When the Dust Clears
by politics_and_prose

Summary

It’s 3:12AM when the BREAKING NEWS banner graces the screen of her television.
Chapter One

It’s 3:12AM when the BREAKING NEWS banner graces the screen of her television. “No kidding,” she mutters to herself before taking another slug from her very expensive bottle of Goodbye. A parting gift from the man she’d grown to respect, to care for, to want to help and protect.

It was a goodbye from Oliver because he’d apparently decided he had nothing left. And of course he’d come to that conclusion alone and when she didn’t have the means to track him down since the foundry had crumbled over her head and destroyed her almost top-of-the-line computer system.

With a snort and another swig, she allows herself to focus on what her bottle-blonde sister Brittany Snow is going on about. She can’t hear it so she turns it up, wondering why she’s bothering. It’s all going to be the same: devastation, body count, Moira Queen, earthquake machine. It’s been playing over and over and over again. She supposes when party of the city’s destroyed, people want to know what’s going on.

She just wants to know where Oliver took off to.

“In a miraculous rescue, a survivor has been pulled from the wreckage of the CNRI Building in The Glades …”

Felicity’s eyes snap wide open, the slight buzz she’d already felt seeping in from the wine all but gone. There had only been one body in CNRI. One person, dead and left behind, a broken hero crying at the loss as he took off.

“Reports are coming in that Tommy Merlyn, owner of Club Verdant, was rescued by firefighters approximately one hour ago.”

Springing to her feet, Felicity stumbles into her kitchen and grabs her phone, dialing Oliver’s number. It rings once and cuts to voicemail, which causes her hands to shake even more. He has to know. Ending the call, she quickly redials and this time growls when she hears the generic message about leaving a message. “Pick up your phone!” she screams, panic and happiness and anger warring for position as the dominant tone. “Oliver, pick up!” She pauses and then lets out a breath. “I don’t know why I’m bothering to stay on the line. Cell phones and landlines are different. Even if you did pick up, you’d hear nothing. Your phone isn’t ringing anymore and I’m leaving a message that isn’t being broadcast out loud. You can’t even …” A long beep cuts her off and she frowns.

Glaring at the phone, she shoves it into her pocket and grabs her keys. Her car was damaged so she’d left it at the club so anywhere she went now was going to be on foot. Hopefully the auto insurance on her lease covers deranged sociopaths trying to level a city in a revenge killing. Something tells her it doesn’t.

Once she’s outside again, she grabs her phone and dials Diggle. He picks up, of course, and asks if she’s seen the news. Her only response is to tell him to try to find Oliver while she goes to the hospital. It doesn’t matter to her that Laurel will probably be there, doesn’t matter that she and Tommy have met a sum total of two times and one of them was because she tripped and face-planted into his back. None of it matters.

If Oliver isn’t going to be there for him, she sure as hell is.

The hospital is in disarray when she gets there. Luckily, if she can say that, it was closer to the area
that wasn’t affected than to ground zero of the second machine, so the damage is minimal. At least structurally. She can only imagine the personal and physical damage to the patients being brought in by ambulance. And those being brought in on foot.

“I’m looking for Tommy Merlyn’s room,” she breathes as she approaches the front desk. The woman tries her best to look menacing but she just looks haggard and tired and like she wants to be anywhere else. Shrugging, the woman motions to the lights that flicker on and off and Felicity realizes their system is probably down.

At least they still have power.

Smiling tightly, Felicity just nods and makes her way to the left. There’s a sign that directs people around the hospital and when her eyes land on the arrow pointing ahead of her to the Emergency Department, she realizes Tommy is probably there.

With a deep breath, she pulls out her phone again and texts Digg, telling him she’s at the hospital and heading to the ED to try to find Tommy. She absentely wishes that she had the ability to hack into the system to change her name to be Tommy’s emergency contact, especially since she’s sure it’s currently either Malcolm Merlyn or Oliver and neither are really in any possession to be with him.

When she arrives, she feels tears spring to her eyes as she glances at the devastation in front of her. Wounds, open and still untreated, crying children, mothers, fathers, Starlingtonians. She can see harried doctors and nurses and wonders if she should suggest Digg come to help out. He might not be a doctor but he has medical training and it looks to be all hands on deck. Deciding to let him handle his personal business, find Carly and AJ and make sure they’re really okay, she pushes forward and looks for that giant board she’s seen on medical dramas telling everyone where patients are.

For the first time in her life, she’s angry that it’s a digital age and the hospital hasn’t been able to come up with a big chart. She’s not positive anyone can help her.

With a frown on her face, she begins to wade slowly through the people, eyes scanning for a quasi-familiar head of dark hair. Or even Laurel. Really, she just wanted to see a familiar face.

She glances to her right and she thinks she sees a familiar jawline but by the time she squints through her dirty glasses, the person is gone and she’s left to her mission to find Tommy.

It takes another fifteen minutes of stopping and starting, dodging, walking in circles, before she comes upon a quiet bay with the privacy curtain a quarter open. With a breath and a prayer, she pushes it back and spies her friend’s best friend, alone, eyes closed with an oxygen cannula in his nose and monitors hooked up to his chest. Her eyes scan the screens, breathing a little easier when she sees numbers she doesn’t quite understand but knows to be good. Well, not bad at least.

Felicity lets her eyes move around the room to try to pick up whether or not anyone else is here with him. No long, dark hairs, no purses. No police badges or anything to suggest Detective Lance is here.

Tommy Merlyn is completely alone and that’s something she just can’t let happen.

She pulls her bottom lip between her teeth and takes one last look around before making her way to the hard, cold plastic chair resting against the wall. She has no idea what she’s going to say if someone comes in or if Tommy wakes up.
Taking a breath, she sends one more text to John to let him know she’s with Tommy, that he’s asleep or unconscious, and that she’ll be here if he needs her. She also tells him that she’ll let him know if she leaves and asks that he let her know when he’s back with Carly and AJ.

They’re a family now, she thinks, but they’re missing an important part. She wishes he’d stayed just a little longer. He probably left because he watched his best friend die and it was all for nothing because Tommy’s here, alive, and hopefully going to stay that way.

She doesn’t know what time she falls asleep but she knows when she wakes up. There are doctors pushing into the room after finally having read the scans that must have been taken before she got there. She hears words like *internal bleeding* and *OR* and *now* and all she can do it sit there and stare and be glad that Oliver wasn’t with her because this would probably make him lose his mind all over again.

She falls asleep again and when she wakes up she spares a thought to wonder if she’s sleeping or losing consciousness. Her head doesn’t hurt, though, and she doesn’t think she got hit with anything in the foundry, but she wanders out of Tommy’s room to find a nurse anyway. She has to sign in and go through all of the stupid forms before some med student shines a flashlight in her eyes and tells her she’s fine.

That would probably cost about seven hundred dollars. Hopefully QC was going to survive the loss of Moira, Walter and Oliver. She kind of needed her job after this.

After her expensive temporary blindness, she makes her way back to Tommy’s room and resumes her vigil. He’s still in surgery and a nurse comes in to tell her they need the room and that he’ll be taken either to ICU or a room after recovery. She doesn’t know where to go, she’s never been to the hospital before, and the kind woman gives her directions. She asks that anyone who arrives for Tommy be sent up as well before heading out of the Emergency Department and towards the stairs to get to the fifth floor. She would take the elevator but her last experience wasn’t that great and she thinks she might prefer the walk.

There are a few people in the waiting room when she arrives and all she can do is smile and take a seat. She wants some coffee but it smells stale from her seat so she pushes the urge away and grabs a magazine.

The sun is starting to peak over the horizon when a surgeon walks in and calls Tommy’s name. She glances around the room and it appears as if no one else has arrived for him so she stands, says she’s a friend, and is relieved when she’s told they were able to stop the bleeding. The doctor cautions her, says he’s still not out of the woods, but she thanks him anyway, shaking his hand and then asking what she’s supposed to do now.
The look he gives her makes her feel like he thinks she’s Tommy’s girlfriend or something and she wants to correct him but she’s too tired and lost to say anything else.

“He’ll be in recovery for a couple of hours. Why don’t you head home and get some rest and someone will give you a call when he’s moved to a room? If no complications arise, it should be a regular room and not the ICU.”

She thanks him and watches him leave before sitting down in her chair. There’s a man and woman to her left and she wonders who they’re here for. A friend? A child? She closes her eyes and prays that they receive the same kind of news she does.

Digg calls her an hour or so later to let her know that everyone’s safe. It makes her feel better and she tells him so before adding that Tommy’s out of surgery and she should be able to see him soon. Her friend is quiet for a minute before asking her what she’s doing, why she’s waiting for someone who probably won’t even recognize her.

“No one else is here, Digg,” she whispers. “His father, Oliver, Laurel … he’s alone. And I know I would rather have someone I could vaguely recall sitting by me when I wake up than be all alone with no one to calm me down. No one deserves to have to go through this alone.” She pauses, considering for a second before amended, “Except Malcolm Merlyn. He can rot.”

