Beyond Description

by LadyPaige

Summary

Oliver's time on the Island was beyond description, being left there was beyond description, to never see Slade again was beyond description.

Set in Season one, from Home Invasion to Sacrifice.

Currently being rewritten.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The island had been...well there was really no right way to describe it. There was hunger, aching, fear, anger, worry, and fatigue, but the one feeling that Oliver could not stand was the feeling that his body just wanted to slip away. Maybe it was the exhaustion finally kicking in when he was safe in the wrecked plane after Slade's so called 'pleasantries', with food, water, and a place to sleep. Oliver lay on his space of rest—not really a bed in his eyes, Oliver believed that a bed was not a bed without a mattress— for what felt like hours and every night for many weeks after he still would.

The young man was uneasy. Slade could kill him whether he was asleep or awake so there was nothing he could really do about that. He wasn't really sure, but he had a feeling that if he were to die it would most likely be of his own doing, not Slade's. After all, that had nearly happened when he had stood on a mine.

Oliver was trusting his gut on this one. Yao Fei had sent Oliver to this Australian, so he had to be the best chance Oliver had of getting off the island. Slade was his only chance and the only chance was always the best.

Over the next few years, Oliver would not just befriend and trust this man. He would come to need him, not just in the way he needed him now; for protection, training, supplies, and to help escape the island, but for something much greater. To cope. To keep Oliver fighting, not just for the need to survive, but to want to.

That's what, looking back, Oliver thought he may have been losing. Don't get him wrong, he didn't want to die, but in moments like these where he was safe, he could sleep knowing there was someone nearby who could watch over him. He had no worries, if only for the night. His usual passing out from exhaustion was still set to happen but, this time it was different. He closed his eyes and thought of the places he would go and the things he would do.

Now it was different, very different. Oliver would lay there and mentally he was fine. He would push away the worries and try to sleep but physically it felt as if his body was betraying him. He was dizzy and the world spun just enough so that if he looked at the floor it would appear as if it had started gradually moving up the wall like the plane was rolling. His breathing was deeper than normal but not loud. It wasn't enough for Slade to worry or care. Oliver almost felt like his blood was slowing in his veins. His body overall felt like it was shutting down.

After their time together, Slade was amazed at the fighter Oliver had become. His smarts and speed at reacting were quick to develop which gave Slade high hopes of the kid's success. Over time the kid would become faster, stronger, and more knowledgeable with weapons, hunting, herbs, general medicine, and technology. Slade made sure Fyers never found out about his skills as it gave the pair an advantage every now and again.

Slade kept an eye on the kid to make sure he didn't fall into mental issues like depression or PTSD which would be likely seeing as he had little training to deal with living like this. For now he would just have to get over it. The older man generally joked with the kid and in the few moments of peace the pair chatted. Slade had good people skills, even if he had to fake it now and again, but the kid was closed off, especially at night when he would just stare at that same old picture.

Numerous weeks later, Slade found an iPod while looking for a bar of soap in what Oliver dubbed 'Slade's big box of crap'. Indeed it was, though Slade normally kept everything in its place due to years of military training, anything spare and/or not overly important was thrown into the box. The iPod was a vibrant blue. He had spotted it one night when he had sneaked around a camp where it
lay forgotten next to a tent. Slade was not a stupid man, nor was he paranoid, but every new thing he
took which he believed could be bugged would be stashed in the woods for a day. If there was no
proof of trespassing (which there wasn't but you could never be too careful) he would open it up and,
upon seeing no bugs, he would keep it.

"Hey," Slade called to the younger man. "Do you like music?"

Oliver turned around as he had been making his way to his bed. A smile had pulled at his lips,
thankful that he could put off trying to sleep for a few more minutes, because of the odd question.
"Music?" he questioned, "Wouldn't that give us away?" He cocked his brow. What was Slade up to?

Slade held up the iPod by the main wire of its earphones, "Not if we use this." He looked at the
music device, "Found it a while ago, bug free." He grinned, turning back to Oliver, "Well?"

Oliver smiled. "Okay."

Oliver guessed Slade was planning on listening with him, which he didn't mind. In fact, his smile
grew. He wanted to see what the older man's taste in music was. However, Oliver was a little lost on
how they were going to do this.

Slade stood up from next to the box and waved the kid to follow him. Slade sat down on his
makeshift bed, leaving room for the kid to join. He turned on the device, running his fingertip over
the circular pad to see what songs were on it.

Oliver watched the older man for a while, not knowing what he would do if he lay next to him.

A grin pulled at Slade's lips. With his spare hand, he patted the space next to him, never taking his
eyes or hand from the iPod.

Oliver was taken aback but before he could overthink anything, he pushed himself forwards and
made his way to the bed. Once he got there, Slade laid on his back and shifted slightly to make
himself more comfortable.

Slade grabbed an earphone. Raising his arm so it was propped up on the elbow, he flicked his wrist
back. "Earphone," he said simply.

Slade and Oliver lay pressed up to each other because of the lack of room. They were both a little
tense and Slade almost completely stiff, although his facial expression betrayed no discomfort. With
an earphone each they listened and spoke about the music. Slade had the iPod so if a song came up
that Oliver didn't like he would simply say, "Next," and Slade would press the button to skip to the
next song. Oliver was not heartless; he always looked over to see what the older man thought about
the song. Slade actually liked an odd song here or there that Oliver didn't, but it made the man happy.
Songs he actually liked didn't come around that often, so Oliver let him listen.

Oliver liked a song with a good beat, something he could imagine a story happening to. His life had
been great, and maybe it wasn't right now, but Slade was helping even if he didn't mean it. As a kid,
music was about the adventure and wonder. As he had got older he found that music allowed him to
be the kind of person he wanted to be. Take away Fyers and his men, the lack of food, and replace
Slade with a man attracted to Oliver. A man who deep down Oliver knew would be a lot like Slade;
strong, smart but not smug, a hell of a body with dark hair and eyes. That was who he wanted to be.

Slade's choice in music seemed to be more lyrical, all the words were clear and well written. For that
reason all the songs he seemed to like were slow, minus Eminem, whom Slade had never heard
before but seemed to like very much. The rapper had a place in Oliver's heart too. The guy was a
talented writer; his music was catchy and funny.

The iPod had been filled with compilation albums, things like 'Greatest Hits!' or 'The Best of...' Oliver had noted that all the albums were new and pointed out that there was nothing personal about it. Maybe the owner was just shallow.

Slade chuckled. "So this man works for someone like Fyers, kidnapping and killing just for the money, but is sensitive about people knowing he doesn't like," he made quotation marks in the air, "the popular music?"

It was more of a statement than a question but Oliver still replied, "Everyone is sensitive in different areas." He was about to continue to list examples like music, weight, looks, and so on, when Slade rolled onto his side, faced away from Oliver, and laughed. Oliver sat up and put a hand onto Slade's shoulder about to roll him back over and ask what he was laughing at when he realized the innuendo.

Oliver glared at the back of the Australian's head. He held the scarf over his eyes which in turn covered the rest of his face below. The joke wasn't that funny, but it brought a smile to Oliver's face. He was glad to see the man laugh.

Things would get worse but being with Slade would always make things better, even if after this moment he knew that he wanted a man, this man, but couldn't have him. A dream is just that, a dream, nothing more. However, when you think about it, if you want that dream badly enough, maybe it was worth trying for.
Chapter Notes

Now Betaed

See the end of the chapter for more notes

- Starling city -

Oliver stood in front of his full length mirror, wearing a simple black suit, shoes and a bright white shirt with the first and second button undone. No scars were anywhere near visible and the young man wanted that to stay the case. Oliver always felt better wearing black; it made him feel like he could just slip into the shadows if he wanted to do so. There had been an odd freedom about the Island - Oliver may have been trapped there and he may have been dependent on Yao Fei and Slade for pretty much everything at first but he did survive entirely by himself for the last six months after Slade had left him behind.

Oliver knew he was not really mad at the Australian; there had been mass panic, Fyers was dead, evidence of the event had been sent to government of some sort or "My bosses" Slade had said in that sexy voice of his – one often heard whispered into Oliver's ear as his strong hands traced the hills and dips of the younger man's skin, eyes scanning over and over as if constantly amazed and disbelieving that such a body could exist and that it was somehow all his. Slade would watch and feel Oliver's body as if it were some sort of treasure, that even his imperfections were perfections, like rich Egyptian silk sewn together with golden string.

Slade had a habit of making Oliver's mind wander, which had been the thing that had led to Oliver being left on the Island. The big "boss battle" as Oliver had dubbed it, to which Yao Fei and Shado had raised a brow and Slade had laughed at the video game reference, was difficult but planned - set to occur not long after Oliver's second tattoo. The first had been made by Shado with a simple sewing needle and black and red ink after becoming a master archer, the image of a red sea dragon forever engraved into his skin which upon first sight and every sight after made Slade's eyes shine with pride. It was by far the one scar Oliver would never see as such, he had pride for it too, proud that he had become a true warrior that even on this Island could face his back to the world and easily block, fight, defeat and protect those he loved if someone were to attack.

The second tattoo had once again been given to him by Shado, under the watchful eye of the Russian leader of the Solntsevskaya Bratva, whose life he had saved. The man had been fooled by his most trusted man, second in command it seems, to go to the Island for business. On a quick solo scouting mission Oliver had seen the man, in a cage like a wild animal, speaking Russian so quickly it made him sound like one. Upon eavesdropping to find out who the man was and with the constant moral need chipping away at him to save the man, Oliver deemed the man important and did in fact
save him. His skills in archery were still unknown to Fyers men via removing his type of arrows, especially when he was with Yao Fei and/or Shado. They couldn't have anyone putting it together. His actions were quick, hood up to hide his identity if he were to be seen. Oliver did not remove the his arrows; he did know they would be blamed for this, who else was there to blame? Fyers would believe that his men had been shot, but with no bullets and shells and the wounds too small for knives, it would have to be arrows and no arrows? Well that would make things interesting. Oliver's arrows were different than the others, a man's own arrows makes him a true master archer or something... but Fyers did not need to know that, he would probably never find out and everyone wanted to keep it that way for now.

The man in the cage stood leaning against the bars. He looked to be in his late forties, his hair was dark brown almost black with line of grey, he wore a black perfectly tailored suit and his body was large, muscular with just a bit of fat. There was a threatening vibe about him that would have wet the pants of the Oliver back in Starling city.

He was frightened, even if to any normal person he looked fearless, Oliver could see it in the way his hands gripped the cage, his body far too straight, stiffened as he tried to cover his fear. He was cornered which, even if scared, would make him likely to strike out. Oliver had been taught Russian by Slade and later on Mandarin by Yao Fei and Shado, both of which he spoke fluently. These lessons were more about giving Oliver more knowledge; it would give them two secret languages to speak like their very own code switching from one to the other to hide the translation. Slade also taught Oliver a bit of Arabic and Persian/Farsi when they were training or hunting - which often lead to sex seeing as they were not as alone as they had been before back at the plane.

Oliver walked up to the man in the cage, stopping a couple of steps away and placing his bow and arrows on the floor. He lowered his hood and bowed his head so that the back of his neck was visible, hands placed palms together. Yao Fei had said that this way of greeting was to signal trust and the exposure of the neck showed vulnerability being that it was a place that hit hard enough could disable/kill you. Even if the man was in a cage Oliver wanted the man to believe him when he said in Russian "Hello, I am Oliver." He raised his body back to see the man "Myself and some friends of mine seem to be in the same situation as yourself. We have been here a lot longer" Oliver pick the bow up and held it for the man to see "as you may have guessed. We are working to get off this Island." he placed the bow back on to the floor "Would you join us?"

After a bit more talking, Oliver made sure to walk were Yao Fei would be hunting; he would have to assess if the man should be let into the camp. Yao Fei had jumped in front of them from a tree; the man had jumped out of his skin whereas Oliver had heard him coming. The man later helped find a way of the Island. Oliver's reward for both getting him out of the cage and soon to be off the Island had been a star tattooed on his left breast signifying that he was a high ranking member of the Bratva. Slade kissed Oliver senseless that night.

The man had been able to send a coded message to get them off the Island whereby Slade was also given the chance to pass off the evidence of what was happening of the Island. The plan to escape was long and complex yet simple; they would start by stealing all available explosives, disabling
mass weaponry, killing all those in command post, Fyers and basic leaders when at all possible. While this was happening an alert would go out for evacuation via planes that were on the way, that the rebels were planning a suicide mission to eliminate everyone and everything on the Island with the explosives they had stolen over the years - which they had; they had kept a few but most they had water logged and hidden, although the mercenaries didn't know that. They also didn't know that the planes were not theirs but the Government's, everyone would get on including Oliver, Slade, Yao Fei, Shado and the Bratva leader. Who was who would be sorted out afterwards via the symbol they all had written on a plain white shirt they all had on to signal who was part of the plan.

The five were split into two groups - Yao Fei, Shado and the Bratva leader to keep him safe and Slade and Oliver to take out Fyers and the command posts. Both teams would take out potential issues and plant "bombs" to cause panic and the image of threat and rescue covering the unforeseen trap. Everything was working when ranks were broken; the planes had landed set to move very soon; after all they had to keep up the act. They all had met up in the stolen mercenaries uniforms, faces covered, set to go. Yao Fei was not there and the Bratva leader was injured. Slade went back to help which he did, Yao Fei came back but then Slade had been recognised by a large group of men. The Australian managed to drag the fight away; he could not have the mercenaries knowing what had happened until they had left the Island and landed. Yao Fei, Shado and the Bratva leader went on, Oliver went to help. Oliver had to save Slade and to stop the truth coming out. He killed and killed, fought his way to find Slade but Slade was gone and before he knew it, he was out of time. The planes were leaving. "Slade!" Oliver screamed "Slade!"

Slade was not on the Island. Oliver had searched the whole Island, the plane and all the bodies. Slade was safe, they all were but Oliver, Oliver was still there. Alone.

Six months later a boat had shown up, in a place where fishing was pointless. Oliver was rescued. When Oliver used his ties to the Solntsevskaya Bratva to get information from the Bratva leader of Starling city, he was later given a message that the Bratva of Russia hoped that Oliver had enjoyed his boat journey, courtesy of some old friends of his. "Yao Fei and Shado" Oliver had thought and smiled.

