get a free ticket to a peep show did they?!_

“I think we should hang up and go to bed.”

“Right. There’s just one bed. Oliver and I are going to sleep in the same bed, Dig! And it’s going to be like in the movies, I’m going to wake up and we’ll be spooning and he’ll be poking my fantastic ass with his nice-”

Fortunately for Dig, the message ended at that moment. Shaking his head, he stood up, pouring himself another cup of coffee.

“I’m not paid enough for that shit.”

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