John laughs and tells her to be careful and to take care of herself before disconnecting.

Not long after that, a nurse comes in and lets Felicity know that Tommy’s been moved to a private room and she can see him whenever she’s ready.

The whole walk, she wonders if he can even afford it anymore since Merlyn Global and the Merlyn family would likely go under because of the earthquake machine.

When she reaches his room, he’s in bed, a blanket pulled up to his shoulders, cannula back in his nose. Her eyes move to his monitors and she smiles, the numbers better than they were in the ED. She lets out a long breath before sitting in the slightly-more-comfortable chair near the window and tries not to stare.

Now that he’s out of the woods for the most part, she wonders what comes next. He’s going to wake up and see her and then what? Will he wonder who she is? Will he ask for Laurel or Oliver or his father? She has no idea what to expect and it’s relatively terrifying.

For the thousandth time, she wishes Oliver was here.

It takes another couple of hours and at least three bandage and vitals checks before she sees Tommy shift. Felicity wishes she did something smooth like stand up and walk over to him, smile and tell him she was glad he was alive and that he was okay, but because she was her, that was pretty much guaranteed to be the opposite of what would happen.

In her haste/panic, she stands and promptly trips over the chair. She doesn’t fall but she makes a lot of noise and spills her lukewarm and disgusting coffee on herself and the floor. Of course, just as she resolves to make her way to Tommy’s bedside, she slips again and falls back into her chair. Silently cursing Oliver Queen again, she rights herself and carefully makes her way over to Tommy’s bedside, a cautious smile on her lips.
“Hi,” she says, her voice a little rough and a lot soft. “I’m …”

“Hopefully here to give me a sponge bath,” Tommy responds groggily, his voice thick but weak, a grin tugging up the corner of his mouth.

Even after nearly dying, Tommy Merlyn is still charming. She should have known.
Chapter Two

Chapter Summary

Her days pass slowly. She spends her mornings checking in on Tommy, sometimes going into his room and sometimes just watching him smile at Laurel from her position in the hall.

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for the great feedback. I wanted to let everyone know that I still haven't decided on a ship, if any, for Felicity in this story. I promise I'll edit the pairings if I do. I just didn't want to put both Oliver and Tommy down because I didn't want to falsely advertise. Any and all feedback and suggestions are greatly appreciated. Thanks so much for reading!

“Shhhh! Fertility’s sleeping,” comes a slurred, exuberant whisper from somewhere to her right.

“Fertility?”

Ah, so Laurel’s arrived. Felicity has no idea how long she’s been out but her neck is aching and she’s pretty sure her whole right leg is asleep. Groaning, she peeks open an eye to see Laurel staring at her and Tommy grinning widely. A quick glance at the wall clock shows it’s about six p.m., which means he probably just had dinner and a shot of the good stuff.

She wonders why no one woke her up.


The way Laurel’s eyebrow arches makes Felicity want to take a step back. She doesn’t know why Laurel’s acting so territorial or something – if she even is because Felicity’s not sure she would be able to pick out the proper signs of a woman marking her territory – but she feels something hard settle in the pit of her stomach.

When Laurel places a hand over Tommy’s, Felicity sighs in relief. So she’s not mad about the Oliver thing, she’s mad because Felicity’s sleeping with Tommy.

A snort alerts her to the fact that her thoughts snuck around her mouth filter and both Tommy and Laurel heard her. “Not in the naked sleep sense, in the in his room sense. With clothes on. With him in his bed and me not in his bed. In this chair. Right here,” she says quickly, flapping her wrist behind her in an attempt to show Laurel exactly where the chair is. “I’m not sleeping with anyone.”

She ignores the tight shame she hears Tommy mutter. There’s no way she can chance a look at him. Focusing on Laurel, she offers a tight smile. “I saw the news broadcast and since Oliver’s MIA, I figured I would come over. I didn’t mean to step on your toes.”
Laurel levels her with a glare for a moment before she sighs and wipes a tired hand over her hair. “You didn’t. I’ve been – I didn’t know.” She glances down at Tommy before returning her eyes to Felicity’s. “I was at the police station with my dad. We were trying to figure out what to do about his demotion.”

Now it’s Felicity’s turn to frown. “Demotion?”

“Disobeying direct orders and a whole bunch of other things. He’s being stubborn about it but that’s no surprise. He, um … he told me he turned off one of the devices. That it could have been worse.” Her eyes move down to Tommy again, softening as she watches his eyes flutter close. “Way worse.”

They’re both quiet for a moment before Laurel purposely walks around the bed and pulls Felicity into a hug. “I don’t know how it happened but I know it had to be you who helped my dad. I saw your name on his phone. I just … I want you to know that I appreciate it. And staying with Tommy. You don’t even know him but you still stayed. With everything that happened, it means a lot.”

Felicity smiles a little uncomfortably before hugging back. “It was nothing,” she promises before stepping from Laurel’s embrace. “I’m glad I could help.” Wrapping her arms around her middle, she looks over at Tommy and lets her eyes scan him again, then move to his monitors to make sure everything still looks good, before redirecting her attention to Laurel. “But it looks like you’ve got all this handled now. Tommy has my number so if you need anything, please don’t hesitate.” She has no idea why it feels like there’s a lead ball forming in her stomach but she ignores it and pushes on. “I’ll see you around.”

With one last smile, she steps around Laurel and heads for the door. Once she’s outside, she pauses and looks through the window to see Laurel pull the chair up to Tommy’s bedside, her hand reaching out to take his.

She doesn’t know why she feels a tightness in her chest but she does. It isn’t until she reaches the solitude of the elevator that she realizes her last link to Oliver in Starling has just been broken. With John gone and Tommy in the hospital, she’s completely alone for the first time in months. She hates it a lot more than she used to.

“Carly’s place is gone, Felicity,” John intones, his voice sad. “I’m trying to convince her and AJ to come stay with me but it’s not going as well as I hoped. She’s scared. Not that I can blame her.”

Felicity nods even though she knows he can’t see her. “Yeah, I understand that. I’m just working on cleaning out the foundry anyway.”

“Alone?” She can hear the admonition in her friend’s voice but she can’t bring herself to care. “Felicity.”

“Who else is going to help me? You’re out of town, Oliver’s gone and Tommy’s in the hospital. No one else knows about the Arrow Cave. Someone has to do it, Digg, and that someone’s me.” She’s quiet for a minute, pausing to push the stray strands of hair out of her face and survey the area. “It’s fine. I’m building muscles. I’ll be able to spar with you in no time.”
Digg’s rich laugh makes her smile and she feels like it might be the first time since she found out there was a second device that it’s happened. “I’m sure you will,” he agrees. “As soon as I get back, we’ll test it out.”

Felicity agrees, ready to tell him how she’d moved a big piece of concrete by herself when she hears a noise in the background before Digg tells her he has to go. She smiles and tells him he should call her later and then the line is dead and she’s alone again.

It doesn’t get any easier.

Her days pass slowly. She spends her mornings checking in on Tommy, sometimes going into his room and sometimes just watching him smile at Laurel from her position in the hall. Her days are spent at QC, trying her best to keep the IT Department running while hiding her programs that are scanning every camera she can find for Oliver. Her nights are spent putting the foundry back to rights.

Four weeks after Oliver disappears, Felicity commits probably the worst crime she could at the time: she hacks Oliver’s bank account and purchases all new equipment for the Arrow Cave. She has to believe he’s coming back and that he’ll be continuing his crusade once he does.

Late one Friday night – or maybe it’s Saturday morning – three weeks later, a loud thumping in a rare moment of silence reminds her that Verdant is up and running again. Tommy was released from the hospital nine days before and he couldn’t wait to get back to the club. His smile was wide when she ran into him and he made her promise to make an appearance at the We’re Still Standing party he was throwing.

Tonight.

With a sigh, she grabs her phone and sees the four texts from her somewhat new somewhat friend, all telling her she needs to get to the club, that all of her drinks are on the house, and that she needs to save a dance for him.

She knows she can probably figure out a way to get out of it but she thinks she can use a little fun to blow off some steam. She’s wound so tight she can barely breathe sometimes. John’s been preoccupied trying to make things work with Carly since they got back to town and she thinks maybe she would like some attention.

It’s not a crime to want to be flirted with.

She doesn’t bother to go anywhere to change because Digg’s with Carly and the only other person who would come down here is still missing without a trace so she highly doubts anyone’s going to catch her in just her panties.

She changes into a red dress, form fitting with a crisscross patterns in the back and a low neck. She shakes out her hair and channels her mother as she fluffs it and then applies her makeup in the front-facing camera on her phone. She doesn’t have her contacts with her so she supposes the sexy, just off work librarian looks is going to have to work for her tonight. Sliding on her heels, she decides she good and heads up the stairs and out the back entrance.