Oliver sighed. 'Friends' went more than one but were all three okay?

Slade...

- Lian Yu -

After the night with the Ipod things really started to pick up; there were still the morning runs, push ups, sit ups and pull ups, breakfast, more push ups and pull ups by which point his arms would be dead, then lunch - but instead of more running afterwards to kill his legs Slade took Oliver hunting. There was a lot of walking so it still killed his legs but Slade wanted to teach him how to hide and
keep quiet, which seemed easy but really was not. The mercenaries, as Slade had said were all "drones". Fyers could just replace them, which Oliver had said "was no way to treat a human life."

"Then learn to hide," the older man held his arms up high "Killing them would mean more recruits, meaning a possible way out of here," he added, lowering his arms back to his sides "but," he held up his index finger to signal his reason not "It's far too obvious." he place his hand back down looking out towards the forest "Tried it once before. Didn't work with two men let alone a man and a half," he looked back at Oliver "Scratch that. A man and a bit."

Oliver glared at the man but knew what he had meant; Oliver wondered if that was when Slade and Billy Wintergreen had been caught. Were they tortured? Likely but for how long, Oliver didn't want to know. The point was Billy Wintergreen had chosen to work with Fyers and now Billy was dead, killed by Slade.

Slade had missed his chance of going home by going after Oliver and had to kill his best friend, and yet there was no blame laid on Oliver. Slade did not like Oliver at first because one: he had found Slade and two: he was sent by Yao Fei but he was of no use. Oliver had proved himself a fighter when getting out of that chair but he was of no use. Oliver had proved himself a fighter when getting out of that chair but it still took two weeks for Slade to warm up to Oliver. Once he did however he seemed to really enjoy the younger man's company. Oliver had guessed that the man had just been lonely, he couldn't put his mind on it but something told him that was not the case, that he liked Oliver for a reason. He still made jokes like the ones about Oliver being weak or having a silver spoon stuck up his arse but there was no malice, the jokes seemed more aimed at getting Oliver to work hard and sometimes even just to make connection with the younger man. Slade was rough around the edges but he was a pleasant person, the night with the Ipod had shown at least as much.

"The point is they are not normally good trackers but a few of them could know a thing or two," Slade took the empty black gun bag from where it lay on his back, held on by his shoulder. The bag was long and thin for longer guns - sniper rifle? Oliver had wondered what it was for but figured Slade would tell him sooner or later. "You're going to take this," he quoted with his fingers "gun," he started grabbing hand sized rocks and placing them into the bag "I'll give you so long then I'm coming to find you." He threw in a handful of pebbles "You'll have to be quick, quiet and stay hidden." After a minute, once he had the bag filled to his liking, he stood and faced Oliver "I'll find you in the end but how long you can stay hidden is the important bit." he continued, holding the bag out to the younger man.

Oliver took the bag strap prepared for the weight as not to embarrass himself, "So," he huffed lightly as he put the bag into place "we're playing hide and seek?"

Slade grinned "You'd never be able to find me."

Oliver thought for a moment, then looked up "You'd hide up a tree." he said, it was guess but Oliver
did not let that slip just in case he was right. Slade seemed like the kind of guy who both could and would hide up a tree. He looked back to see that Slade's eyes were slightly boggled, eyebrows raised, head cocked. Oliver grinned.

"Lucky guess." he mumbled, turning away from Oliver "Okay test run. You have thirty seconds." he paused for a moment, unknown to Oliver he grinned "Go."

Oliver went; he had a feeling he was going to be found quickly but he had to learn this, so what the hell. He ran so far then he slowed down to quieten his step, scanning his surroundings for possible hiding places, hand holding the bag down to quiet his movements further. Time was running out. Spotting a hedge, he crawled inside, pulling the brush over the hole he had made. He waited, his heart beating quickly and his breath too heavy for his liking. He distracted himself by looking around through the dark green leaves for other potential hiding places for next time. Oliver was not surprised that the leaves and grass were so green with all the rain that he had seen while he had been on the Island. Oddly the more he saw it the more he liked it, okay it was cold and damp but the green earth made it seem so natural and peaceful... for an Island full of mercenaries. Having lived in a big house meant a big garden; Oliver could still remember the years he, Tommy, Thea and his dad would roll around on the freshly cut grass. He missed his father, he was not like most business men, he did not wear suits unless he had work and he loved to play with the kids in the grass and dirt, even with Tommy whom he saw as practically his son, which Oliver loved. He had always wanted a brother and Tommy was his brother regardless of blood. His father did have his downsides; he never shouted but he was a man whose orders you would listen to. Oliver knew since he was a teenager that he would never be able to be gay openly or in the shadows until his father was gone, else Oliver himself would have to leave but he knew his father had both the money and ties to find him.

In the distance Oliver could see large dip in the earth the length of a path. Was that a ditch?

Oliver heard Slade before he saw his feet heading towards him, he looked straight at the space Oliver knew the older man would appear with an annoying look on his face, and true enough a few moments later Slade moved the bush away with a grin of his face. The look on Oliver's face only made him grin wider.

"Found you." he said simply "Too obvious." he held a hand out to Oliver "Another go?"

A challenge?

Oliver grabbed the hand and held on as Slade pulled him from the hedge with ease. The younger man grinned devilishly and nodded.
Challenge accepted.

Same rules as last time; Slade turned around and Oliver had thirty seconds to hide.

Oliver chose a different tactic, running to the side to make Slade think he had stopped somewhere before walking over to the dip he had seen. It was a sudden decline, eroded by years of traffic, human and otherwise, making the wide path almost into a ditch. On the other side of the ditch there was a slope leading into a second natural ditch in which water had slightly build up, making its way alongside the path. It was just low enough to hide behind but then he spotted a tree just on the edge, almost about to fall into the first ditch had it been a younger smaller tree. He jumped lightly into the ditch, hoping to hide his tracks by walking along it, making his way to the tree. The tree's roots stuck out somewhat along the wall of the ditch making it look like carvings but the tree was strong, it was not going anywhere. The tree was wide but the best thing was it had a large thick hedge right next to it. He grinned and proceeded to hide behind the tree in the ditch, taking a small pebble from the floor in-between his index and middle finger tips and the "gun" from his back, balancing it flat on his palms. He looked down at the hard dirt floor - even the shadows were on his side. Oliver had a plan.

Not long after, he heard movement; he listened to how close it was. His heart was beating rapidly both from fear and excitement. After a few moments of waiting the soft thump of Slade's boots mixed with the light squelch of the wet moss sounded just ten or so feet away. Oliver grinned like a cat stalking its prey. It was time.

Slade was making his way towards the ditch, close to the tree which Slade must have known would have been a doubly good place to hide, seeing as the tree would have covered Oliver if he were to stand. Oliver hoped he would have done this, had he not he would have just stayed hidden. Slade seemed to be going to the right side of the tree so Oliver placed the "gun" on the left side of the hedge. Oliver slowly lifted his body onto the side of the ditch hiding behind the tree and hedge, and then took the pebble that still sat between his fingers and threw it into the water. Seeing as Slade would not be able to see the water until he got to the edge Oliver hoped the older man would follow the sound thinking the younger man was hiding down there. He did.

Oliver balanced the "gun" back onto his palms as to not about to forget it; he was going to win in every way if it killed him. Slade made his way to the sound and Oliver made his way around the hedge and stood. Oliver stood behind Slade. The shadows, as Oliver had made sure to check before, were behind them so Slade would not see it coming. Oliver stood right behind him, a few steps away so the older man did not strike out and... Oliver took at deep but silent breath, he was not going to fuck up after coming this far, watching as Slade's eyes scanned the ditch.

"Slade!" he said loudly, yet not a yell that could draw any unwanted attention.

Slade jumped and spun around, weapon just sliding out of its holder "Fuckkkk~" the word had
started loud but it quietened down gradually as the older man dragged the last letter, his body relaxing.

Oliver had the world's largest shit eating grin on his face "Scare you?" The grin amazingly got even wider "Did I?"

Slade grinned back "Little shit," the older man stepped forward and fluffed up the kid's hair with his hand.

Oliver ducked and turned away to get away from the hand but the hand and the body it belonged to followed. Slade was chuckling Oliver had noticed which almost made him still but he was not getting caught just yet. Oliver turned, Slade turned, Oliver ducked down, Slade ducked down. Slade's body was pressed up to Oliver's back but before anything could go any further, the twosome tripped over each other's legs – which, thinking about it in hindsight, would have been bound to happen.

Slade landed on his butt, Oliver went with him, his back hitting the older man's front causing them both to fall further back, Slade falling onto his back with Oliver landing on his arm, not the one that he had been shot in thankfully. Seeing as the fall had been split into two bits and was slow to begin with neither man was hurt.

Oliver lay there for a second, enjoying having Slade's warm body close by him much like the night they used the Ipod for the first time. They had used it almost every night but after the third time they stopped, conversation between the two had been coming along well, months had passed since that day and the two got on fine. The bad nights had got fewer as well; from every other night to one night a week, to twice in a month. Slade did help with that, Oliver knew. Which is why if anyone asked Oliver would say that was the reason he did not feel uncomfortable right now, they were friends. But Oliver knew the real reason. He liked Slade; for his body, personality and just generally everything that was Slade. Laying like this on the man's thick bicep, nose tip just touching his elbow, Oliver could pretend that this was normal, that this is what Oliver and Slade did... on a deserted Island crawling with mercenaries.

Oliver knew only seconds had passed but he was starting to wonder why Slade had not just pushed him off. The younger man lay there for a few more seconds, guilty but happy for just a little longer but his worry was starting to build. Why was Slade not moving? Was he... Oliver's body stiffened; here he was enjoying this when his friend could have been injured. Oliver was just about to move when he felt movement behind him. He stiffened further but turned his head just in time for Slade to roll onto his side; pressing his body into Oliver's back, his chin on the younger man's shoulder. Dark brown eyes linked with a set of light green, the kind that of green that grass was after you just mowed the lawn, green with specks of yellow, along with something different. A few thin waves of aqua blue.
Slade smiled, pulling his trapped arm back then rolling the man onto his back. Slade balanced himself on one elbow while the hand of his other arm went to the man's hair, fingers running through the blonde locks. He lent forward, faces inches apart, as close as you could get without getting cross eyed, eyes staying linked the whole time. Oliver's eyes went from boggled to half shut, the thick muscular arm next to his head, the strong yet soft hand in his hair. The light warm breath on his mouth, the dark pools looking into his green. Oliver knew what he wanted, he did not need to think twice, and he returned the smile.

Slade lent forward and brought their lips together in a chaste kiss.

- Starling city -

Oliver smiled at the memory of their first kiss. That was a good day. Back then he used to wonder if when they went home Slade would ever want to see let alone be with him again. Oliver's smile fell, he looked into the mirror. Before the Island Oliver would have thought of himself as sex itself on legs even if now he was a lot better looking... well maybe not with all the scars. Oliver knew what would happen if people saw them, they would demand to know what caused them. He would not mind telling a person or two but then they would baby him. Wrap him in blankets, give him some sort of hot chocolate drink, hug him and tell him the world was a good place. What was he supposed to say?

"Mum, Thea don't worry it was not all that bad. Okay I saw dad shoot a man and himself in the head so I could live and just as I had buried him a man shot me with an arrow. I was also tortured, I killed people; the first by accident whose clothes I had to wear, then I had to kill to survive. More killing and mental scarring but it's okay because now that dad is dead I can tell you that I'm gay. Boyfriend? I did have constant sex with a forty year old Australian Secret Intelligence Service agent, who ha ha, you'll love this; made me prove I was worth saving by breaking my own arm to get out of the chair he had tied me to and punching him in the face. But other than that he's really nice and I like him. No I..." Oliver sighed and said out loud "I love him." Oliver sat on his bed, face in his hands "And isn't that just all kinds of fucked up." he mumbled.

- Lian Yu -

They kissed and kissed, Oliver grabbing handfuls of Slade's black shirt and as he introduced tongue; via a light lick at Oliver's lips which he willingly opened and shivered as the tip drew patterns on the roof of his mouth, dancing alongside his own tongue. Slade pulled back slightly and slowly nipped the younger man's bottom lip twice before kissing the area he had bitten, stroking Oliver's hair before he returned to kissing him. His kisses were slow and relaxing, Oliver's hands had at some point started to tighten and relax on the handfuls of fabric like a content cat kneading a soft blanket.
Slade pulled away, a light smile on his face "As much as I would like to keep doing this," he laid another chaste kiss on Oliver's lips before pulling back "and I would," he grinned "We have to get back to the plane." He kissed Oliver's ear to which the younger man shivered. Slade then, just to be evil, slowly ran his thigh over the bulge in-between Oliver's legs. Oliver gasped, his eyes fluttered shut. Slade sat back on to his knees and slapped Oliver's thighs and said "Okay, time to go."

Oliver held the urge to call Slade a dick for taking his leg away his crotch and glared at him. He had that "I've stolen something from Oliver and I liked it" grin, the same one he had every morning when he shook Oliver awake for their morning run.

- Starling city -

Oliver made his way down the stairs to see Thea sitting on the sofa ready; dressed, made up and waiting.

"What took you so long?" she demanded, clearly annoyed.

"Sorry," he held his hands up in surrender "fell asleep." Oliver hoped she would believe that, he looked a little down, felt even more so. It was a good cover; Oliver hated naps, tried it once or twice and just hated it. He liked sleeping, but naps were only an hour or so long so they left him even more tired than before and they made him feel like it was the next day. Those two things made him disappointed and confused which lead to him just being plain pissed off. He had napped a few times on the Island after Slade and he had sex, those were the only naps that he has ever enjoyed. Oliver sighed.

"No, no, no," Thea said, pulling her leather coat on and running over to Oliver, heels clicking as she went "You said you would go." she pouted at him "Ollie~" she whined "You have to go," She smiled "You could help us with the mystery army guy."

Oliver was going to go anyway but what Thea had said just then made him wonder "Army guy?" he raised a brow.

Thea smiled "It's the cutest thing ever," she grabbed his arm "come on, I'll tell you on the way."