Felicity feels dumb walking from the alley to the front door but she’s sure Tommy will somehow
know that she came from downstairs and the last thing she needs is for him to see the Cave.

She approaches the bouncer and gives her name and can’t stop herself from smirking at the girls waiting on line to get into Tommy Merlyn’s club. It’s nice to be on the list; this is something that never would have happened before Oliver Queen complicated her life.

She’s leaning on the bar when she feels a hand on her hip. A smile touches her lips before she arches a brow and turns to see who the very forward person is. She’s not really sure if she’s surprised that it’s Tommy himself. “Nice party!” she calls over the music, smiling at his proud grin.

“A thousand times better now that my not-nurse nurse is here.”

“How many times did you dream that either me or Laurel caved and gave you a sponge bath?” she asks with a laugh, her hand wrapping around the wine glass the bartender hands to her. She reaches out and clinks it against his tumbler of dark liquor before taking a sip. “Thanks for keeping the good stuff in stock.”

He apparently decides to ignore her question about the sponge bath dreams, which is an answer in and of itself, but drinks to her thanks. “You can pay me back but putting on a nurse costume and giving me that long overdue sponge bath,” he shoots back with an easy grin.

His lighthearted attitude makes her smile. When he was in the hospital, she was worried he would turn cold and hard, the way Oliver was when she first started getting to know him. He’d lost his best friend and his father – again - and she wasn’t sure anyone would be able to fault him if he shut down.

And maybe he still would. Maybe this was all for show. She didn’t know and she had no idea how to find out.

“Shouldn’t you be asking your girlfriend for that particular favor?” she asks with a grin, but it falls away when she sees the look on his face. “Tommy?”

“No girlfriend,” he answers, his bright smile returning. “I’m a free man. So what say you and me …”

“What happened with you and Laurel?” she asks because she obviously can’t let things go when she should. “I mean, she was there almost every day with you in the hospital and you were looking at her the way I look at a clean server that I can mold into whatever I want it to be. Which is kind of sad, if you think about it,” she says, her lip turning up. “I need a man.”

Tommy’s eyebrow shoots up and he smiles widely, this time genuine.

“No. Don’t. I don’t need you flirting with me tonight, Tommy Merlyn.”

“Why?” he asks, leaning in so his warm breath skims over her cheek. “Afraid you might give in?”

She pulls back and takes a deliberate drink from her wine glass. Her eyes catch on his and she thinks she might see his breath hitch. Good. “Not a chance,” she tells him with a smile of her own before she turns away and melts into the crowd.

It takes her heart rate five minutes to return to normal but that’s not something he ever needs to know about.
A week later she finds herself sitting at the bar in Verdant, only a few staff around, as she looks over the financials. Tommy had been going through them but had hit a snag in his program and called her complaining of error warnings and a fear of losing all of his money. Instead of telling him that the program could be recreated if worse came to worst, she headed to the bar to check it out.

“It’s just a bug,” Felicity promises as she pushes off the stool. “I just need to get onto your computer and I’ll be able to fix it.” She could probably fix it right there but she didn’t want the bartender who was getting ready for the club to open to see her skills.

A girl has to have some secrets from attractive men with chiseled jaws.

Plus she doesn’t want to seem like too big of a nerd because he’d winked at her the night of the reopening and she’s been wondering if there was any possibility of a night with him since then. She really needs to blow off some steam soon or she’s pretty sure she’s going to explode.

She follows Tommy up the stairs but freezes when she hears a bang. His arm comes out to block her and she wonders if he knows she can probably protect him better than he can protect her. Digg’s a good teacher and she’s a fast learner.

There’s another crash and then a giggle and Felicity is pretty sure she’s jealous of whoever’s in the storage room to their right. “Gotta say, Merlyn … you’re running quite the operation here,” she laughs, pushing past him to head into his office. “You handle that business and I’ll handle your business and then I’ll be … why are you looking at me like that?”

Tommy looks like he can’t decide if he wants to blush or laugh. It takes a minute before he blinks and smiles. “You’re finally ready to handle my business?”

With an embarrassed whine, she storms into his office and slams the door. It’s quite apparent to her that her penchant for inappropriate sexual innuendo is not only limited to Oliver; obviously Tommy brings it out in her too.

It’s only when she hears him freaking out at Thea and her boyfriend that she’s pulled from her own thoughts and she’s able to start working on his accounting program.

He wanders in a few minutes later, a scowl on his face as he drops into the chair across from her. “She’s too young for that.”

“Says the man who likely lost his virginity at thirteen.”

Tommy’s scowl deepens. “Sixteen, for your information. When was yours?”

Felicity’s head shoots up, wondering why she opened herself up to this line of questioning. She should have known Tommy wouldn’t be uncomfortable with it. “I was a senior in college so … nineteen.”

He stares at her for a minute, eyebrow arched. “Sophomore in college.”

“No, senior,” she assures him, her fingers flying over the keyboard as she patches his program and installs some fail safes. “I graduated with my masters when I was twenty. Why are you looking at me like that?”
“Why are you working in the IT Department at QC?”

“Right now I’m working for your club. For free. And besides, I like QC,” she answers with a shrug. “And once Oliver gets back and takes over the company, I’m sure I’ll have an opportunity to advance. Maybe head of IT. And in a few years, CTO.” At his grin, she shrugs. “It could happen.”

“You could ditch QC and take over Merlyn Global,” he offers. “They’re selling it off piece by piece after my father … well, you obviously know the story. And I got my money back after … I mean, I could buy it back and give it to you.”

She stares at him for a long minute before rolling her eyes. “You don’t have to give me a multi-billion dollar company so I’ll sleep with you,” she tells him seriously.

It’s quiet for a long minute, the only sounds in the room are their breathing and the click clack of her fingers on the keyboard, before he asks, “What do I have to give you?”

Her eyes slide from the screen to his face. “A break,” she responds with another eye roll. “Because this,” she continues, her finger motioning between the two of them, “is never going to happen.”

She’s pretty sure her definitive words aren’t going to be enough to keep her from thinking about what it would be like if it did happen though.
“I once told Oliver I loved having him inside me,’’ she tells him before forlornly watching her noodles slip from her chopsticks and back into the takeout container on the coffee table between them. “We were on a mission or whatever you want to call it. My first time in the field. I may have been a little nervous.”

Tommy laughs, his head falling back as his voice echoes around his apartment. “God, what did he say?”

Frowning, she scoops her noodles up again and lifts a shoulder. “I plugged through and reached the end of my ramble and told him I was going to stop talking and he said that would be his preference.’’

Now it’s Tommy’s turn to frown. That was one of the things Ollie had obviously lost on the island: his ability or desire to capitalize on a beautiful woman letting her mouth get away with her. For the millionth time, Tommy is glad he wasn’t invited on the trip with his best friend. “I wouldn’t have responded like that,’’ he smirks, his eyebrows waggling.

“I have no doubt that you wouldn’t,’’ she shoots back with a snort. “One of the many, many differences between you and your missing best friend.’’

It immediately feels like the air is sucked out of the room. Missing. It’s been nearly two and a half months since Oliver took off and Felicity is no closer to finding him than she was the day after he left. It’s starting to wear on her in a way she didn’t think was possible. People left her; it was just something that seemed to always happen. Her father, Cooper and now Oliver. Maybe she should amend her thought to men left her.

“Hey,’’ she hears, the voice soft and concerned. “Where did you go just then?’’

Forcing a smile to her lips, Felicity shrugs. “Just thinking about Oliver.’’ Tommy’s frown makes her sit up a little straighter. “I just can’t find him and this city …’’ She shakes her head, glancing out his window. He lives in a good part of town and she can’t even see the edge of the Glades from where she sits. “It needs him. I know I told him I was only in it to get Walter back but I couldn’t walk away even though it wasn’t my mission.’’ Reaching up, she runs her fingers over her ponytail.
“And now he’s gone and the Glades are under martial law and I’m just … John and I …”

“I know,” he says softly. “I think about trying to do something about it but what could I do? My name is … I mean, I’m surprised no one’s tried to kill me yet.”

“Don’t even joke about that,” she shoots back sharply. “Not even a little. Don’t even think it.” The venom in her voice surprises her but she doesn’t apologize or take it back. She can’t. “You’re alive and you’re going to stay that way and we’re going to find Oliver and save this city. Successfully this time.”

She squeezes her eyes shut and pulls in a deep breath. She and Tommy rarely talk about Oliver and how long he’s been gone. They’ve been focusing on themselves and each other, building a friendship outside of their individual relationships with Oliver Queen.

It’s been going well, too. Felicity was almost surprised how easy it was to be with the son of Malcolm Merlyn. Initially she’d wondered if he was like his father, devious and carrying out some kind of sinister agenda. And while she could see the resemblance from time to time, she had quickly been able to separate the Merlyn in front of her from the one who tried to destroy their city.

Tommy was light, relatively happy, all things considered, and just … easy. She found herself increasingly excited about their once-a-week lunches or dinners. She still worked at the crumbling Queen Consolidated, she still worked on repairing the foundry, she still had a relationship with John.