Oliver needed to spend more time with his sister, he loved her dearly but he had a feeling she would not want to play in the grass like they did when they were kids. He didn't want her to drink or do drugs but he didn't know how to connect with her. He did not want to just sit there, nod and agree
with everything she said to make her happy, he wanted to have a connection with her again. The list took up a lot of his time which made it look like he wasn't trying, but it wasn't like he could tell her what he was doing.

The pair got into the car "Okay this guy-"

"No." Thea pointed a finger in his face "You're not getting out of this."

"No," Oliver said; hands once again up in surrender "I meant," he pointed out "when we get to the club we could solve this mystery guy like a case."

This was apparently the right thing to say because Thea smiled "Okay, I'll text Ash; she'll tell me what she remembered about the guy."

A couple of minutes later Oliver and Thea were sitting in one of the private booths, the cold red leather feeling good on his hot skin from the warmth of the club. Oliver liked his club; it made him feel like he could relax knowing his bow and arrow was just a small walk away. It was odd that now being back at home he knew he felt somewhat safer at the Island. He knew how everyone worked back there, he never had to hide who he was although it was freaky as hell that one time when he and Slade had come back from one of their longer than normal (wink, wink) hunting trips. The twosome had come back with a few birds and a rabbit and just walked into their little camp. Shado had looked to her father who had smiled and nodded, Shado turned to look at them, winked at Oliver and mouthed "Have fun?" and grinned. Oliver had turned red. How the hell did they know? Slade had out right laughed.

The other thing he liked was that his family there could look after themselves; he never had to fear for their safety. They were a family; he'd lived with Slade for over half a year, then Shado had joined and later on Yao Fei. Oliver had learnt different things from each of them; hunting, work outs, weapon work and fighting/defending from Slade, herbs and medicine with Yao Fei along with the bow with Shado and they all taught him different languages mostly by only talking Russian in the camp, all of them refusing to give it up. Sex with a man speaking Russian with an Australian accent was a new one, the Russian did sound a bit threatening which just turned Oliver on further. "I need to get away from these people." Oliver had thought, shaking his head with an amused smirk on his face. This was a family. His uncle, his cousin and his... the man he had sex with from time to time which everyone seemed to know for some reason. If only the mercenaries weren't there, mercenaries ruin everything.

"So," Oliver placed his elbows on the table, hands held together with entwined fingers, leaning forward with a facial expression of jokingly over the top enthusiasm "tell me the story."
Thea gave him a glare and a slight raised brow as if to say "Your kidding, right?" to Oliver's childishness, but she told him any way "I saw this guy in the club two nights ago," she started, eyebrows knitted in confusion "he was dressed up kind of like in the army, but not." Thea looked at Oliver "He was wear black lace up boots and he just had this army look about him." she moved her hands around as if they were painting a picture of the man.

Oliver was a little worried; he hoped this was something The Hood was not needed for.

"Oh God, was he good looking," Thea smiled.

"I'm beginning to see the mystery here,"

"Shut up," Thea pointed at Oliver "He was worn out like he had just got off a plane but he didn't leave until the club shut down."

Oliver raised a brow.

"Tommy told me."

"Oh."

"Anyway," she smiled, the mystery must be coming up soon "Last night Ash was out with that guy she's been going out with now and she saw the army guy. This time he was dressed down but looking ready for the army kind of action." she point at a table, Oliver guessed the man must have been sat there "He sat there and just seemed to wait so before Ash left, she and... Max?" She thought for a moment "Yeah Max. Anyway they went over to him to ask if he was waiting for someone and he said something like; Yeah I got here yesterday and I know she comes here sometimes." Thea smiled "Max asked if she was hot and the guy said" she put her hands together, finger spread, she moved her hands away from each other, like she was expressing the title of a movie "gorgeous" she gasped.

Oliver nodded taking it all in, nothing for the hood to worry about. He lent back into his seat and took a swing from his beer, made a satisfied "Ahh" and looked back to Thea "So he stayed till the club closed again and," he point the beer neck at Thea "you think he'll come again tonight."

"Yes." Thea nodded "We may have to wait awhile 'til he gets here so I got the sign in sheets from
last night and the night before to see if we can find him." she placed the folder onto the table from her lap.

"You know his name?" Oliver asked.

"No," she held her hands up to stop Oliver from saying anything, "but Ash said he sounded like he was from New Zealand."

"Okay," Oliver gave a smile "just look for something New Zealandie," he joked. Oliver and Thea sat together and looked over the list looking for males who had been at the club both nights. It would not take too long but it was boring, and Oliver's mind started to wonder about Slade again so as Thea was scanning the lists for names, Oliver closed his eyes and his mind wandered.

Chapter End Notes

New Zealand and Australia's accents are alike but NOT the same, people can find that racist. But it is kind of funny that the actor who plays Slade is from New Zealand. The point is that if Thea had said the man was Australian Oliver may have guessed (hoped) that it was Slade (which you should know by now) and I did not want him to know yet.
The trip back to the plane was awkward for Oliver who held the empty gun bag on his thigh facing Slade to hide his shame, which the man very much knew was there.

"Want me to take that bag for you?" Slade asked, not even trying to hold back his grin. 

"It's not heavy," Oliver kept his poker face.

Slade chuckled.

Oliver liked to hear the older man laugh, even if it was at Oliver's expense. Oliver liked seeing the other man happy, like when he had chased Oliver after the younger man had made him jump, which had led to the kiss and the older man had really liked that - especially when he got to cock block Oliver with what seemed like responsibility but was in fact just pure evilness. Oliver's lips and chin still felt lightly burned from Slade's moustache and beard, most likely due to Oliver's own skin being sensitive after shaving this morning. Oliver much preferred the fresh faced look and feel. Shaving with a knife had felt very odd and he had to be very careful about it, feeling like any minute he would stab himself in the eye. 

"So how was this so called 'training' supposed to help me unless Fyers finds me and molests me to death..." the question drifted off. It was a joke but it made him think about being sexually tortured, Oliver had been tortured before and he liked to think that if it came to saving Yao Fei and/or Slade that Oliver would not give up, but he worried that he would. His head and lips dipped sadly. He had to stay strong and keep fighting. He had no idea what was the worst thing he could suffer and he wanted more than anything to just hide in the plane and never leave -but he had to get out of here. His hands tightened on the bag strap. He would get Yao Fei and Slade off this Island if it killed him.

"Hey," Slade grabbed Oliver's shoulder to stop him "You're gonna be alright," he wrapped his arm
around the younger man's shoulder and gave him a squeeze "I'll protect you and one day," he lifted the younger man's chin so their eyes met "you'll be able to protect yourself. I believe that." he then leant forwards and they kissed. After a moment or two the twosome separated but stayed touching shoulder to shoulder, hands knocking lightly together as they walked.

After a few minutes Slade attempted to bring back the humour "I regret getting you to do yoga."

Oliver looked over at the older man "Why?" he cocked his head. The Yoga was just stretching so that Oliver's body could get used to all the working out and to increase flexibility.

"The cat," Slade said simply.

Oliver smiled understandingly; the cat was a pose where by the person stood on their hands and knees, stretching their arms forward and sticking their bum out like a cat stretching. "Next time I do that I'm going to wiggle my butt a little and cock block you," Oliver grinned.

They got back to the plane, by which point the awkwardness had returned, questions like; 'What now?' 'Do we...?' hanging in the air.

Oliver took the empty bag over to where the rifle was hidden and placed it on the floor. He had no idea if the two of them were going to continue what they had started before. He hoped so, he really hoped so but Oliver did not want to go over and just ask. There had to be a sort of signalling or something. Who topped and who bottomed was easy, Oliver would not admit this but he wanted to bottom. He had tried penetration with his fingers and oh God did it feel good. It felt different but not strange and Oliver could not get enough of it - but he knew he had to stop, that by doing it he would ruin so called "normal" sex. Oliver had to go out with women like any man should be doing, which meant at some point there would be sex. If Oliver could not perform and the woman he chose told the press... What twenty one year old wasn't having sex with women? A gay one. And that was it for Oliver, he did not know what would happen, he never wanted to.

Oliver ran a hand through his hair, the other question was; how far should they go? Oliver had no idea. He couldn't go all the way, it would be painful, but what did Slade want? For all Oliver knew the guy regretted the whole thing and wanted to forget about it. If Oliver got home could he be openly gay? Would he ever get home? Would he die here? Die a closeted gay virgin? If he were to die here he hoped people would just believe he died on the boat. It's not like any one would know everything any way, he would not have an obituary that said; Oliver Queen, twenty one, was a strong man, a brave-ish man who was taken before his time by mercenaries before he could get his gay on with a smoking hot Aussie on a apparently "deserted island". Maybe it wasn't that bad, he could have the world's weirdest obituary, and who said that every cloud didn't have a silver lining.
Oliver jumped, feeling a set of warm hands on his hips.

"You over think," Slade's warm breath felt wonderful against his ear.

Oliver squeezed his thighs together as if somehow it would stop his arousal, but then he stopped. In a sudden moment of courage Oliver spun around, grabbed the back of Slade's head and smashed their lips together. Slade smiled, leant down, grabbed Oliver by the thighs and pulled him into the air. The younger man broke the kiss while he wrapped his legs around the older man's waist and arms around his neck.

"Care to teach me something new?" Oliver asked; poker face and courage just about to break.

Slade blinked at the man's forwardness then grinned "Been with a man before?"

Oliver's poker face chipped.

Slade smiled "That's okay. I don't want to hurt you," he kissed the Oliver's temple "I can not fuck you," Oliver shivered at those words "even if I want to, no lube. I'll find something we can use as lube," he kissed the shell of Oliver's ear "later," he nipped it "much later. No worries and no over thinking." His words were stern but soft.

Oliver nodded, his hardness getting more so by the second.

"However," Slade slipped his hands to Oliver's behind "I can teach you a thing or too now if you'd like?"

Oliver blushed and nodded.

Slade walked over to his bed, Oliver still held up by his capable hands; once he got there he softly dropped the younger man onto the bed and crawled on top of him. He placed his thigh back onto Oliver's crotch, dragging it back and forth ever so slowly, not even nearly enough to be considered pressure, pure teasing.

"Stop," Oliver groaned.
Slade did, completely.

"No," Oliver whined "stop teasing."

Slade smirked, thrusting his thigh forward. Oliver threw his head back with a moan, seeing this Slade started to kiss his neck. The older man bit down, his smirk widened as Oliver gasped. Oliver's hands slipped under Slade's shirt, his arms hugging the warm flesh, gently brushing past the numerous scars, some from the Island, and others from fights in the past. Slade shivered as each one was touched.

Slade lifted Oliver's shirt to the man's chin and ran his fingers along his chest, pausing at a nipple to rub the nub. Never once did he stop kissing the man's neck. Oliver arched his back to which Slade bit down again, kissing the wound. Another gasp from Oliver which became a full grown moan when Slade left Oliver's neck, travelled down, kissing his chest as he went, and dipped his tongue into the younger man's belly button. The tip of his tongue ever so slowly travelled the rim of the belly button and once again dipped inside.

Oliver was digging his nails into the older man's back at this point, he tried to pull his body closer but the man was too strong to be moved "Your shirt," Oliver panted.

Slade left Oliver's belly to return to his lips; licking them and upon gaining access, diving his tongue inside. His tongue drew patterns on the roof of Oliver's mouth and for a second Oliver wondering if the man was writing Chinese letters. Oliver moaned, trying to arch himself closer to the man. Slade finally understood the message. Not that Oliver didn't love this, he did. To be the one getting all the treatment was amazing, but he wanted to be naked and touching Slade already.

Slade sat back and took off his shirt and scarf – a keffiyeh, the older man had told Oliver just the day before. Thankfully he had not been wearing the protective padding today seeing as the training had been low risk. His body was that of a God, every muscle strong and filled to its limit, perfectly sculpted hills and dips with what looked like soft, naturally tanned skin stretched over the muscle. There were scars; burns, knife wounds and one circular discoloured patch of skin which Oliver thought might be a bullet wound, just next to Slade's hip bone. He wanted to feel that body against him, those hand holding his wrists in place, he wanted to feel the strength, wanted Slade to make him feel that strength oh so badly.

Slade thrust his thigh forward again, Oliver pushed himself down onto it, eyes half shut and biting his lip gently. Slade rubbed his thigh up and down, adding pressure as he went up, making Oliver arch his back and moan softly, and taking pressure as he went down to which Oliver just sighed at as if it were relaxing. Like a skilled hand job, the lack of pressure made the pleasure all the better when
the friction returned. "Oh God," Oliver gasped. He managed to remember himself for a few seconds so he could take off his own shirt, never once moving away from Slade's powerful and ever so pleasurable thigh.

Slade eyes and fingers stroked the scars on Oliver's chest; he lent forward and kissed along each and every one, his thigh never stopping it’s rhythm. After a few last thrusts with his thigh, all the while watching Oliver moan and pant, Slade pulled his thigh away.

Oliver opened his eyes fully, with a question in his eyes and a lazily cocked brow. Oliver asked with a relaxed but needy tone "Slade?"

Slade placed an elbow at each side of Oliver's head and gave him a soft kiss, lowering his chest onto the younger man's, making sure to keep his weight held up so as not to squish the man.

Oliver's arms tightened around the solid waist and stomach, astonished by the body in front of him. The peak of physical fitness; strong, hard muscles brought the red hot heat of an Australian summer to Oliver's freezing blue skin. The muscles were thick and heavy, Oliver had nowhere near enough power to move the other man, but then again why would he want to?

Oliver licked Slade's lips and when they opened Oliver slipped his tongue inside, his movements as skilled as they could be. He was just so relaxed... No, tired, he was exhausted. They were having the relaxing but very pleasurable kind of foreplay which Oliver was really enjoying but after the work, lack of sleep and food, this was wearing Oliver out.

Oliver was so distracted by Slade and his own tiredness that he did not notice one of Slade's arms move until a hand grabbed Oliver's crotch through his black jeans. Oliver moaned hard into Slade's mouth at the unexpected pleasure, his body involuntarily moving towards the capable hands. Slade unzipped and unbuttoned Oliver, moving inside to cup him through his boxers, never once did he stop kissing the younger man. Oliver broke the kiss, thrusting his hips forwards, begging for friction.

"Slade," he gasped.

Slade slid his hand around to caress the soft flesh of his behind and Oliver tightened his grip, really tightened it, which either meant that he was nervous or...

Slade rolled down Oliver's jeans down the back so his behind was exposed. He squeezed one cheek and Oliver gasped, pushing himself into it. Slade smiled "Interesting." But before Oliver could even
think straight for a second to ask why, Slade slapped his rear. Oliver full out moaned. Slade looked at Oliver "Looks like you have an arse fetish." Oliver looked at the man, shivering at the lustful look in those dark pools.

"Okay," Slade started "I'm going to make you cum," he moved his mouth to Oliver's ear and said "and trust me when I say you're gonna like it." he nipped and licked at the lobe, Oliver moaned lightly "But," he continued moving back, "I'm not going to touch you again." Oliver cocked a brow at that, "You are going to cum simply from the feel of my fingers fucking you," Slade said ever so simply "and trust me you will cum." Slade slapped the rear once more. Oliver moaned.

For Oliver this was overwhelming but at the same time it was the sexiest thing he had ever heard and he wanted it, really wanted it. To feel something else beside himself inside of him, to feel Slade inside of him and not only that, but to feel that the things he wanted were just so normal and... that's what they were. Normal. That's how things felt with Slade. Normal. Normal. Normal.


Okay, normal, natural, normal. It was normal and it amazed Oliver how stupid he felt all these years.

Oliver blinked, coming out of his thoughts. Slade looked concerned, wondering if he had pushed things too far. Oliver smiled; he pulled himself up using Slade's sturdy body and sealed their lips together. Slade returned the kiss and smiled into it. After a few seconds Oliver broke the kiss and lowered himself and his arms back onto the bed.

"I would like that," he said simply.

Slade leant forward and kissed Oliver while his hand stroked the man's behind. The kiss became more heated; tongues dancing together. Oliver moved a hand to the back of Slade's head and neck. Oliver had not noticed before when he had grabbed the man's head but his hair was wiry, Oliver liked it. It wasn't what he was used to but he liked it even more, it was more masculine. Ha and if that wasn't just the definition of Slade.

Slade broke the kiss to remove Oliver's shoes, which took a little while, before he moved back to pull down and remove Oliver's jeans and boxers, revealing his long white milk bottle legs covered in fine blonde hairs and of course there was his arousal, clearly living up to its name.

Slade leant forward and palmed Oliver's ever so smooth behind with both hands. Oliver spread his
legs, giving Slade room to work. Slade suddenly paused, he had thought of simply using spit as lubricant but he had just been struck with a better idea.

Slade leant forward and kissed Oliver before getting up and walking towards the supplies. After a few seconds of searching he found it, and hid the clear jar. He returned to Oliver who sat there, legs together and pulled to his chest, using his crossed arms to cover himself. He looked sheepish and a little annoyed, eyes brows twitching lightly as if he had been, in his words, "cock blocked" again. Slade grinned back and before the younger man could think Slade was back on the bed and pushing Oliver back onto his back; his legs were still held to his chest so Slade moved them onto his shoulders which in turn spread them. The position made Oliver blush lightly, laying like this with his legs on Slade's shoulders with said man's covered crotch a mere inch away from Oliver's hole. Oliver's body was really heating up and for once in his life he was thankful for the drafts let in by the massive holes in the plane.

Slade pulled back from the kiss, still keeping their position and said "I got you something." He grinned when he saw the darkened patch on Oliver's bottom lip from where he had bitten him back at forest, and made a made a mental note to himself to work on the marks on Oliver's neck further. Slade slid the jar behind his back, he didn't want to give away what he was going to do. "Ready?" he asked, placing Oliver's legs back onto the bed. As fun as it would have been Slade would just have to test Oliver's flexibility later.

Oliver wanted to ask what Slade had got him, but right now all he really wanted was to have Slade's fingers inside of him and asking would take up time. He nodded.

Slade moved one hand away to grab the clear jar which was filled with thick yellow liquid, honey; a natural antibacterial agent, a good lubricant and it tasted wonderful which would make what Slade was planning to do even better. Thankfully he had the sense to unscrew the lid before he got back to the bed, making for less fumbling later.

Slade licked at Oliver's neck, the younger man wrapped one arm around the older man's neck and the other held the man's head, asking for more. Slade grinned into the man's neck and Oliver resisted the urge to smack him for that.

Slade flicked the lid off; it landed on the bedding making no sound, or at least no noticeable sound. Slade dipped two fingers into the thick liquid, he ran one finger up his Oliver's leg so he knew what was coming, all the while kissing and biting at Oliver's neck. The younger man pulled his head
closer gasping and moaning lightly. Reaching Oliver's rear Slade stroked the rim lightly with his finger before slowly pushing his finger in, to the first knuckle. Oliver gladly welcomed him and Slade ever so slowly eased his whole finger inside.

It felt amazing; the thick lubricant Oliver could feel rolling inside of himself and Slade's larger fingers were just indescribably pleasurable and he did not want to describe it, he just wanted more. "Slade," he moaned, "more." He gasped as Slade crooked his finger; his next moan was swallowed by Slade's mouth. Slade kissed him as his finger moved, thrusting in and out of Oliver, making Oliver moan every time he was re-entered. Slade would stop once or twice to crook his finger and massage the internal wall, which Oliver bucked his hips at, before he returned to the thrusting motion, Oliver meeting each and every thrust. Slade made sure to stay away from where that certain little bundle of nerves could be found, not wanting Oliver to come any time soon.

"More, more," Oliver begged into Slade's mouth, only then did Slade in fact give him more.

Slade rubbed the rim with his second finger as the first slowed down its movement and after a bit of teasing he slipped both fingers in on the next thrust. Oliver broke the kiss moaning hard.

"God, oh God," he whined, he was so close.

Slade smiled, "Hold on Oliver," he slowed his movements to a near stop to which Oliver groaned. "I have something I have yet to give you."

"Okay, Okay!" Oliver groaned "Just don't stop." He hoped Slade would just give him whatever it was because he was not going to hold on much longer.

Slade leaned back and continued to thrust his fingers into younger man a few more times, very much enjoying the view of Oliver accepting the his fingers so enthusiastically, honey resting on his yogurt white skin. His eyes closed, panting quickly, and with each intake Slade could see the curve from his ribs to his waist. His hands were clinging desperately to the make shift bedding, penis red and erect and body always seeming to want more but Slade wanting to drag this out so no sex today, even if Slade was very much aware of his own erection pressing against his cargo pants, which was very uncomfortable.

Slade deemed Oliver as ready and pulled out, giving him a few seconds to cool. Oliver looked at Slade, eyes half lidded; he looked so confused. Slade smiled. He gave Oliver's lips a chaste kiss, then his Adam's apple to which Oliver's swallowed at the feeling, then kissed his chest where Oliver's ribs joined together, then his belly, his belly button, flicking his tongue inside, and moving right past Oliver's erection, which had the younger man groaning. "Don't worry you'll like this," he assured.
Slade smiled as he reached his mark, he leant forward and kissed Oliver's honey covered rim. Oliver gasped.

Slade pulled back, licking his lips "Get on to your hands and knees." Oliver complied without a second thought. Slade dipped a finger into the honey and stuck it into Oliver's hole, a little more couldn't hurt. Oliver moaned as the finger stretched his rim. Now they could begin.

Slade pulled the cheeks apart, kneading the flesh in his hands. He looked down at the hole and blew a soft but warm breath over the entrance. Oliver gasped and moaned, moving his behind further back towards the heat. Slade held the younger man in place and continued to blow until he saw a bead of honey slowly rolling down Oliver's leg. Slade ran his tongue over that stray drop of honey and followed its previous path all the way to Oliver's hole where he lay his tongue flat over the rim before blowing at it once more.

Slade licked, flicked and rubbed the hole with his tongue, all the while Oliver moaned, whined and gasped like he was a bitch in heat. Slade then used the tip of his tongue to trace the rim twice before stiffening the tongue and penetrating the honey filled hole. Slade groaned at the way the rim tightened initially before relaxing. Slade kept his tongue stiff and started a good thrusting rhythm, now and again removing his tongue and teasing the rim.

Oliver was a wreck; the front half of his body was lying on the bed, only barely able to keep his rear up for Slade, and he was making all sorts of sounds and half words that neither Slade nor Oliver himself knew what they were. But they both knew one thing, and that was that Oliver was close.

Slade took away one of his hands, after all, the guy wanted to cum too. Unzipping and slipping his hand into his cargo pants, he grabbed himself and started pumping in time with his tongue's thrusts, running his thumb over his slit as a reward for every time he got Oliver to whine and beg.

Now was the time. Slade was sure that prostate was probably too far to reach and trying to would put strain on his tongue, so he removed his tongue and kissed the rim one last time before pushing two fingers straight inside, all the while still jerking himself off. Oliver moaned hard, gripping the bedding. After a few thrusts, to which Oliver moaned all the way, Slade hit that bundle of nerves and Oliver had just enough time to turn his arms into a makeshift pillow before he let out the world's loudest moan.

Oliver came first after a few more hits to his prostate, thankfully having the sense left to hold the head of his penis in his hand to stop the mess from going all over Slade's so called bed. Slade felt the rim tightening and relaxing quickly and came a few jerks later in his hand.
Oliver had passed out on Slade's bed, honey still dripping from his behind and spunk still in his hand - which was thankfully not spilling over - but other than that he was gorgeous. Just as he was he was perfect. Even if he might not able to fully protect himself, he would be in time.

Slade looked out one of the planes windows, it was still bright, although not for much longer. Slade sighed, not wanting to, but he had to make the kid wake up.

Chapter End Notes

Turns out the guy who plays Slade was born in New Zealand, he's māori. Cool isn't it.
Warmth

Chapter Notes

Now Betaed

- Starling city -

"Ollie?"

Oliver squeezed his eyes shut, then blinked a few times to rid the dull ache before looking at his sister. "Yeah, sorry," he said "lost in thought," he continued, turning to the brown bottle of beer and taking a swig.

Thea softened her tone. "About?" she raised a brow.

"It's nothing," Oliver shook his head, "just this and that, you know."

"Then why do you look so sad?" her tone stayed soft, which surprised Oliver, he must have looked miserable.

"It's nothing, just..." What was he supposed to say? There was nothing he could tell her about Slade without telling her the whole story and did he want her to know he was gay? Oliver was gay, yada yada yada, met this man Slade, yada yada yada, fell in love with him and now... Leaving out the missing pieces of information about everything Islandy made the story confusing when it came to the end. Telling her Slade died meant pity, saying Slade's visa ran out meant questions of why Oliver did not use his money and power as a Queen to keep him here. Saying that Slade was in the army and on tour at the moment was a good cover, but then he wouldn't come back and there would be even more questions. Oliver looked back at Thea, she looked sad. Oliver had been good at hiding everything, or at least enough to not raise any serious questions, but just a moment of thinking of Slade and it was clear as day that he was not okay.

It had been four months since he had got back home, which made ten months without Slade, and Oliver knew he'd never see him again. He'd fallen for Slade years ago but he didn't want to be with him, let alone says those words until the fear of the whole "we could die here" thing was over. Now it was and so were Oliver and Slade. He should have seen it coming, really. They pleased each other
physically and they were friends, partners, but once the thing that brought and forced them together was gone, that was that. They were each other's way to cope, nothing else.

Had they first met each other in this city, would it have been different? Yes, back then Oliver was a spoilt manwhore, even Oliver could see that. The two would have never got along. Oliver would not have liked the whole meeting in a cafe beginning anyway; the Island gave them a bond, trust and made Oliver into a stronger person. A person whom Slade, having just met, may have liked. This Oliver was a warrior and he knew that he liked who he had become, even if it meant keeping secrets about his beginning.

Oliver looked to his side and made sure no one was nearby; the club had just opened, it was nowhere near full but there were a lot of people inside and a queue outside. This was a popular place after all.

Oliver Looked back to Thea, before quickly looking away, blurtling out "I'm gay."

- Lian Yu -

"What are you doing?" The gruff voice of the Australian made Oliver jump. Oliver was sitting on the grass next to the plane, before Slade had made him jump he had been looking out to the forest, eyes squinted as if concentrating on something.

"You made me lose count," Oliver complained, although there was a smile on his face seeing as Slade had returned from where he had been setting up the animal traps for the night.

Slade cocked a brow, now he was confused. "What?" Slade made his way over to Oliver, sitting behind the man, resting his back on the metal. "What are you looking at?" Slade squinted, but saw nothing.

Oliver's eyes followed Slade, pushed himself back so that he sat in-between Slade's legs, his own legs pulled up to his chest. He rested his back on the man's padded chest to which said man's arms locked around Oliver waist. Even if there were clothes, gloves and padding in the way, Oliver felt close to Slade, whose body was warm due to the all the hiking he had done.

"So," Slade's warm breath on Oliver's ear made the younger man shiver "What were you counting?"
"Cricket chirps," Oliver said simply, hiding his cold hands under Slade's arms

Slade nodded. "Any reason for that?"

Oliver smiled, enjoying the relaxing conversation. Yao Fei's daughter Shado was staying with them now, and that meant less time for Slade and Oliver to be close like this. They still slept next to each other but there was nothing else they could do while she was there except lightly knock boots when they were eating. Slade did not trust her enough to leave her at the plane while they went on hunts, so she had to come with them. She was a nice person though, a good fighter, she knew more about Fyers then the two of them put together and she was teaching Oliver how to become an archer. She had just started teaching him to make his own arrows. It was apparently really important that he made his own, something about knowing how every little thing worked or something like that. As Slade could see from the broken attempts on the floor, it was still very much a work in progress.

"I heard it on a documentary once," Oliver said flexing and straightening his fingers to warm them up. Feeling this Slade took off his gloves and, knowing that the younger man would not take them, he brought Oliver's hands together so one was on top of the other and placed them on the man's lap, covering them with his own hands. Oliver paused looking at the difference in size and colour and smiled slightly, turning his hands over to hold Slade's hands. The older man took a hand in each of his and weaved their fingers together. Oliver's smile grew.

"This documentary?" Slade asked, rubbing the muscle along the side of Oliver's hand with his thumb.