Things with Tommy are different from everything else in her life.

A hand on hers pulls her from her mind and she can’t stop the genuine smile from crossing her lips, nor can she stop her heart from picking up its pace. “You okay?”

“I am,” she answers, hoping she doesn’t sound as breathless as she feels like she does.

They’re quiet for a couple of minutes, just breathing and keeping eye contact. It’s not as uncomfortable as it could be but Felicity is still relieved when Tommy grins and launches into a story about his brain to mouth filter betrayed him.

Things shift after that dinner on his floor. Felicity doesn’t notice it for a few days but they do and she can’t say she’s disappointed.

One or two texts per day turn into an open stream, chatting when one or both get a free moment. Tommy sleeps until noon or so because he makes sure to stay until the last Verdant employee heads out for the night, but once he wakes up, he texts her. She’s usually on lunch so they chat for a while before she goes back to work and they’re silent for a while.

He texts her again shortly after five and more often than not, dinner is spent together. Usually it’s at the club because he’s a very hands on boss, but sometimes they go out. She makes the reservations under her name because his carries a negative weight and neither of them want to be turned away because of him.

She won’t let him be made to pay for the sins of his father.
It’s at Table Salt three weeks later that she gets up the nerve to ask him about it. Fortunately for her, he beats her to it.

“So … I’m thinking maybe we should start calling this what it is.”

Her mouth snaps shut as she meets his eyes, her stomach swooping and her heart thudding. She’s quiet for a moment, her mind spinning to try to come up with an alternative to what it sounds like he means.

Felicity has never been all that great with reading men. She can read people just fine; perhaps she’s not the best at interacting but reading them has never been a problem so long as she doesn’t see them as someone she could potentially be interested in.

That night in Tommy’s apartment had made her hyper-aware of the fact that he was a man, an attractive man, a man she was attracted to. His lines didn’t work on her one bit but his unintentional charm most certainly did. Her problem had been the fear that she was falling for it because she was desperate for some male attention. But she’d found herself not craving a man but craving him. Even if they just sat on her couch, glasses of cheap red wine in their hands and a movie on the television, she was happy, content.

“Felicity?”

“Sorry,” she breathes, an embarrassed smile on her lips. “I was just … um.” She pulls her bottom lip between her teeth and thinks about what she wants to say. He’s not stupid by any stretch of the imagination, and she knows he knows she isn’t either. She finds that she doesn’t want to beat around the bush or play coy. She wants to know what’s on his mind, what he’s thinking about them.

“You were just …?”

“Trying not to get my hopes up?”

It’s not really how she wants to answer him but it’s what comes out and she refuses to take it back. It’s the truth anyway, mostly, and even if he doesn’t feel the same thing she does, she knows he won’t let it ruin what they’ve been building since he woke up to her sleeping in a chair in his hospital room. They were friends first, no other feelings. He was in love with Laurel and she may have had a crush on Oliver.

He blew that when he ran. Not that she ever entertained the thought of him returning her feelings anyway. All things considered, she was pretty sure that he thought he still loved Laurel too.

Thinking about Laurel used to make her worry. As she and Tommy got closer, she worried she was a second choice. Now she knows that’s not true in the least. The way Tommy’s looking at her makes her feel like she may be the only woman he sees despite the fact that there are no less than three beautiful women within his eye line.

They’re quiet a little too long, apparently, because the waitress comes over and asks them if everything is all right. Their plates are only half empty and they’re silent, which probably sends some kind of signal to the staff that there’s something wrong.

Not for the first time since developing this relationship with Tommy, Felicity things that there’s nothing wrong at all. At least not right here, right now, with this man.

“We’re fine,” she answers, her eyes reluctantly leaving Tommy to focus on the woman. “We’re great. The food is excellent. Not that you prepared it or anything, I’m sure there are a few chefs
back there working to make sure the quality of the food is nothing short of outstanding, but you
delivered it without dropping anything so -.”

She’s cut off when a heavy hand covers hers and gives her a squeeze. Her face flames and she
ducks her head, unable to believe she went on such an epic ramble in the middle of what she’s sure
is going to finally be defined as a date.

“We’re fine,” Tommy says with a charming grin, nodding once to effectively dismiss the woman.
Once she’s gone, he turns his grin to her. It’s teasing now, and maybe there’s a hint of something
she can only define as adoration hovering on the edges. “Been a while since that happened. You
nervous about something?”

The jerk.

“Shut up,” she mutters, grabbing her glass of wine and taking a long drink. ‘No. I’m not nervous.
At all. What could I be nervous about? It’s not like thi-.” She cuts herself off and sighs. “Shut up.”

His hand squeezes hers again and it’s pretty obvious he decides to take pity on her brain to mouth
filter and speaks. “So, I think I’m ready. I mean, I know I am. If you are.”

“Ready for what?” she asks, because she doesn’t want to read into this too much and guess the
wrong thing. She doesn’t think either of them are in any rush to put a label on them but if he is, she
doesn’t want to make him think she’s not interested.

“Ready to call this … a date? Like, we’re – we’re going on dates.”

She lets out a breath she had unconsciously been holding, a sure smile forming. “Going on dates?”
she asks rhetorically. “Yeah, I … I think that’s a good way to define what we’re doing.”

Tommy smiles then, wide and brilliant, and Felicity feels something start to burn inside of her, his
smile reflected on her own face.

“A little birdie told me you and Tommy Merlyn were seen holding hands at Average Joe’s,”
Diggle says from the other side of the nearly-complete foundry. “Got something you wanna
share?”

“Is your little birdie the person you hold hands with when you’re getting coffee?” she asks, a smile
on her face as she pops her head out from under her workstation. “Because I feel like I don’t want
to be a part of your pillow talk.”

John laughs and heads her way, leaning a hip against the other end of her desk. “Fair enough. Any
truth to the rumor?”

“Now it’s a rumor? Gotta get your story straight before backwardsly confronting me, Digg.” She
laughs and pushes herself up from the floor, grabbing her bottle of water and taking a slug. “Which
was it?”

He rolls his eyes and claims she’s just as stubborn as his ex-wife. When she doesn’t give him the
information he wants, he sighs. “Carly said she saw you and Merlyn holding hands and smiling like
… I don’t know who. She made a reference to a movie or TV show she knows I would never
“Carly isn’t wrong,” she answers, drinking again to cover her girlish smile. “Tommy and I were holding hands at Average Joe’s.”

“And the smiling?”

“There may have been some smiling involved.”

It’s John’s turn to smile. He regards her for a minute before shaking his head and pushing off the tabletop to head back over to finish restocking the medical supplies. “How long?”

His voice holds no jealousy or irritation at not having been informed immediately and she’s grateful for that. John is one of her closest friends but this thing with Tommy is new and she doesn’t want to act like she would have in high school if a cute boy gave her the time of day. She’s not going to hide their relationship but she’s also not going to go calling everyone she knows to tell them. John obviously understands and it feels good to have a friend like that.

“Uh, I guess it’s been there for a while but we went out to dinner a few days ago and decided we were dating.”

“No girlfriend boyfriend titles?” he teases, sliding a drawer shut before moving over to start stocking the weapons cabinet. They’re almost done with the renovations and upgrades and Felicity is itching to get back to work.

“No yet,” she replies in kind, shooting him a wink before heading towards the bathroom she and Digg – but mostly Digg – had added downstairs. “I’m going to change and then I’d like to work on more of those defensive moves you were teaching me last week, if you don’t mind.”

His nod is enough for her so she bends to grab her bag when an alert starts sounding from her computer. With a frown, she presses a few keys and frowns at what she sees. “Digg?”

“Yeah?” he calls, stepping closer. “What’s up?”

“I think I found something.”

He’s beside her a second later, his eyes on the screen in front of him, his lips tugged down into a frown. “What is this?”

“Footage from Dusseldorf airport from May 23rd,” she answers, her voice slow and her brows furrowed. “Does that look like …?”

Digg leans in closer, his nose inches from the screen. If this was any other occasion, she might have teased him about getting old and needing glasses. Now, though, she can’t.

“It looks like Oliver.”

“What the hell was he doing in Germany a week after he left?”

Diggle sighs and runs a tired hand over his face. “Running and trying not to be found,” he answers dully. “I bet we’re going to have a few more of these sightings before we get close.”

She stares at the screen, the image frozen on the profile of Oliver Queen in a baseball cap, her eyes narrowed. “I’m gonna make you regret letting yourself get caught on camera,” she mutters. “I can promise you that.”
Unfortunately, Germany turns out to be a dead end. He hadn’t used his own name and she hadn’t been able to spot him on any of the camera feeds from any of the destination airports flights had gone to on that day. It makes her wonder if he knew she would be looking and he showed up there without ever getting on a plane.

Felicity curses his name as she gets ready to go out with Tommy again.