"It was about survival in the wilderness," Oliver grinned, "As if I'd ever need that."

Slade chuckled lightly.

"It said that snowy tree crickets' chirps can tell you the temperature," Oliver continued

Slade raised a brow, although Oliver couldn't see it.

Oliver thought for a second, then he said, "They synchronize their chirps, so you count the number of chirps for 13 seconds and add 40. That'll give you the temperature in degrees Fahrenheit," Oliver turned his head to look at Slade, "give or take a degree."
Slade nodded, he'd never heard of such a thing. "Interesting," he said, leaning down to kiss Oliver, who smiled into it and returned the kiss.

Oliver turned his body and moved to sit on Slade's lap. Slade grinned, he oh so badly wanted to bite the younger man's neck, slip his hands down his front to grab his crotch and down the back to tease the his rim, listening and watching as the man moaned and begged - but Slade knew he could not. As soon as Slade knew that they were safe again, with or without Shado, he would fuck Oliver until they both passed out.

Slade pulled Oliver closer by his thighs. Their mouths were hungry, their kisses passionate.

- Starling city -

"Oh."

Oliver cocked a brow, "Oh?" he looked back to his sister.

She had her brows drawn together in thought, looking down towards the table but not really looking at anything. "It's just that..." she thought for a second before saying "You dated a lot," she smiled "but around the time of dates you always looked kind of sad and I never understood why. But..." Thea looked at Oliver "I guess it was hard to be with people you felt nothing for," her smile widened "Thank you for telling me."

Oliver smiled back.

"So," she tilted her head to the side, "what kind of guys do you like?"

Oliver out right laughed, he calmed down and then said "Oh, Thea," he chuckled "I don't know..." a smile crept on to his lips "Older," he started.

Thea nodded, wanting to know more.

Oliver looked at his hand on the table, remembering the times their hands had joined together. "Tanned," his smile grew bigger, "dark hair and eyes. A guy who's no pushover." Nowhere even
close to a pushover Oliver thought, wanting to laugh. "Personality is more important, I guess," Oliver said, thinking about all the things Slade used to do; the way he grinned in pride and raised his voice in excitement, sounding happy every time Oliver did something that both helped them and showed that Oliver was cut out for this. The way he loved to tease Oliver, grinning when he succeeded and smiling when failed, because that had meant that Oliver had been the one to beat him, that he was getting smarter, faster and stronger. The way he held Oliver close to him, weaved their fingers together and how when they sat next to each, he would place a boot covered foot on each side of one of Oliver's, holding it gently, wanting to keep a hold of Oliver even when Shado and Yao Fei were there. Slade trusted him, treated him like an adult who could look after himself, but at the same time protected him.

"You met someone."

Oliver looked back at his sister to see her smiling, her eyes full of happiness. "What makes you say that?" he asked.

"Your face," she said, full of excitement, "Whoever he is, I like him if he makes you this happy."

Oliver's smile fell. Thea would never meet Slade in Starling city, and neither would Oliver, Slade was gone. Far away with no reason to ever come to this city. Some nights, when Oliver allowed himself to think about the older man, Oliver wished that he could see him for just more hour; run his fingers through the man's wiry hair, hold his face in his hands and kiss him, have sex with the man for one last time - but would a goodbye, a final night, have made any of this easier? Most likely not.

"On the other hand, I don't like him," Thea said, sounding sad.

Oliver blinked a few times, realising he had been lost in thought "No," Oliver said, a light smile on his face, "He's a nice guy," he looked his beer, not wanting to take a swig because that would not help his point. "He showed me that it was okay to be...me," he said, in case of eavesdroppers, "It just ended." Oliver did not want to say anymore, he looked at the floor sadly. After taking a second to recover himself, Oliver looked at one of the lists.

"Ollie?" Thea asked, with an expression Oliver knew would be sadness without even having to look at her.

"I don't really want to talk about it," he said simply, never taking his eyes off the list.
Thea took the other list, thinking that her brother just needed time.

The twosome looked back and forth from the lists for a good few minutes before Oliver saw it. He had no idea why he was there, but he knew that name.

Slade Wilson

Oliver stared at that name, eyes never blinking, time almost seeming to stop. Oliver could hear his heart beat over the music. Then an idea came to him. "No," he whispered, not heard over the music.

"Is there a Slade Wilson on your list?" he asked, never taking his eyes from the name.

"Slade Wilson..." she looked over the list, spotting the name after a while, "Yes, right here!" she pointed at the name. She turned to see Oliver staring at his list. "Ollie?"

"He's Australian."

"Uh...what?" she cocked a brow. How did Oliver get that from a name unless...

"He's from Australia, not New Zealand," His voice sounded dull, Oliver simply did not know what to think.

"You know him," Thea said, eyes huge.

Oliver nodded. What was he doing here? He was waiting for someone, a woman. Oliver felt an ache in his chest and his belly hurt. Slade had left him.

Oliver stood and left the table. He needed to get out of here

"Wha-" Thea ran after her brother. "Ollie wait," she called, "Wait!" she called again, but he ignored her. She grabbed her brother's wrist and pulled him back, he stopped. "Ollie?" she said, sounding worried.
Oliver could not deal with this; he could barely cope with Slade being gone, with the idea of moving on and the fact that Slade did not feel the love Oliver felt for the older man, but to have it all rubbed in his face? No. No, no, no, no! He was getting far away from here, he would just hide away for a while and not think about the Island, the death and the fact that the person who had kept him alive through all of it was a fucking asshole who left him and came back not even for Oliver but some whore who-

"There he is," Thea said.

Oliver froze and slowly turned to look at the crowd. There was Slade Wilson making his way to the bar. From the waist down he looked pretty much the same, wearing leather lace-up boots over grey cargo pants, although they were more baggy than the ones he wore on the Island and there was no knife holster on his calf for the six inch blade, nor did he have on his belt with its gun holster and multiple pouches for herbs, back up ammo and anything else useful he could fit in there. He was wearing what looked like to be a simple black shirt covered by a leather jacket, which Oliver was not surprised by. Slade had told Oliver that he had always like the practical and potentially useful, leather was good for keeping warm, reducing bodily harm and it was easily cleaned. Cargo pants for...well cargo, some place useful to keep things; if Slade did have a knife or two somewhere that's where they'd likely be. That or a makeshift pocket in the Jacket, which was just as likely if not more. Slade was Slade. Even if he was not wearing his protective padding or the katana sword on his back.

Slade was here, at the club and Oliver had no idea what to do.

Thea smiled. "Slade!" she yelled so the man could hear.

Slade stiffened, but turned to look around where the voice had come from. It was high up, to the right. Looking there Slade saw a teenage girl looking at him, holding the wrist of a man who looked like he wanted to leave. The man was tall, blonde, and was looking at him too. He...

"Oliver?" Slade mumbled, eyes wide in shock. He smiled.

Oliver did not even think for a second, he made his way down the stairs, Thea letting go of his wrist as he went, a smile Oliver could not see plastered on her face. Oliver made his way to the bottom of the stairs and saw that Slade was making his way towards him. The man was only a few steps away so Oliver stood and let Slade come to him. Then there they were, Oliver and Slade face to face, no fear of death, no Island, just them.
"It's good to see you again," Slade said in that rough voice of his.

Oliver placed a hand on the back of Slade's neck, pulled him forward and kissed him. God to feel Slade close to him again was amazing, to kiss him again was wonderful and Oliver's heart melted when the man kissed him back. The warmth of his body, the touch of his soft lips, just having Slade again was almost too much, Oliver could not, did not, even think about losing it all again.

Slade broke the kiss. "I missed you too," he kissed Oliver's forehead "We should talk."

Oliver was worried but nodded; he followed Slade out the building. Turning his head back he saw his sister giving him the thumbs up. Oliver did not know what to think, he would just have to see what happened. Thankfully, no one minus Thea looked like they had seen them kissing, if this all went badly Oliver did not want to be reminded of it.

The night had just started but the breeze was blowing cold air on his face, hands and down his neck. The cold was something Oliver had grown used to on the Island, the only times he had been warm was when he was with Slade. That, and training and fighting, but the first was a much nicer warmth. Oliver missed the warmth of another person against his skin, the warmth of their breath, their lips on his lips or on his skin. That unbelievable warm pressure of having someone inside of him, stretching him, filling him in ways he never knew he needed and the warm liquid that rolled inside of him, a mixture of honey and semen. Oliver missed all of it.

The two men walked side by side, neither saying anything. After a while Slade spoke up. "I'm sorry I could not have seen you sooner. We had to make sure this whole thing was over, turns out there were a lot of people involved and getting them was a bitch. Weren't even allowed to send rescue for you for another year just in case, but..."

"You did anyway," Oliver smiled, looking at Slade

"I could never leave you behind," he looked at Oliver, his near black orbs showing concern, "don't forget that."

Oliver nodded, but had to ask. "Why are you here?" he said, before he could stop himself.

Slade stopped, Oliver did as well. The corners of Slade's lips pulled down lightly. "I'm sorry," he stepped forward and held Oliver's face with his hands. "I'm sorry I left you behind," he said, sounding vulnerable which was beyond unnatural. He stroked his thumb over Oliver's jawbone, and
the younger man closed his eyes, just letting himself enjoy the feeling. "Had I known, I would have stayed with you," Slade continued, resting their foreheads together.

Oliver was shocked. Slade had come back for him. He smiled. "I missed you so much," he opened his eyes, light green meeting dark brown.

Slade pulled Oliver's head forward and kissed him. Oliver smiled, grabbing the older man's shoulders to pull him closer.

After a while the two pulled back from the kiss, still staying close, "Hey gorgeous," Slade said, smile on his face, happy to finally have Oliver back. "Now that we're off the Island, how about I take you to dinner?"

Oliver looked at him, eyebrows raised. He took a second but then he smiled, looking at Slade's chest "Yeah," he said sounding a bit sheepish, "I'd like that," Oliver placed his head on Slade's chest, enjoying the warmth. Slade wrapped his arms around Oliver's body, pulling him closer.
Slade and Oliver strolled down the street, standing so close together their bodies were touching, Slade's hand on Oliver's lower back, being protective as ever. This had confused Oliver for a second; Oliver could handle himself fine, his body is a weapon and they're not on the Island anymore. So why protect him? The answer, Oliver guessed was likely a mixture of old habits die hard, the unfamiliar and people-filled surroundings, and of course Slade's love of holding onto Oliver which would have been present even if they had not spent months apart. Although Slade was more the kind to wrap a whole arm around him and Oliver could tell the older man still wanted to.

Was Slade worried about being gay in public? No, Oliver didn't think so. Slade was the kind of guy who would walk down the streets proudly carrying Oliver like a husband carrying his bride over the threshold, face plastered with the biggest grin, like Oliver was some sort of prize.

Was Slade worried about being vulnerable both out in the open and in a place he didn't know? No, Slade was by no means an easy target and if anyone did by chance think so, they were they in for a big surprise. Oliver had seen the man fight many time, his attacks were professional; quick and precise hits, kicks, or far more likely slices and stabs. Killing each and every one of his enemies before they could even think of fighting back, with the fights only shortening when his enemies were in large numbers, spread out and wielding guns. It was damn impressive to see a group of men with clearly intimidating large automatic assault rifles all taken down by one man and his mixture of kunai throwing knives and jagged daggers, using only the trees to protect and conceal himself. Slade only ever used one of his katana swords (both of which he kept strapped to his back, just in case) to kill small, close together groups where he had the element of surprise. The fights never lasted long, especially when a katana was involved.

Oliver knew that he should be fucking terrified of Slade's power and ability but he was not, calmed first by the need to survive and then by trust. Oliver felt more protected, if anything. The younger man was glad that neither Slade nor himself enjoyed or could take watching the other kill, even if they had to ignore the fact that these were people. They were both still human, which was beyond lucky considering.

Being in a city meant a constant flow of people, cars, taxis, motorbikes and an occasional limousine, even at night. This was Friday night around the 'everyone to the night club!' rush hour, filling the roads with taxis and the foot paths with rowdy party goers and men and women desperately in need of alcohol after a stress filled week, trading their uniforms for body fitting dresses, skirts, shirts and
Oliver, having lived here all his life - minus five years - knew how to get around easily, especially through the areas he travelled most, like the one he was in now. Finding a place to eat would be no problem.

Oliver remembered how in the years before the Island, he would get lost or go the wrong way now and again. He made it a game to never use the maps dotted about the city to see if he could find his way and he did, giving himself a mental high five. He wasn't going to be late for anything anyway, he was young and free. The Island had aged both his mind and body, made him stronger. Had he not had the book of the people who were poisoning his city - gripping it tight with their greedy fat fingers and melting away the money and the people's spirits like acid on plastic, breaking all the rules and using the law in their favour, so that the so called protectors of this city could not stop them - Oliver would most likely have followed Slade's line of work. Contract killer or not, Slade was protecting people, destroying the evil of this world and getting to use his body for what it was built to do. He could fight and kill for those who could not and save hundreds, thousands even, like they had done by exposing the Island.

"Oliver," a soft deep voice said into Oliver's ear, the warm breath sending a shiver down the younger man's spine. Much like Slade talking Russian or Mandarin with an Australian accent, sounding very odd but somehow lyrical and oh so sexually demanding even if he was talking about plans to stalk mercenaries while readying his weaponry, which really should have been wrong. Speaking softly made Slade's voice lose a little of its coarse nature, but somehow it remained just as demanding, making Oliver feel like he should just fall onto his back right there in the middle of the street and let Slade fuck him. The voice was arousing, but soothing and the use of his name only made him calm further. It always had; when giving Oliver commands the use of his name kept his head on straight, stopped him from panicking. When they were alone the use of his name made the younger man happy, to have the person he cared for so deeply say his name in that wonderful rough voice of his, that sounded so husky and demanding as they had sex, Oliver feeling the grin on Slade's full lips as he teased the younger man's rim with kisses.

Slade moved his hand from Oliver's lower back to shoulder and squeezed gently, cocking a brow at the younger man. "Something wrong?"

"No," Oliver said, but after a moment's thought he continued, "Just surprised that you're not clinging to me like an octopus," Oliver smiled lightly.

Slade smirked, chuckling softly. "Trust me I would constantly have my hands on your arse but..." he looked out to the city, "You'd get a lot of unwanted attention."

That was Slade. He would never guilt trip a person, if he wanted to say something he just did,
regardless of how people would react. Oliver smiled.

Still walking with the older man, Oliver took the hand from his shoulder and wrapped it around his hip to rest the base of the palm on his hip bone, fingers resting on Oliver's rear. Oliver was annoyed that he was not wearing something with pockets on his behind where he could have placed Slade's hand, but this worked well. He smiled at Slade. "I don't care," he said, leaning into Slade's chest with his head resting on Slade's shoulder.

Slade stiffened but then relaxed and smiled also, squeezing the cheek lightly before moving his hand to Oliver's waist and pulling him closer.

Oliver's smile grew wider. "Your important to me, you're..." Oliver was not sure on the last words, he knitted his brow. Mine?

Slade kissed the top of Oliver's head. "I'm your boyfriend," he said into the dirty blonde hair,"I'm yours," he smiled.

Oliver was truly happy, the kind that made him want to jump for joy and tell the world all about Slade. Slade was Oliver's boyfriend. Oliver's boyfriend! Oliver looked forward to the day he could introduce him as such. For now he leaned closer into his boyfriend and said "Yeah, you're mine," feeling almost giddy.

Oliver knew there were so many things he should be worrying about; the book, the other archer, about his mother's possible ties in the sinking of the Queen's Gambit, and the fact that by tomorrow the world could know that Oliver Queen was gay, with a man 14 years older than Oliver - even if that man was unbelievably sexy. But Oliver could not even make himself care; he wanted to be selfish at least for tonight.

The twosome walked down the streets leaning into each other, Slade's arm still around Oliver's waist. Oliver knew they got a few looks, if only because they were both clearly guys, but neither of them could care less. It's not like any one could ever have a go at them. They were two very strong looking guys who could easily defeat any random group of homophobes without even needing the other's help, and together the two were unstoppable in a fight.

After a while Slade directed them towards an Italian restaurant. Outside it almost looked small, with brickwork walls, medium sized windows with dark wooden frames that allowed bright golden rays of lights to shine through, and potted conifers that stood tall and bushy, the April showers having made the plants a shade of dark green. Overall the place was attractive, an ideal place for a first date.
Inside the walls were white but the lights were covered with yellow shades giving the walls a cream colour. The entrance and what looked to be the bathroom doors were made of dark wood, likely the same kind as on the windows, as was the sign in desk. The kitchen doors however were white plastic, turned cream by the lighting. Pictures sparsely covered the walls; horses grazing in a field, peaceful lakes, healthy plants blooming and one of a sunset at a dock. The sky turned golden by the light of the receding burning star, the waters almost cream from the reflection, and the wooden dock, darkened by the lack of light, made a perfect barrier between the sky and it mirrored image. The sky and sea were so alike but different, each with a star, but the waves made its star lightly misshapen, almost like the spirit world looking back to the real world. One world so strong, alive and real, the other nothing but an illusion.

After a few minutes, during which the two men stood chatting about what they had done since the Island, they were given a table. It was a simple two person table next to a wall, it meant their knees would touch when they sat down but neither man minded. Their table, like all the tables, was made of a strong bronze coloured wood, covered with a crisp white sheet ending half way down the table legs. Each table had chairs made of the same wood with cream padded seats, a pair of glass salt and pepper shakers, a tan folded napkin fan in front of each seat and a vibrant red tulip in a thin glass vase in the middle of the table. The leaves were spread out as if they were encouraging the flower to bloom but the petals stayed closely shut.

Both men were giving a large complimentary glass of water and menus and a few minutes later the waiter came back for their drink and food orders. They decided upon a bottle of red wine to share, both liking the drink and it usually when well with all meals. Oliver had slices of steak; medium rare mixed with mushrooms, lettuce, red onion, bell pepper, cucumber, tomato and lightly drizzled with balsamic vinegar. Slade had linguine pasta with king prawns and thin slices of chorizo in a hot chilli and tomato sauce.

"Prawns?" Oliver asked as the waiter left.

The seating in the restaurant was somewhat close which unnerved Oliver, thinking that people would listen into his conversation especially considering this was a date but the two men had, along with Yao Fei and Shado, learnt to look out for and signal what they could not say via use of hinting with replacement words, head tilts, glares and light hand gestures. If worst came to worst they could just speak a different language, it would draw more attention but no one would know what they were saying.

"I love sea food," Slade said simply, "Prawns, mussels, crab..." he held out a hand and tilled it side to side to mimic a seesaw, "Not too sure," he made a face mixed between a grimace and interest."Mussels are the best as long as the meat does not rip open when you take it from the shell," he smiled lightly, "not very appealing when you look inside."
Oliver smiled, holding his foot to Slade's, missing the contact. Slade however held out a hand, palm up on the table for Oliver to take at which the younger man paused for a second, but then his worry left him. Oliver laid his hand in Slade's, smiling as the older man's larger and darker hand curled around his, engulfing his hand in its warmth.

The conversation was simple, easy, smiles and grins pulling at their lips as they spoke of their times together on Lian Yu and what they had done for the time they were apart. They kept their hands joined; Oliver's thumb ran over Slade's palm and wrist making the older man twitch at the feather light touch that swept over the sensitive skin. Oliver laughed lightly, then Slade pulled his hand away before moving it back to its place, trapping Oliver's thumb with his. With the rest of the younger man's fingers intertwined with Slade's, Oliver was unable to torture his boyfriend any further.

Too much happiness (and probably some of the red wine he had drank) turns Oliver giddy it seems because right now he was feeling borderline silly. He looked down at his trapped hand before looking Slade in his dark eyes, trying to make a begging puppy dog face complete with pout.

Slade just looked at him, eyebrow raised with a not amused look on his face but after a few seconds a smile tugged at his lips, he chuckled lightly, shoulders jolting slightly. "You are just adorable," he said, using his spare hand to cup Oliver's cheek. Not once did Oliver stop making the face he had created.

Their food arrived, the waitress had looked a little startled by the affection between the two men but then she smiled; a real smile, before continuing with her job. Oliver had been seen. He'd been seen before by people on the street with what was clearly his boyfriend but he did not see their reactions. This was the first time a stranger had seen Oliver with another man, not Thea or Yao Fei and Shado all of whom were his family, by blood or not. A stranger knew Oliver was gay, she may not have known who Oliver was but she knew this man in front of her was gay. Oliver was out of the closet. Oliver smiled at her, thankful for the happiness she had given him. No, the happiness Slade had given him.

After the woman left Oliver got up saying he was just going to use the toilet (which he did need a bit) but really it was for one thing. As he got up to go, he moved to stand next to Slade, tilted the older man's chin up and kissed him for all the world to see. Pulling back, Oliver smiled. "Thank you."

Slade may have thought it was for the date but Oliver hoped that the older man understood it was for everything he had done. Fortreating his body like it was Slade's most precious treasure, helping him to survive, to cope, to accept who he was, and for making Oliver fall in love with him. Oliver had a feeling that under the years of military training and emotional repression there was love for Oliver too.
After dinner the twosome had drank the rest of the red wine, ordered another bottle and were drinking that, chatting away when Oliver's phone vibrated in his pocket.

"Work I take it?" Slade asked before taking a sip of his glass of red wine, which granted, was small, but looked to be about the size of a children's toy tea cup his large tanned hand.

"Hn?" Oliver looked at the phone to see the caller ID.

Diggle

Oliver looked back at Slade, at which the older man put his wine glass down, then using both hands; thumbs, index and middle fingers crocked, he mimed flipping a hood on. This stunned Oliver.

Slade further indicated his knowledge by holding one hand out, fingers curled like he was holding a pole, the other hand a couple of inches behind it but to the side so Oliver could see, crocking his index, middle and ring fingers then pulling said hand back slowly like Oliver would when he pulled back the wire of his bow.

That's just what it was. Slade knew.

Slade dropped his hands. "It's not a big deal Oliver," the words and the use of his name calmed Oliver. "I just figured it was not something we could really talk about here," Slade smiled lightly. "Take your call."

Oliver smiled back before getting out of his seat. "One minute," he said.

Slade nodded.

Oliver quickly walked outside the Italian restaurant. The night air hit him, with only the wine to numb his senses seeing as how he had left his suit coat on the bad of his seat. Oliver ducked into the alleyway, answering his phone. "Yeah?" he said, slightly annoyed.

"Uh...hey," Diggle said, sounding a little confused and worried, "It's Diggle, Felicity is here too."
"Hey," A female voice said.

"Yes?" Oliver said, getting more aggravated.

"Well, we're kind of wondering where you are," Felicity said, just as confused."The guy you were after, you know on the list?"

Oliver started to pace, waiting for them to get to the point.

"Well he's getting back earlier than expected from his business trip," Diggle continued.

"When?" Oliver asked.

"Tomorrow morning."

"Okay," Oliver said then he sighed. "There's something I've got to tell you two," Oliver took a deep breath.

"Oliver?" Felicity sounded worried.

Oliver exhaled. "Don't worry, it's okay," he smiled, "It's fucking great."

There was silence on the other end of the phone, shock from how happy Oliver sounded. He had never sounded that happy before, excited almost.

"A friend of mind has come to Starling City. The love of my life actually," Oliver's smile grew; it felt so good to say that. "We're on a date right now, so you'll meet them tomorrow night, when we go after Luke Morgan," he paused, forcing himself to say,"We'll most likely have an extra member on our team that night."

"Wha- Oliver just," Diggle stumbled over his words,"You can't just believe your girlfriend will just
accept this..." he paused,"This. And then join."

Oliver laughed, "Trust me, Digg. My date taught me how to become a fighter, everything minus the bow," he sighed, knowing he would a lot of explaining to do."We were on the Island together."

A pause.

"Oh," Felicity said. "That's romantic."

Oliver laughed. "Nowhere even close," he said. "I'll explain everything tomorrow, it's about time I told you two about what happened," he pulled the phone back, about to shut it when he remembered,"Don't tell Tommy, I want to talk to him myself," he snapped the phone shut to stop any arguments.

Oliver went back inside the restaurant and took his seat. He would not be surprised, in fact he would not put it past them to find out where he was, but the restaurant had no cameras so they were not going to know who his date was until Oliver told them. Diggle could try to get the information out of Thea, Oliver had spent the night with his sister after all, but Thea would not tell him anything, Oliver was confident of that. Thea loved Oliver very much and would never push him into anything he did not want... minus the whole calling Slade over.

"Nice chat?" Slade asked in his usual rough voice, proceeding to pour wine into his glass before holding the bottle to Oliver's, when he received a nod he poured.

"Not bad," Oliver said, taking the wine, "I have three people who know what I do."

Slade just looked at him.

"The first," Oliver explained, "Is my bodyguard."

Slade chuckled, grinning. "Bodyguard?" he cocked a brow then took a sip of his wine.

"Yeah," Oliver said, "Mum made me use one, wrong place for the story why."
Slade nodded.

"I told him because I was stuck with him twenty-four seven and he seemed like the kind of person who could understand and he did..." Oliver looked away, "In the end," he took a sip of his wine.

"Number two?" Slade asked, seeming satisfied with the answer. He took a sip.

This was beginning to feel like a drinking game; Slade asked a question, takes a sip, Oliver answers said question, takes a sip. "Felicity, IT expert for my family's company. She's the best at what she does. Helped me a few times with tracking, discreetly, although my lying skills have never been that good," Slade smiled. "I went to her after I got injured," he pointed to Slade's right arm, where Oliver had removed a bullet all those years ago. "She joined after she got me to Diggle for treatment."

"Bad?" Slade asked, worry in his eyes. Had he been there at the time his eyes would have been void of all emotion. You can't become emotional when it comes to survival.

"Yes," Oliver took a sip of wine. "Remind me to tell you about that later," he had to be honest.

"Number three?" Slade downed the rest of his wine, he did not like hearing about his Oliver being hurt. All he could do now was make the future safer for Oliver and kill the fucker who shot him, if he wasn't already dead. The look on Oliver's face said the man was not, but there was something else there, something for when they could talk freely.

"My best friend, Tommy," Oliver frowned slightly, not liking the amount Slade had drank. "His father was," he pointed at Slade's right arm, "he wouldn't let me help and I needed his help to save his father so I had to show him it was me," Oliver took a sip of his wine, the wine was making him a little tipsy but he could handle it.

"Okay," Slade said simply, before smiling and reaching a hand to cup Oliver's check once again. "What do you say to us getting out of here?" Slade said in Mandarin, "I have a feeling you'll like me fucking you into a mattress for a change," Slade smirked.

Oliver shivered but smirked back, "Just fuck?" Oliver asked.
Slade smirk grew, "Not even close."

"What are you going to do to me?" Oliver cocked a brow. Was it wrong that he was really enjoying the idea that people could hear them, not understand them, but still?

"First," Slade said, "I'm going to slowly explore every little bit of you with my mouth, trust me there will be a lot of marks," Slade stroked Oliver's temple and next to his eyelid with his thumb, Oliver's eyes shut. "Then I'm going to tease every. Little. Piece. Of you until you're begging me to fuck you. I won't, but if you beg just right I'll fuck you with my fingers. You will hold on," he ordered. Oliver shivered, holding back a moan, "because if you can hold on when I'm fucking you so hard that you're fucking yourself on my fingers, I'll take my mouth to that tight little arse of yours."

Oliver gasped lightly, not loud enough for anyone to hear except for Slade, who was likely listening out for it.

"Would you like that Oliver?" Slade said. He paused, not going any further; he wanted Oliver to answer him.

Knowing what Slade liked, Oliver opened his eyes, light meeting dark and said, "Yes Slade, I need you inside of me," a blush crept onto his cheeks from a mixture of Slade's words, the fact that it was Slade, the idea that people could hear, and most likely the wine too.

Slade smiled. "Will you be good?"

Oliver nodded. "Yes Slade, I will be good."

Slade smiled before spotting something to Oliver's left, his face fell and he said, "Oh crap," but then he chuckled, his shoulders shaking lightly. Oliver went to see what it was but Slade held his face in place. "I'm going to pay the bill, no arguments," Slade smiled, "I'll tell you when we get out of here," the older man stood to take care of the bill but before leaving he leaned down and kissed Oliver. "I'll see you outside."