She and Tommy decide to take things slow, letting their relationship develop naturally. They’re dating and not trying to hide it, but things are pretty much the same as before their conversation at *Table Salt*. Honestly, she thinks that’s the best thing that could have possibly happened once they started dating.

There’s no pressure. There have been a few kisses but nothing planned. A peck before he heads home for the evening, one when he brings her coffee if he’s up before noon.

It’s easy and she feels herself starting to fall for him in a way that would have made her freak out if they hadn’t built a friendship first. Her last real relationship was with Cooper and she’s fallen for him hard and fast. They were all passion and heat and an overwhelming desire to get naked and be as close to each other as possible. She fell in love with his mind and his abs and even though he wasn’t that great of a guy, she had actually thought they would have a future together. Maybe they would have if he hadn’t killed himself.

What she and Tommy have is different. It’s slow and sweet and instead of feeling like fireworks, fast and bright, their relationship is something of a supernova. That’s the only way she can describe it.

When they’d started flirting, she had been desperate for male attention. She wanted to feel wanted, wanted to work out some stress with no strings, simply wanted sex.

Felicity still wants sex but she’s willing to wait for it. She’s still stressed but Tommy takes a lot of it away with a simple smile or the brush of his fingers over his shoulder. She feels good, happy, content, and she’s sure a lot of that has to do with him.

“I’m just finishing up a possible lead that will likely lead to nothing and then I’ll come upstairs,” she says into her phone, smiling when she hears Tommy’s huff of annoyance. “And tell – what the …?”

“Felicity?”

She frowns, hitting a few keys as her lips tug down. “Hang on.” He calls her name again and she huffs. “Tommy, hang on … I … shit.”

“Felicity? What’s going on? Where are you?”

“Downstairs. Get Digg and come down here now.” She doesn’t hear him moving so she practically growls, “I don’t mean when you feel like it. Get him and get down here now.”

She disconnects the phone and stares at the screen. It’s satellite footage from a tiny airstrip in Hong Kong. She can’t get close enough to be certain but she’d bet donuts to dollars that she’s staring at Oliver Queen standing beside a small plane with either another passenger or a pilot. He has no
luggage but has the stance of a hunted man. She’s only ever seen The Hood standing like that.

“How shit,” she hears and she realizes this is Tommy’s first trip downstairs. He’s known that their base of operations was here, of course, but they’ve never let him in. She supposes he deserves to be a part of the team if he wants to. “How in the hell did you get all this done?”

“Benefit of knowing the owner,” Diggle laughs but grows solemn when he looks at her. She wonders what her face looks like. “What’s going on?”

“Look,” she says simply, her eyes on them and not the screen. She points, though, and steps back so that they can study the image.

“That looks like …” Tommy breathes.

“Yeah. Where?” John adds, his eyes slightly wide and his mouth set.

“Hong Kong,” she answers. “But it looks like he’s going, not coming.”

Ever since she got the lead that brought her to this footage, something had been building in her mind. She’d dismissed it more than once, sure that she couldn’t possibly be right. But seeing this, seeing him, knowing where he was …

“I don’t understand. What the hell would he be doing in Hong Kong?” Tommy asks.

Swallowing, she looks up to her Team Arrow partner and holds his eyes. “I think he went back to Lian Yu.”
Chapter Four

Chapter Summary

Either way, she’s willing to search that entire damn island to find him and if he’s there, she’s going to bring him home. Whether he likes it or not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It takes another two weeks to get all of the resources she needs to make the trip to Lian Yu. She doesn’t want to go alone so she asks John to join her, explaining to Tommy that Oliver doesn’t know he’s alive and it might be too much of an information overload if they find him and he sees Tommy. He might think he’s hallucinating or something and that’s the very last thing she wants to worry about. He’s likely to either be in survival mode and kill her and Digg or he’s going to be skittish and not allow himself to be spotted.

Either way, she’s willing to search that entire damn island to find him and if he’s there, she’s going to bring him home. Whether he likes it or not.

Felicity arranges for the flights to Hong Kong and then John works some magic to find a pilot who’s willing to get them to the island. It takes some heavy flirting and a kiss on the cheek for a fishing crew to get the captain to promise to come pick them up if she calls him from the satellite phone stashed into her backpack.

She texts Tommy before getting on the plane that’s obviously older than she is, telling him that they’re on their wait to the island and she’ll let him know when they have Oliver. She doesn’t say if and he doesn’t correct her and she kind of loves him a little for that. He believes in her, knows her well enough to not doubt her when she sets her mind to something. It makes her stomach swoop and she considers telling him three words she’s nearly positive she feels, but she dismisses the thought because she should be sure and she certainly shouldn’t be telling him via text before flying to a deserted island to bring his best friend home.

There may not be a particular etiquette for such a thing but she’s pretty sure if there was, her current option wasn’t the proper way to go about it.

She and John board the plane and she moves immediately for the second seat, her eyes screwed up. She waits until they’re in the air to inform her partner that she has a fear of heights and flying and when she does, he looks like he wants to toss her out of the plane. Oddly, that makes her calm down.

It’s not a terribly long flight from Hong Kong to the island and when John starts grabbing parachutes, she loses her mind. He tells her he wasn’t sure they were going to make it here flying in this “not entirely up to code tin can” and then grabs her to strap her to him. He doesn’t give her the chance to prepare herself before they’re hurling through the sky and she’s positive she’s going to die without being able to see Tommy again.

When Digg directs them towards the beach and tells her to keep her feet up, all she can do is nod because there’s vomit in her mouth and if she talks, it’ll come out and neither of them need to be
covered in it. As it turns out, they’re on the beach and she’s stumbling away with just enough time
to throw up away from him.

He thanks her for waiting and she sarcastically shoots back that it’s her pleasure. There’s nothing
pleasurable about this place at all and she wants to be back home in Starling with her boyfriend
now please and she swears to herself that if Oliver gets difficult, she’s going to give him a piece of
her mind.

After an hour of tracking through the jungle, she’s tired and in need of a break. John promises they
can take a break as soon as they get to a clearing. He doesn’t want anything to sneak up on them
and that’s when Felicity really recognizes the fact that they’re on a remote island that obviously has
wild animals since Oliver survived for however many years.

She thinks maybe this wasn’t her best idea.

“Just a little further,” John promises, stepping over a log. It takes her a minute more to climb over it
because she’s tired and not a soldier and used to an urban jungle not this one. She clears the log
and opens her mouth to suggest they just sit there for a minute before John throws his fist in the air.
She might not be military or anything but she knows what that means. He surveys the area and
decides it’s clear before they continue on their hike.

Not ten feet further and there’s a click under her foot and for the second time in the span of, like,
five hours, she’s positive she’s about to die. John confirms her fear, that she’s on a landmine, and
she considers reaching into her bag to call Tommy and tell him she’s sorry for getting herself killed
while trying to find Oliver.

John tells her he’s going to try to disarm it when she hears a voice she’s been missing for too many
months. They both follow his instructions and she’s lifting an arm out of instinct so he can sweep
her out of the way before the bomb explodes.

It’s not surprising that her mouth embarrasses her but Oliver seems to be used to it and simply lifts
her up and leads them back to his shelter.

It’s a hollowed out plane and she frowns because she can’t imagine living here is very easy. She
wants to call him an idiot but he looks mad enough to stop her.

“You two shouldn’t be here,” he tells them, his voice tight and his back turned. “It’s dangerous.”

“You think?” she shoots back, her hands going to her hips. “You shouldn’t be here either. It’s
dangerous.” She watches his fists clench and she thinks good. She’s mad enough at him that she
wants him mad. They’re pretty good at fighting because she knows he’ll never hurt her even if
everything in his body language suggests he might. She’s not afraid of Oliver Queen or The Hood
and she’s not going to back down when she shouldn’t.

“Why are you here?”

“You two shouldn’t be here,” he tells them, his voice tight and his back turned. “It’s dangerous.”

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dangerous.” She watches his fists clench and she thinks good. She’s mad enough at him that she
wants him mad. They’re pretty good at fighting because she knows he’ll never hurt her even if
everything in his body language suggests he might. She’s not afraid of Oliver Queen or The Hood
and she’s not going to back down when she shouldn’t.

“Why are you here?”

“Planning our honeymoon,” she fires back, not in the mood for his stupid questions. “Why do you
think? We’re here to bring you home. Starling needs you. Needs The Hood and Oliver Queen. So
… so let’s go. Gather your, um, belongings and let’s go. I’ll call the rescue ship right now.”

“Felicity,” Oliver breathes, “I’m not going back. I can’t.”

“You can,” John interjects, probably stopping her from saying something they’ll all regret.
“Felicity got a fishing boat to agree to come pick us up when she calls.” He pauses and crosses his
arms. “So let’s go.”
“You expect me to go back to the place I left my best friend die?” Oliver spits at Diggle, advancing on him. “I failed that city, John. I can’t go back there.”