Oliver did as the older man asked, had it been something bad following the man's orders was a good idea, but it did not seem to be from the way Slade was acting. Oliver trusted that the older man would tell him. Maybe it was the alcohol, Slade, or the mixture of happiness the two brought but Oliver was feeling silly. Scanning the room for anyone watching, Oliver skilfully grabbed the wine bottle, hiding it under his jacket before leaving.
"So what was that?" Oliver asked as Slade joined him outside.

Slade looked at the jacket Oliver should have been wearing in this cold weather, cocking a brow when he spotted a large lump sticking out. "What is that?"

Oliver flashed the bottle, half of which was still full of the red liquid. "Wine?" he smiled.

Slade laughed and fell forward, forehead resting on Oliver's shoulder. "Oliver," he smiled, "Yeah, sure," he started to walk down the street, knowing Oliver would follow. Oliver did in fact follow, pulling his jacket on before passing his boyfriend the bottle. The older man removed the lid and took a swig before twirling the lid back on. He sighed pleasantly, "I've missed red wine."

"How's finding all of Fyers bosses going?" Oliver asked. Slade had said before when they were eating that he had quit his job, Oliver couldn't really blame the guy with all that had happened and how the work went further than he could have ever imagined. Oliver understood the message; Fyers had bosses who had to be dealt with.

Slade's voice took a serious tone, his eyebrows down. "Bosses upon bosses and many more after. The first load we could arrest near straight away, the second took some work but they're working on it. After that linking evidence gets more difficult and after that is a mystery," Slade looked up, searching the sky for stars. He could see a few but the buildings got in the way, he hated cities. "What we did though," he looked to Oliver, "will have saved many lives both from the activities of the Island and the halt of future plans of Fyers bosses who will be keeping a low profile to avoid capture," he grabbed a hold of Oliver's shoulder, giving it a squeeze. "Couldn't have done it without you," he smiled, "you remember that."

Oliver smiled, he got a lot of pity about the Island and the more people knew the worse it got but it had all been worth it; to stop Fyers, to have met and saved Yao Fei, Shado and Slade and to have all that they had given Oliver; understanding, knowledge, friendship and love, admittedly, some more than others. Oliver wished he could tell the world that they did not need to pity him, with all that Oliver and his friends had done, but he knew he could not. He did not want fame and respect was something he was willing to sacrifice both for the sake of finding everyone involved and to reduce further pitying. But having someone who understood, whom talking to about the Island would actually bring smiles instead of pain, and having the respect he received from Slade as a fellow warrior made Oliver truly feel proud.

Slade took his hand back and dropped it down to Oliver's, knotting their fingers together. Never mind how their relationship had started (with a game of hide and seek and a jar of honey), they were just like any other couple. Walking down the street hand in hand.
"Okay so what happened in the restaurant?" Oliver asked, looking at Slade. The wine bottle was probably making the man's hand cold, they should get a cab or something but Oliver wasn't sure where they should go, he'd have to ask Slade what he thought later. Once he found out what the hell the older man had been laughing at.

Slade chuckled lightly, "Remember how I was describing what I would do to you in Mandarin?"

Oliver nodded, looking away sheepishly. There were still a large number of people around.

Slade moved his mouth to Oliver's ear, "By just listening to my voice you were becoming more and more turned on," The older man's husky voice said into Oliver's ear, the warm breath on his cold skin unbelievably arousing. "That even now you would love for me to pull you into the nearest ally way and fuck you up against a wall," Slade kissed Oliver's ear before lightly licking the shell with the tip of his tongue.

Oliver gasped and grabbed hold of Slade's bicep with his spare hand, not once did the two of them stop walking. God, he missed this. Slade's oh so skillful tongue was something Oliver would never be able to forget. The wet warm touch travelling over the younger man's body was unbearably teasing, making Oliver want to rip his own hair out from the need to have Slade's thick cock inside of him right now!

Slade pulled away, he kissed Oliver's ear and then he kissed the man's cheek affectionately. He smiled,"After you had told me how good you were going to be;"

Oliver face was definitely red at this point. He nodded and placed his head onto Slade's shoulder.

Slade grinned, "Out of the corner of my eye I saw a very red faced Chinese waitress."

Oliver's eyebrows shot up, eyes boggled.

Chapter End Notes

Chorizo is a type of Italian sausage
Chapter Summary

Part two of Blame It On The Wine.

Chapter Notes

Now betaed

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Oliver had blushed, and Slade had laughed so hard that he had to lean forward, hand on one of his knees to hold himself up. Oliver had glared at him at first, but then he joined in. It was really embarrassing, no, humiliating, but dear God was it funny. Oliver was pretty sure the wine was what was making this so unbelievably entertaining.

Oliver had not drank that much when he got back to the city, only really when he was socialising. Yao Fei had once told him a quote from a German philosopher, roughly translated; "Battle not with monsters lest ye become a monster; and if you gaze into the abyss the abyss gazes into you." Yao Fei did not specify what it meant but Oliver took the meaning he could find in it. To Oliver it was a warning of becoming the very thing that he was fighting against. Use alcohol to rid the sadness and in time that's all he would ever use it for; he'd never try to overcome it and just keep falling and drinking and falling and drinking...

It was good advice and much needed. Lian Yu may have been the place where Oliver became stronger and had met Slade, Yao Fei and Shado but it was also the place Oliver had floated to after seeing people die on the boat, watching his father kill a man and himself in order to save Oliver, the place Oliver had buried his father, got shot with an Arrow, stabbed repeatedly by Deathstroke, and trained to his limits; everything from fighting to language. Jamming his brain full of information and pushing his body forward even when his muscles and bones were aching, begging Oliver to stop, that his body could not go on - but it had to. Every. Single. Day. Even when Oliver had been left behind, he still had to fight. He had to look out for some way to escape.

There was no time to wallow in self-pity there, but once Oliver got home there was nothing to do but that. Oliver knew that he had remade the Island; slept on the floor with the windows open, to remake the cold nights before and after Slade, created an area to train, a hide away from the rest of society and with a list of enemies, things were back to the way they had been. But he was alone. He needed someone who was as strong as Oliver and could understand what Oliver was doing, or at least what he told himself he was doing. Diggle was close, but not the same, and the more Oliver was in this city the more he began to realise; he was holding onto the past, trying to remake it because after so
long, the constant need to survive was all he had.

Oliver pulled away from the list somewhat, he still had a job to do but he needed to lead his life. He slept in his bed, had warm showers, baths even. Drank with Tommy, even if now the man found it hard to look at him, knowing his secret. He tried eating dinner with his family but he was always so busy, until last he stopped trying. He met old friends in his club but it was never long before he was back downstairs. At first his sister and mother always tried to get him to stay, to talk to them but Oliver pushed them away, saying he needed time. Why was this so damn hard?! Being normal is normal therefore it should be easy. Right?

The pair had finished the last of the alcohol, thrown it into a bin a while ago, but all of that red wine was beginning to make Oliver sleepy and Slade could see this.

"Let's get you home," Slade said, leading Oliver to a taxi rank. The older man was disappointed that this was the end of their night but they both really needed sleep. A good meal, wine and a lack of sleep for what looked to be the both of them was really taking its toll.

"No!" Oliver said, a little louder than he meant which was not helping his point, so instead he said "You could come to mine for the night," Oliver looked down at their linked hands "I've missed having you there," 'when I sleep' was clearly left out, but Slade would catch the drift.

"Okay."

Smiling, Oliver stopped walking which in turn made Slade stop; he looked up to his boyfriend and kissed him. The kiss was sweet and chaste; Oliver loved the taste of red wine on his boyfriend's dark full lips. The red wine had stained Slade's lips a noticeable purple, just at the opening, but Oliver liked it. It was like a hickey; a little short-term mark that signified their time together. The kiss was quickly turning passionate; Oliver wrapped his arms around Slade's strong thick neck, whereas Slade's arms were wrapped around the younger man's waist. Wrists crossed, he reached down with his large tanned hands and squeezed Oliver's rear. Oliver jolted, moaning loudly in Slade's mouth, arching his body closer to Slade's while pushing his behind back into the hands. Oliver loved the feel of Slade's warm body against his, especially when those strong hands grabbed at his behind.

The kiss was interrupted by wolf whistles and giggles, the two men broke apart to see a group of girls; two fake red heads, two dark brunettes and one blonde, aged about twenty-one to twenty-three. One wore a dress, another wore a skirt and shirt, the rest wore skinny jeans; two black, one red.

Oliver went to reluctantly pull away from Slade, expecting the older man to do the same. He was surprised however when the Australian, not being much of a gentleman right now, forced Oliver's
body flush against his oh so wonderfully muscular chest, the familiar and very much missed warmth seeping into Oliver's skin through the thin shirts that separated the two men. Oliver was ashamed to say that the feel of those powerful forcing hands on the area that turned him on so, caused the blonde to gasp.

The two brunettes and the blonde stood there, mouths hanging slack in shock. One red head out right laughed at the look on Oliver's face, which he could only imagine was a mixture of shock and severe arousal. The other red head looked more intimidated by couple in front of her, worried that her friend's behaviour could get them into trouble.

Oliver hid his face in Slade's chest; he could feel his nose dipping into the crevice between the older man's pecs. "Asshole," his voice was both mumbled and muffled, but Slade understood fine.

Slade smiled, "Hey, I have a sexy boyfriend. So sue me for wanting to show him off," the older man directed them towards the taxi rank.

Oliver just walked with the man, he had pulled his very red face away but he stayed leaning into the man. He was embarrassed, he had been embarrassed a lot tonight, but it was from being seen, not the acts themselves. After all, the two liked to flirt and grab at each other, nothing was more normal to them, so although Oliver was a little red faced he did not regret what they had done and what they would do in the future.

They had got a taxi to take them to the manor and Oliver paid the driver before Slade could get his wallet out. Slade simply chuckled at the younger man's determination.

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"So," Oliver said as the taxi left, "what do you think?"

Beyond the tall black steel fencing and the tarmac driveway which, void of all dips and cracks, ran through the clean cut and clearly looked after by paid help grass, stood the mansion, more like a castle really. It was three stories and was a bit medieval looking; a mixture of shades of dark and light grey as well as a few white stones made up the large stone walls with borders of cream stone, slightly darkened by the night sky. The windows and the large front doors were all likely wooden. All the windows were painted white, minus the second floor which was green and there were three chimneys, although one of them could have been for the kitchen considering how old the place looked. In front of the house was an oval shaped garden which the cars would have had to circle around to reach the front doors, and tall, dark lamp posts stood on each end of the garden, just after the driveway. Most of the roofing was triangular minus the roofing of the archway over the front doors, the roofing of the second story behind that, and third story behind that, which made the roofs look like stairs in the way they were one above and behind the other. The roofing there was flat with high stone rises and gaps a couple of inches wide after every foot of wall, like the kind of walls archers hid behind and fired through the gaps in the medieval ages.
"Fuckin' hell," Slade's deep voice echoed through the night air.

Oliver laughed lightly, a smile on his face. "It's my family's house," he pointed out, even if he was pretty sure Slade had guessed that.

Instead of glaring at the younger man or smacking him lightly on the shoulder or the back of his blonde head, Slade simply said, "Great, I'm a predator."

"Shut up," Oliver said, before realising,"My mother does not know you exist, so you will have to sneak in."

"Once again I say; predator."

Oliver ignored the older man. "I'll distract, you go upstairs."

"Mission accepted," Slade smirked.

Oliver just rolled his eyes.

Oliver opened the large wooden doors, having moments ago got them passed the gates, typing in the code to let them through. Step one; getting inside the manor. Complete.

"Mum, you in?" Oliver called.

"Living room," a female voice called back.

Oliver mumbled directions to his room to Slade, who nodded before going. Oliver went to the living room, the one with the TV. They had two; one with a TV anda more formal looking room where they could talk to guests. The other living room had a group of sofas; one with three seats, another with two and the last three just for singular seating. There was a desk, phone and computer where Oliver's father would have once sat; watching as the kids played with the toys that were now stowed away, along with blankets the father would wrap around his children when they fell asleep stored
in the two large wooden cupboards standing on the other side of the room. There were also two bookcases each side of the large fire place. The whole fire place was made of stone and took up a large portion of the wall. The fire place itself was a black metal box held up by its four legs; it opened up via a medium sized gate through which the logs, which lay either side of the box, could be thrown in. It also had a thick, black pipe coming out of the top of the box which went up the chimney to allow smoke to escape into the night air. There was another fire place in the front room but, like the living room, it was only used for guests.

Making his way into the living room, Oliver saw his mother. She was reading through some papers, the TV on low in the background.

She looked up, having heard Oliver walk into the room. "How was your night out?" she asked, looking a little confused, but happy.

"Fine," Oliver said cocking a brow, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," His mother smiled, pushing and pulling the papers into a neat pile. "Thea came back not too long ago," she placed her pen on the pile, "She said you met up with a friend that you haven't seen for a while," she smiled, remembering how happy her little girl had looked.

"Yeah," Oliver smiled, hoping his mother would not push the subject. "Goodnight."

Luckily she did not. "Goodnight," she replied, smiling at her son before picking up the remote and looking at the TV. What for, Oliver did not stick around long enough to find out.

Oliver made his way up the stairs and towards his room. Turning around the corner he heard voices; a deep one, Slade and a softer one, Thea... Thea?

Oliver picked up speed and, taking the next corner, he saw it. There, at the bottom of the hall, was Slade Wilson and Thea Queen, chatting; Thea was talking and smiling about something while Slade was nodding, leaning against the wall next to Oliver's room door. His arms were crossed but he looked relaxed and there was a small smile on his face.

Thea looked over to Oliver. "Hey Ollie," she smiled. Slade looked over too, unsurprised. He had heard the younger man coming.
"Hey," Oliver said, walking towards the two, feeling a little awkward. "So..." he said, "You've met."

"Uncomfortable," Thea said, shaking her head in mock disappointment.

"Simple Oliver psychology," Slade tilted his head to Thea, making the same face and nodding.