Felicity blows out a breath and shakes her head. “You didn’t fail the city, Oliver,” she tells him, not touching on the subject of Tommy just yet. “A madman did. And your mom. Though she tried to save the city after she tried to destroy it so maybe it kind of cancels it out. Only not really because she spent more time trying to destroy it than trying to save … it.” She blows out a breath and shakes her head. “Sorry.”

John rests a reassuring hand on her shoulder, his eyes tracing over her for a minute before turning his attention back to Oliver. “We need you, man. Me and Felicity and everyone else.”

“Thea. She needs you too.”

“Thea thinks I’m in Europe,” he tells them dully.

“Must be nice for her to have any idea of where you are even if it’s a lie,” she snorts. “Because I got a bottle of wine and Digg got … what did you get?” she asks as she looks up at her friend.

“Nothing I wanted.”

Oliver has the presence of mind to look chagrinned at the turn of the conversation. “Look, I appreciate you guys coming for me but I can’t … I can’t go back.”

Something inside Felicity snaps at his woe-is-me tone. “You know what? Fine. Don’t come home. Sit here and do whatever it is you do here. In the place you tried so damn hard to leave. You don’t want to come back? Don’t. But I have someone waiting for me and I’m not going to give up my life to convince you to come back. We all have a choice in this life, Oliver. I decided to live mine. If you decide to live yours, I’ll be on the beach waiting for my fishermen.”

Without giving him a chance to respond, she turns and stomps out of the plane and back out into the jungle. She vaguely remembers how they got in here and she’s pretty sure her eyes are good enough to keep her from stepping on anymore landmines as she navigates her way back towards the beach.

She stops a good distance away and listens for any movement behind her and when she hears none, she decides that John probably stayed back to try to forcibly remove Oliver head from his ass.

When she reaches the beach only about half a mile from where they landed, she decides she probably could have been a Girl Scout. Pushing that thought away, she calls for the boat and then treks back to where the parachute is sitting. She frowns at the mask with the arrow through it but she doesn’t really want to touch it so she moves to a place where it’s out of her sight line then flops down onto the sand. If that leather-wearing idiot wants to spend the rest of his days on this island, let him. She’s not going to put her life on hold for him, not when she’s got a job and a boyfriend at home. Not when it’s pretty damn clear he’s not willing to come back.

It’s another hour of convincing herself that she’s going to be leaving this island without Oliver before she hears footsteps. Two sets. Turning, she looks over her shoulder and sees Oliver and John coming out of the woods, one looking accomplished, the other looking like a scolded child. Good, she thinks. He should be ashamed of himself.

She doesn’t address either of them as they join her, sitting on either side of her as she stares out at the water. She sees something on the horizon and she hopes it’s the ship coming to get them the hell out of here. She’s never going to complain about wanting to be on an island again.
“John told me,” Oliver says quietly and her head snaps to him, eyes wide. Before she can ask, he clarifies. “He told me Tommy’s alive.” She can see his adams apple bob as he swallows before he turns his attention out to the water as well. “I didn’t know.”

“Because you didn’t stay to find out,” she replies, her voice flat. “You realize that if he had been gone, you would have missed his funeral, right? Your best friend.” She closes her mouth and breathes in deeply through her nose before exhaling slowly. “You should have stayed.”


“If you failed, I failed. And Digg. And Detective Lance. You weren’t alone, Oliver. You weren’t responsible. You did everything you could and it wasn’t enough. Nothing we did was enough. We. You thought you didn’t get to Tommy in time and I didn’t know there was a second device. If you want to take blame for the Undertaking, Oliver, you have to share it with the rest of the team.”

He’s quite for a few minutes and all she hears is the slow, soft lapping of the waves and the off-sync breathing of her teammates. She hopes he’s thinking about what she said, hopes he’s accepting and understanding. Or at least that he’s willing to try to accept and understand.

“Five hundred and two people died that day, Oliver, but none of their blood is on your hands,” John states after a few minutes of silence.

“It feels like it is,” Oliver admits, his voice barely audible. “I don’t know how to make it not.”

Her anger at least washed away, she reaches over and takes one of Oliver’s hands in her own. She doesn’t look at him but she thinks she doesn’t have to, not now. “It’s a good thing you’ve got to help you with that, huh?”

Felicity feels his eyes on her so she turns her head and gives him a smile. “You don’t have to do this alone, Oliver,” she promises. “John and I, Tommy, we’re all going to be there for you. You could think about telling Thea too. But that’s – that’s a family thing. Just … think about it.”

Oliver nods though she’s positive he’s not going to. He has a fierce need to protect his family and close friends and by letting Thea in, he probably feels like he’s putting her in danger. She can understand that so she vows to herself not to push. The secret is his to reveal at his own discretion.

“So,” he asks after a few minutes, “how did you get someone to agree to come out here to pick us up?”

Felicity blushes and John laughs and it kind of feels like they’re all going to be okay.

She sleeps on the boat and then on the flight back to Starling because she’s exhausted and nothing else they should talk about can be talked about in public. John told him about Tommy and she’s glad he doesn’t ask more about what his best friend’s been up to. She’s sure John didn’t tell him about her relationship with Tommy and she’s grateful. That’s something for her and Tommy to do.

When they land back in the US, she’s more than ready to go see her boyfriend and get ready for work but there’s no time. The Queen car is waiting for them and she slides into the back seat with Oliver, ready to brief him on what’s going on at his family business.
“There’s talk,” she tells him, “that Stellmoor is considering trying to acquire QC. No moves have been made yet but I saw a fierce woman who walks around with her nose in the air sniffing around and I can’t say I feel good about it. We’re going to need to nail down some investors or something because you can’t lose the company.”

“Because it pays your salary?” he asks with a wry grin.

“And funds our nightly activities,” she reminds him. Diggle grunts from the front seat and she hastily adds, “And Diggle. It pays for John to guard your body.”

“Guard his body?” John scoffs. “Are you serious?”

“No, I’m jetlagged.” Her phone dings in her pocket and she pulls it out, smiling at the text that set it off.

Home? Pls say yes.

Back in Starling and headed to the office. Verdant tonight? You can prove to Oliver that you’re still alive.

And kiss my girlfriend.

Her grin is ridiculous when she responds with I should hope that’s the first thing that happens. Almost at QC. See you tonight.

Her responds in kind and she stuffs her phone back into her pocket before looking up to see Oliver watching her. “Who’s got you smiling like that?”

She simply smiles and turns her attention out the window. “We’re here. You have a suit in your office and I have a change of clothes in mine. I’ll come up after I’m not all deserted islandy.” With a grin, she pushes out of the car and heads towards the front door. She knows she’ll have to tell Oliver before tonight but she can put it off a little longer.

Besides, she’s not positive he really believes Tommy’s still alive. He’s more a seeing is believing kind of guy and until he lays eyes on his best friend, there’s probably a part of him that’s going to remain skeptical.

Truthfully, she just can’t wait for tonight so she can kiss him. And prove to Oliver that he’s alive, of course, but mostly she just really wants to kiss him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for the wonderful response to this story. I love writing it and reading your opinions! :)
Chapter Five

Chapter Summary

“What’s a girl like you doing in a bar like this?” comes a teasing voice from behind the bar.

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much for all of the kind words and I'm sorry this update took so long. All mistakes are mine. Thanks for reading!

Felicity gets to Verdant first, telling Oliver he should go home and see his sister before worrying about getting to the club or the Foundry. He obliges but it’s obviously reluctant and she can’t decide if it’s because he’s jittery to see the renovations or because he doesn’t want to have to come up with a lie to tell his sister about where he was. Lying was kind of second nature to him at this point, though, so she wasn’t sure if that had anything to do with it.

“What’s a girl like you doing in a bar like this?” comes a teasing voice from behind the bar.

Smiling, Felicity responds, “Of all the gin joints in all the world, she walks into mine.” Pausing, her head tilted to the side, she snorts. “That would have been a better line from you.”

Tommy grins and steps around the end of the bar, meeting her a few feet away, his hands automatically going to her hips. “I don’t think I need lines with you,” he informs her before leaning in and pressing a kiss to her lips. It’s short and sweet and it leaves her wanting so much more. “You’re okay?”

Felicity pulls back a little, a small smile on her face. “I’m fine. Almost threw up on John though. He was pretty grateful we were on the ground before I upchucked. Not a big fan of planes.”

“That mean you won’t let me sweep you away on some exotic vacation?” he asks and tugs her closer again. “Because I’ve got some grand plans.”

Her heart races at his words. She knows his fortune is his now since his father is dead but its still kind of crazy to think about the fact that Tommy could have a jet fueled and they could be in Hawaii in, like, five hours if she said the word. And she’s pretty sure she would say yes in almost any other situation. But Oliver is back and she’s going to do whatever it takes to make sure he keeps his company so taking a vacation isn’t high on her list of priorities at the moment. “As long as we fly in a real plane and not the tuna can Digg and I were in, I think something can be arranged.” She leans in and kisses him again, smiling as she pulls back. “After we make sure Oliver keeps QC.”

At the mention of his best friend, Tommy stiffens. She’s not sure if it’s because he’s remembering what Oliver does at night or if he’s worried about what he’s going to say now that he knows he didn’t die.
“Hey,” Felicity says softly, her hands coming up to cup his cheeks. “He’s happy you’re alive. I’ve just had him running around all day. And I’m sure he’s nervous to see you. He’s been punishing himself.” She takes a breath and shakes her head, expelling a long breath. “He was gone before you woke up. John told him you were still alive.”

“John did?”

“Oliver made me mad so I stormed off. Probably not the best idea because he’d had to rescue me from a landmine not an hour before –”

“Landmine?” Timmy asks, his hands moving to run over her sides and hips, her face, over her head. “Are you okay? What happened? How did you step on a landmine?”

Sighing, Felicity lets him inspect her before answering. “We were in the forest looking for your dumb, stubborn best friend and I stepped on one. Lucky for me, Digg and I both heard the click. If not …” She mimes an explosion, complete with sound effects. “Digg might have survived but I would have been fish food. Or whatever kind of creatures live on that island. Definitely wouldn’t be here with you now. Not without Oliver Tarzan-ing in and saving me. And can I mention I hate being the damsel in distress? Because I do.”

“I’d rescue you from a train track,” Tommy promises, “but probably nothing short of that because you’re an independent woman and you don’t need no man.” He’s teasing and it makes her laugh. She’s missed him in the last few days and all she wants to do is kiss him and go home and sit on her couch or his and reunite in a more private setting.

It’s not in the cards, though, because before she can even kiss him again, the doors to the club slide open and Oliver and Digg walk through. She takes a step back and so does Tommy, a silent, joint understanding that they would let Oliver know a little later that they were together. Right now it’s about proving to the hero that he didn’t leave his best friend to die alone.

“Tommy,” Oliver breathes, frozen several feet away. “You’re …”

“Definitely not a ghost,” Tommy quips, “because I tried to get into SU’s ladies’ locker room at the athletic house but no dice. And I can’t walk through walls either.” The first is a lie, of course, but it brings a smile to Oliver’s face so Felicity can’t be peeved at the proof of life her boyfriend offered.

Oliver doesn’t respond, instead walks forward and wraps his arms around Tommy, holding tight. Felicity feels tears clogging her throat and she grips John’s arm as she watches her boss and her boyfriend reunite.

“You keep looking at Merlyn like that and you’re not even going to have to tell Oliver about the two of you,” John whispers, a grin on his lips.

“Shut up,” she whispers back, not willing to let him goad her. He will anyway but she wants it on the record that she’s not interested in his digs. A smile touches her lips, though, and she knows he can tell, so she’s sure he’s not done.

Oliver and Tommy are talking quietly so she takes a moment to go behind the bar and pour four shots. The work day is over and she’s sure the other men all have a high enough tolerance – Oliver and Digg because of their size and Tommy because it’s Tommy – that it won’t ruin any plans they have tonight. She doesn’t know if Oliver plans to patrol but she plans to do everything in her power not to let him. He’s just gotten home and she’s sure he can use to quality time with his friends.

“A toast,” she calls when it’s clear Oliver and Tommy aren’t going to stop talking anytime soon. All three men look at her and make their way over to the bar. “Yes, it’s tequila, no, we’re not
getting salt and lime. And no,” she directs at Tommy, “no body shots.”

Oliver lifts a brow at her and she smiles back, trying not to give herself away. There’s no reason for her to reveal her relationship with Tommy right now. They’ll tell him after he’s more settled.

Or if he catches them kissing because she’s pretty sure that’s the only thing on her mind right now and Oliver’s really good at reading her.

“How to coming home,” she decides, holding up her shot. The boys clink their glasses against hers and they all take the shot at the same time. She smiles and slams her glass down. “Always wanted to do that,” she tells them, grinning when they all laugh with her.

“You did all this?” Oliver asks in awe as the lights come up on their new and improved Foundry.

“John helped,” she informed him seriously. “And Tommy kept Thea away from being down here. So it was a group effort.”

“Tommy didn’t know they were doing it until she found where you went,” Tommy interjects, obviously ignoring the way she wrinkles her nose when he refers to himself in the third person.

“Semantics.”

Felicity, John and Tommy stand back while Oliver moves slowly through the space, his eyes tracing over the new surfaces, his fingers sliding along the metal work stations. He pauses in front of the space for his suit and then looks back at them all. “I’m not ready.”

Digg grunts and she expels a breath. It shouldn’t surprise her, not really, but it kind of does. Tommy’s alive and the Glades are in ruins. She wants to kick him in the butt and tell him to go save the city but instead, she hangs back and says nothing.

John seems to be in the same boat that she’s in and just stands silently. They meet eyes and silently decide to give him some time. Not a lot but enough to get his head on straight and realize that he’s what the city needs.

“But you’re a hero. Starling needs you.”

Three heads whip towards Tommy, who’s standing beside Digg with a confused look on his face. “I’m serious,” he continues. “I mean, I get it. Things went wrong. But … but things aren’t good. We’ve got staff who don’t like to walk home alone when we close so I pay for cabs. You could – you could change that. Just because something bad happened doesn’t mean you should give up.”

“You called me a murderer, Tommy,” Oliver shoots back. “How the hell …?”

“Well, I was wrong.” His voice is flippant but his eyes aren’t and Felicity feels like she and John should leave them alone but neither moves. Oliver doesn’t either, but his eyes are wide and breathing labored. “Look, I’m not good with change. You know that. And seeing you like that? In that,” he says, indicating the green suit in the case, “was a big change. And know what you did before …”

“Were,” Tommy answers. “Who you were. Because you’re not that guy. I know you went into the fight. Into the Glades to try to save people. A murderer doesn’t try to save lives, Ollie.”

Felicity yearns to reach out and touch her boyfriend. What he’d just said was exactly what she wants Oliver to hear, to think, to know to be true. She also knows there’s no way Oliver could believe that from anyone but his best friend.

“You really think that?” Oliver asks, his voice strong but unsure.

When Tommy rolls his eyes, Oliver laughs and just like that, she knows they haven’t lost him. He may need time and they would give it to him but she knows in her heart that Tommy used the exact words needed to convince Oliver that he’s a hero and that he can make a difference.

Oliver calls his best friend forward to tour the facility with him and Felicity hangs back with John. They’re both quiet, content to let the feeling of home wash over them, before John asks, “Think he’s going to let Tommy be part of this?”

She wants to answer immediately but she finds she can’t. “I’m not sure,” she answers, head tilted to the side. “I’m actually not sure Tommy will want to be. I mean, he loves Oliver, that much is obvious, and he obviously accepts and respects what he’s doing now, but Tommy’s got the club, you know? And he loves it. And, you know, our nightly activities usually happen during his peak hours.” She pauses, thinking. “And this may sound crazy but I don’t know that I’d want him to be involved on a regular basis. If we need some extra help, sure, but … I mean, it’s safer for him to not be involved, you know? And I don’t know if I could handle him freaking out if I get called out into the field.”

John’s quiet for a long minute, arms crossed over his chest as he surveys the room. He lands on Oliver and Tommy, now over by the salmon ladder she couldn’t bring herself to get rid of. “I know what you mean,” he says lowly, “but I think you’re probably going to have to get used to him worrying whether he’s down here or not.”

Felicity nods. “I know that, I do. But I think it’ll be easier for both of us, for all of us, if there’s a degree of separation.” Taking a breath, she lets her eyes linger on the men on the other side of the room. “I know I need to talk to him about it but I don’t want to do it before he and Oliver do. I don’t want to bring up my concerns if it’s not even on the table, you know?”

“That’s fair,” John answers, straightening up when the others move to join them. “Just don’t keep it bottled up inside. If he doesn’t bring it up, talk to Oliver and then Tommy.” She gives him a look and he just grins before addressing the others. “So … love it or list it?”

Tommy and Oliver screw their faces up in confusion and Felicity snorts. “Seriously, John? Carly got you watching HGTV?” His chin drops to his chest and it becomes obvious that he realized what he said. “I’m going to enjoy that one for a while.”

“I’m going home,” he announces.

“Fixer Upper marathon on?” she needles back. He just shoots her a look before climbing the stairs, moving faster when the three of them chuckle, though she’s sure the boys are just laughing because she is.

“I think I’m going to head home too,” Oliver states, his hands pushed into his pockets. “Spend a little time with my sister, see if I can find out a little more about my mother.”

“We’ll head out too,” Tommy says, his hand automatically moving to the small of her back. She
stiffens and she sees him wince out of the corner of her eye but Oliver thankfully isn’t looking at them. “Let’s let Felicity’s computers get some rest. Lord knows with you back cleaning up the filth that’s taken over the Glades, they won’t be sleeping a lot in the near future.”

Felicity hopes the look she gives Tommy isn’t as adoring as it feels because Oliver is looking at them now. “Sounds like a good plan to me. Tommy, you staying at the club?”

“I’m actually thinking of seeing if my recently returned best friend wants to grab something to eat and go back to my place.”

“As long as you’re buying. But I don’t put out on the first date,” Oliver shoots back, his cheeks pinking when he realizes it’s not just the two boys joking back and forth.

“Keep those standards high, Oliver. And try to get dessert out of this guy. He’s stingy sometimes. More interested in the post-dessert activities.”

Both men freeze, staring at her with shock, and she reviews her words with horror. “Not that I know. It was – I didn’t mean I know that from experience. It’s just that in my experience, attractive men who are interested in post-dinner activities like to get to them. Not that I’ve been with a lot of men recently so I don’t really know if that’s Tommy’s MO. Because that’s not what I was trying to say at all. All I was trying to say was … that I’m going to stop babbling and go home. Yes. Me and wine, alone. With Netflix. Good plan, Felicity,” she says as she slides the strap of her purse over her shoulder. “Have fun, boys,” she smiles, not even needed to force herself not to kiss Tommy because she’s too embarrassed after that weird ramble. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Without waiting for either of them to say something, she hurries up the stairs and into the still empty club. She considers grabbing a bottle of the good red wine Tommy keeps in stock for her but instead, heads out. She doesn’t want to give either of them the chance to catch up to her and try to dissect what she’d said. With any luck, Oliver would chalk it up to her typical babbles and Tommy would find it adorable. Or completely forget about it.

Either way, with Oliver and Tommy hanging out tonight, she and her Netflix queue were going to have a date night with some red wine and ice cream. Her disappointment in not being able to spend time with her boyfriend is quelled by the happiness over his reunion with Oliver. If there’s one person she doesn’t mind losing him to for the night, it’s Oliver.
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

It turns out she doesn’t have to tell Oliver anything; Tommy does it for her. It’s not surprising that he can’t keep their relationship to himself, not really, because the two of them were a very tactile couple and Oliver, vigilant as he was, had noticed them without them realizing it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It turns out she doesn’t have to tell Oliver anything; Tommy does it for her. It’s not surprising that he can’t keep their relationship to himself, not really, because the two of them were a very tactile couple and Oliver, vigilant as he was, had noticed them without them realizing it.

“It was kinda weird, telling him I’m in a relationship with his friend,” Tommy tells her later that night. “He wasn’t mad or anything. Kind of surprised, I guess. But he brought it up so you totally can’t be mad at me about it.”

“I’m not mad,” she answered immediately, reclining back against her couch as she sips from her second glass of wine. “I wish one of us had been able to tell him without him figuring it out first but I should have figured that he’d notice. How did he take it? I mean, I know you said he wasn’t mad …”

“It was kinda weird. He was sort of … relieved? Maybe it’s about Laurel. Maybe he thinks he has a shot to be with her again now.”

Felicity groans. It’s probably not the right reaction but it’s still how she feels. While she and Oliver are friends and she’s not worried at all about Tommy and Laurel, she thinks that Oliver and Laurel are an ill-fitted couple. Maybe before he left on his family’s yacht they worked but she didn’t think they did now. They weren’t the same people.

Sure, maybe he would be faithful now and that would fix everything. Or maybe he would stand up for himself instead of lying to let Laurel hear what she wants to hear and they’ll implode. Spectacularly.

Their relationship was awkward enough; they didn’t need to add more sex or feelings to it now.

“What?”

“Nothing,” she answers. She considers telling him her thoughts but decides against it, instead offering, “What they do is up to them. I kind of think he should concentrate on some of the more important things right now. Like hooding up and protecting the city. But, you know, that’s the selfish part of me who wants something to do at night.”

There’s a long silence and Felicity wonders what she said wrong. Tommy is a talkative guy and there’s barely a moment that goes by when their lips aren’t engaged in one way or another. Him not speaking now worries her.
“You know, I know a guy who’s more than willing to give you something to do every night so you’re not relying on his best friend for entertainment,” he tells her slowly and her words bounce back and smack her in the face. She really needs to get her brain-mouth filter fixed so things like that don’t happen.

It’s strange to think of balancing a romantic life with her life with Oliver and Digg. Sure, it’s Tommy so she knows he’ll know what she’s doing when she can’t be with him but something about the whole idea scares her; it makes her wonder if they’ll work once she’s back behind her computer. The thought of losing her new relationship to her “secret” life scares the crap out of her and it makes her wonder if she’ll be able to hack it. Oliver doesn’t have a love life (yet), John and Carly broke up, in part, because of the Hood stuff … she hopes she and Tommy are different but she’s second-guessing herself and she hates it.

“Felicity?”

“Sorry,” she breathes. “Got distracted by … well, myself.” It’s not a real explanation and she knows she has to push forward before he gets a chance to press her on it. “But yes, I like that idea. Except for one tiny, little, insignificant detail.” She pauses and smiles when he doesn’t say anything. “You have a club to run.”

“I’ll hire a good manager and we’ll be home by eleven every night,” he promises and Felicity can’t help but smile. It’s a pipe dream and they both know it but it makes her heart flutter when he makes the offer. “I just got you, Felicity. I’m not about to let you go that easily.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” she promises breathlessly. “I’m not going to … my other nightly activities won’t have an effect on ours.”

It’s a lie and they both know it but it’s a lie they can both live with for now.

“Talk to me, Felicity,” Oliver calls over the comms and she wants to roll her eyes but she doesn’t. He’s out on a patrol, itching for a fight, and she wants to tell him to come back and go upstairs and find a nice girl to take home but she can’t. That’s not her call.

Plus it’s a little more selfish than she’s willing to be.

“I’m not seeing anything you need to break up,” she answers, her eyes scanning the screens. “There’s a group of women walking home down Hall but there’s four of them and I don’t see any others in the area. Uh, ten blocks away there’s a bunch of … less fortunate people … having a bonfire. I’m sure there’s alcohol involved and there could be a riot out of that.” She pauses, letting out a slow breath. “I don’t know, Hood. I think maybe it’s a quiet night.”

“Starling is never quiet,” he bites out. “You’re not looking hard enough. Find me something.”

She wants to bite back, to tell him to knock it off, it’s not her fault that there’s nothing happening, but instead she lets her fingers do the talking. “B&E on Duvall. Lance is already on his way there. If you take Spier to Gallo you can get there before him. If not, you’ll show up after and have some explaining to do. I say call it a night but you’re the boss.”

He’s quiet for a second before she hears his breathing change and she realizes he’s running. Of course he is.
She stays with him through catching the “criminal”, a kid who had a kid of his own he needed to feed, and then tells Oliver she’s signing off because there’s “nothing worth exposing yourself for out there tonight” and she’d rather go spend time with her boyfriend.

She gets upstairs and is behind the bar lending a hand when the other man in her life walks around from the back, an irritated scowl on his face. “You left me out there,” he growls as he leans across the bar. “I get that you’ve got a boyfriend now but …”

“Cassie, I’m taking five!” she calls out to the closest bartender before walking around and grabbing her friend by the jacket, dragging him with her towards the stairs. He follows willingly once they get there and it’s only a few paces further before they’re in Tommy’s office and she’s shutting the door behind them. “We need to get something straight, Oliver.”

“Tell me about it,” he says lowly. “We need to get it straight that you’re not going to do that to me again.”

“No,” she shoots back, “we need to get straight that when I say there’s nothing out there for you, I mean it. I don’t want to rush out to get to my boyfriend, Oliver, though I do like seeing him. I need you to trust me. I know you were itching for a fight tonight, though I don’t know why, but you need to trust me, Oliver. This isn’t going to work if you don’t.”

They’re both quiet, each digesting her words. There’s no heavy breathing, no pacing or toe tapping or anything like that. It’s just the two of them sharing space, trying to figure out who they are and where they fit. Oliver licks his lips and Felicity shifts her weight, neither saying anything for several minutes.

If she’s expecting an apology, she doesn’t get it. “I trust you,” he decides. “I’ll be more … I’ll listen better next time.”

Felicity pulls her bottom lip into her mouth and considers him for a moment before nodding. “Okay then. See that you do.” She offers him a smile and pats his chest on her way back down to the bar. It’s busy, unusually so, and when you’re the owner’s girlfriend, you’ve got to pull your weight when you’re able.

Things get smoother from there. Digg starts going out in the field more to back up Oliver when he needs to, Oliver stops itching for fights with lunatics from the Glades and starts taking his aggression out on some new training equipment, Tommy comes down to the foundry once a week to spend time with the team and Felicity takes one night a week to spend time with just Tommy. It’s not easy but it works for them.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the shortness but I’ve decided to end this story here. I’m not ruling out the possibility of a sequel - I mean, who wouldn't want to know how Tommy would react
to The Count or Cooper coming to town? - but for now, I'm going to close the book on these guys. Thank you all so much for reading and leaving comments. It means so much more to me than I can say.

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