Thea smiled and laughed like the two had some hidden joke going and it looks like they did. "I like you," she said simply, "so far you're the most entertaining person Oliver has dated."

Slade smiled back, he had noticed the use of the words "so far" but, then again, the two of them had only just met and Oliver was her brother. Older or not, Thea did seem protective of him. Slade had to admit though, he liked the kid. "I take that as a complement."

"Okay..." Oliver said, feeling a little lost.

Thea smiled, turning back to her brother, "If I ever sneak a guy in," she pointed a finger at Oliver, "I expect secrecy."

Oliver frowned but there was a light smile pulling lightly at his lips. "Not until you're married or 30," he said. Thinking for a second, he continued, "Scratch that, both."

"Your twenty-six," she pointed out.

"Fine, twenty-six."

"Deal," she smiled, enjoying the little argument. "Night Ollie," she said, walking to her own room, up the hall. All of their rooms were spread apart; Oliver had on the odd occasion had text message conversations from his room, with his sister, who was in hers. Lazy maybe, but Oliver thought it was funny.

Slade opened the door and walked into Oliver's room, followed by the man himself. "I like your sister."
Oliver glared at the back of the older man's head. "I'm not surprised, she's a lot like you," Oliver swung the door shut, hearing the click and as he flipped the lock he realised something. Out spoken, stands proudly; shoulders back, head held high, a natural swagger, keeps calm but when angry is almost animalistic, protects Oliver furiously, likes to joke at Oliver's expense. "She is you," Oliver shook his head, smiling,"No wonder you two get on," his voice low, sounding exhausted. The blonde had a bad feeling that when his boyfriend and sister started to really get on they were bound to team up.

Slade chuckled. "Worried the two of us will team up?" he turned his head to see the look on Oliver's face. Slade grinned, looking forward in thought, "So many plans in the works," he said to himself.

Oliver walked over to stand in front of the older man. "Don't you dare," he said, with no real malice.

Slade grin grew before turning into a smile. He cupped Oliver's cheeks with both of his hands, pulled the younger man forward and kissed him. Finally the two could just kiss; no more time limits. Just their lips touching one another. Sliding one hand down Oliver's body to pull his body close via the hip, he licked the red lips.

Oliver relaxed, opening his mouth for the older man. The kiss was tender but was quickly turning passionate, tongues riding together. Oliver wrapped one arm around Slade's ribs. His spare hand held the back of the older man's head, grasping the wiry black hair, pulling him closer. Sneaking his tongue forward, Oliver licked the roof of Slade's mouth, grinning against the older man's full lips as he shivered. Satisfied, Oliver pulled away from the kiss to kiss Slade's neck.

The older man lifted his chin, exposing more of his neck for Oliver to kiss. The blonde lightly ran his tongue over the Adam's apple before moving to the side of Slade's neck, biting down. Slade gasped lightly, bordering on a moan. Oliver ran his tongue over the developing mark, kissing it gently before pulling back to inspect his work. Slade allowed the younger man a quick look before kissing him.

Now it was Slade's turn.

Slade held Oliver's bottom lip with his teeth, biting down and sucking the flesh in the hopes of leaving a mark. Oliver moaned lightly. Slade kissed those lips one last time. "I've missed that," his voice deep voice was husky. Moving down to Oliver's neck Slade proceeded to leave behind a large, dark, and very noticeable mark. He grinned as Oliver gasped, throwing his head back to give the older man better access.

Oliver's eyelashes fluttered shut, gasping as Slade bit down on the side of his neck. His mouth hung open slightly, releasing small gasps which turned into whines when Slade licked along his jugular,
groaning as Slade bit down. God, Oliver missed this. Missed Slade's teeth biting down hard on Oliver's neck, his thick lips against Oliver's, and that tongue. In his mouth, at his neck, nipples, in his belly button, up inside of Oliver's ass and any other place it could find to torture the younger man. Every sensation that skilled tongue could give was incredible. Oliver was willing to beg for even the smallest amount of treatment from that tongue, something Slade was always happy to hear.

Slade pulled away from Oliver's neck and Oliver opened his eyes to look at the into the near jet black orbs, pouting lightly. Slade took one of Oliver's hands into his own, the other laying on Oliver's cheek. "You are beautiful," he smiled, entwining their fingers together, "So beautiful," he stroked Oliver's bottom lip with his thumb.

Turning off the light and turning on the bedside lamp, the two lay in bed together; naked, Slade's clothes folded neatly on the desk, Oliver's in the laundry bin. They lay on their sides, facing each other, fingers knotted together, talking lightly. Oliver had been sleepy but ready for sex; Slade had said that they should just sleep now and that tomorrow, when everyone was out, he would fuck Oliver till he screamed.

"Promise?" Oliver had asked, eyes sparkling green in the light of the lamp.

"Promise," Slade had said, staring into those eyes with his own pools of black abyss.

The two chatted for a while longer, lazily kissing now and again, before deciding it was time for the two of them to sleep.

Reaching over to turn off the lamp Oliver remembered, "Hey Slade?"

"Mmm?" Slade's eyes stayed closed from exhaustion, head resting on his hand, held up by his elbow.

"I'm supposed to be meeting up with Diggle and Felicity, the two who know what I do," Oliver added.

Slade nodded, opening his eyes slowly.

"We're checking out someone on the list tomorrow night and I was wondering if you wanted to meet them?"
Slade blinked, eyebrows raised, but then he gave a Cheshire cat smile."I'd love to."

Oliver smiled back. He turned off the lamp before moving back to lie next to Slade. The two hugged for a moment before Oliver rolled on to his side, facing away from Slade. The older man smirked, spooning in behind his boyfriend. Oliver loved the feeling of that strong muscular chest pressed against his back, it made him feel safe and, yes, aroused but he would have to ignore that for now. A large arm wrapped around Oliver's waist, pulling him closer to the heat that had kept Oliver warm enough to fall asleep every night. He had really missed this; sleep was going to be easy tonight for the first night in nearly a year.

Slade stroked Oliver's belly. "You need to eat more," he commented, sounding like he was just about to drop off.

Oliver would have made some sort of comeback but he was really starting to feel the lack of energy now, his eyelids drooping shut. Oliver gave in; shutting his eyes, he pushed himself closer to the warmth, smiling as Slade's arm tightened around him.

"Goodnight Slade."

"Goodnight Oliver," Slade placed a kiss on the back of the younger man's neck.

Chapter End Notes

Day one is over!! I would have put a sex sence in but I have work tonight.
Slade's long black eyelashes fluttered lightly, gradually bringing his mind back to the world of the waking. He did not want to wake; he was warm and the bedding felt feather light on skin, stopping his body from feeling trapped by the heat. The bed he lay on was just the right amount of soft but sturdy -bodily cramps were never a good start to the day. However, the thing that truly made Slade feel content was the body that lay next to his, arm wrapped around his ribs, head resting on his chest which was moving slightly, hair brushing against his tanned skin. Oliver's comfort-finding sleep movements must have been what had woken Slade.

Forcing his eyes to stay closed, he ignored the red he could see on his eyelids which signified there was some annoying light in the room, likely coming through the windows. Slade's arm curled around Oliver's shoulders, pulling him further onto Slade's chest. Oliver groaned lightly, sounding displeased, and tightened his grip on Slade's ribs. Slade just smirked, kissing the blonde hair. He inhaled, his boyfriend smelled like smoke and oranges. A weird mix; Slade could tell that the oranges were from Oliver's shampoo and, if he had to guess, the smoke was likely from his adventures hiding out on top of roofs waiting for someone on that list of his to show. Always hide somewhere where your enemy would never expect, regardless of whether or not they know you're coming. Height is almost always the best choice, both for hiding and for long distance weaponry with which being high up will give you a better chance of hitting the target, and also for making a quick escape if necessary. That lesson took a while to teach, considering he had to teach the kid to climb and stay balanced first.

Slade moved his spare hand up to stroke Oliver's short cut hair. Oliver's naturally soft hair felt kind of fluffy in its short state, Slade made a mental note to comment about it later. He ran his fingers through the younger man's hair, massaging his scalp. Oliver, still asleep, tilted his head to lean into the hand. His breathing was becoming less deep and quickening ever so slightly. Oliver would awake shortly. Not a bad way to wake up, Slade had to admit that.

Slade opened his eyes lightly, blinking to become used to the light. There was indeed light coming through the curtains, shining onto the floor at the end of the bed. Slade ignored it, slipping his arms under the covers and wrapping them around Oliver's waist, tenderly caressing his boyfriend's hip with his fingertips.

Oliver stirred, opening his eyes to reveal those amazingly emerald orbs, engraved with shimmers of crystal and specks of topaz. So precious and unique. His gaze on Slade's chest, Oliver reached a hand up from Slade's ribs, moving under Slade's arm, to gently stroke the patch of skin he was looking at. He nuzzled his cheek into Slade's chest, running his index fingertip down the dip between
his boyfriend's pecs, following the light trail of wiry hair.

Slade smiled. He lifted his hand to the back of Oliver's head. Oliver felt this, freezing then relaxing, and looked up to meet the older man's eyes, a dark honey brown in the morning sun.

"Morning," Oliver smiled, eyes seeming to shine brighter upon seeing his boyfriend.

"Morning," Slade said, kissing Oliver's forehead, the younger man's eyelashes fluttering shut as the older man did so. Pulling back, Slade saw the closed eyes. He smiled and kissed the tip of Oliver's nose.

BANG BANG BANG

The knocking on the door caused the two men to nearly jump out of their skin, effectively ruining the moment.

"Oliver," A loud whisper said from behind the door, obviously Thea, "I've got to go to school, but I brought you guys some breakfast."

"Thanks Thea," Oliver called, not really knowing what to say in this situation.

Unseen to the two males, Thea smiled, placing the tray on the floor. "It's on the floor," she said. Just before she was about to leave she stopped and turned back to the door. "You look after him because, lumberjack or not, I will kick your ass," She said before leaving. Her voice held no malice but Slade knew there was worry rooted deep in her. The breakfast had likely been a ruse to get the chance to warn the older man, but he didn't mind.

Slade smirked, he would have called something back but he did not want to risk Oliver's mother overhearing.

Oliver covered his face with the hand from Slade's chest. The older man could feel the heat from the burning cheeks on his chest.

"Could have been worse," Slade mumbled, petting Oliver's head gently. He did not like seeing the
younger man upset and as much as he cared for and trusted him, Slade had a worry in the back of his mind, although he knew it was pathetic; that one day Oliver would realise that he did not want to be with him anymore.

Slade had been scared many times in his life; he was man enough to admit that: fear that his fellow navy men could see his sexuality written across his forehead. Fear that he would not be able to save everyone. Fear that he would die, first in the navy all the way through to the missions as an ASIS agent. Fear when Billy and he had been shot down, crash landing on the Island. Fear of Billy himself. Fear of Oliver dying which, at the time, was very likely and being left alone again. Fear of losing Oliver, someone whom Slade considered a friend. Fear of losing Oliver, someone who kept Slade sane, someone who could distract him from Lian Yu. Fear of losing Oliver, someone he cared for deeply. Every fear Slade had ever faced he had overcome, keeping calm and collected, understanding that he could not have done anything and, if he could, to do it next time. He had accepted a long time ago that his family would never want him back, and then that they were never coming back. He accepted that no one would understand who he was and would want to wait for him. He accepted that everyone looked out for number one; Billy had proved that, not even giving it a second thought before stabbing his friend in the back.

Then there was Oliver. A spoiled brat, who Slade knew would fail. He'd be killed or become depressed and kill himself. Slade knew he'd be the one to put the kid out of his misery sooner or later, but he never did. The kid was just so strong. The brat just kept fighting, both physically and mentally, still cracking jokes even when the world itself seemed like it was trying to obliterate every piece of hope they had left. Slade had seen the marks left by Billy. The little fucker should have been broken but he wasn't and it made no fucking sense.

Slade remembered the 45 calibre bullet that stood on that small makeshift table; basically the smooth surface of a large log that stood next to his bed. Just that bullet, nothing else and there was room. There was a reason for that after all. It was the last bullet from his M1911, the only gun and bullet Slade had left that was his. Neither Fyers nor Billy's. Slade's bullet, Slade's gun, Slade choice. The empty gun was buried outside the plane, under a large piece of white painted metal panelling. Both to keep it hidden and, if the time did come, Slade hoped this would deter him, if only slightly. He would never work for Fyers; he would not let them taint him. Slade stayed strong during the year he was held captive and he would keep fighting until he and Yao Fei got on that plane. But if he couldn't...

He remembered staring at the bullet, clean cut and shining in the light like it was some sort of diamond.

He was being a coward for even thinking about it, which was one of the things that kept him holding on just a little longer, but that was about it. There was no one back home waiting, no real home really; no friends nor family, just work. He had saved many lives in his time, which he would never regret. He would never regret who he was and the things he had done. He always did what he thought was right and accepted when he wasn't.
Sometimes there is no big battle, no last stand, no glory or even recognition. No words can help; no clever sayings can be used. It's all beyond description. Too painful, yet empty. Sometimes it does not matter what you got right even when you got every little thing exactly right. You're stuck. You're fucked. A laugh releases from your throat; like your body itself is trying to change your mind, forcing a bubble of euphoria up -but the bubble pops, the sadness quickly grips you tight and drags you back into the black bubbling tar of hopelessness. The only light you see is the shine of the bullet, reflecting the light of the half-arsed attempt of a fire, as if mocking how pathetic you really are.

Then Oliver just waltzed in. Yao Fei was captured. Slade was so annoyed by this news he wanted to hit the brat and he did, hard, with the butt of one of his stolen guns. He'd tied the brat to a chair and threatened to kill him to see how strong this kid was. Dislocating his wrist get out and punch Slade, the answer was very clear. Slade remembered laughing at the kid, both at his determination and just at the whole situation. This brat was someone he could work on, train to get them out of here on that plane. Oliver failed but he did have his uses, as it turns out, and not just knowing that one quote from The Odyssey to correct his mistake.

Slade had been amazed that Oliver wanted to go back for Yao Fei, knowing his chances of survival were minimal at best. Why did Slade get so panicked when he did not come back? Why did he go after him? He had no idea. Maybe there was still that spark inside of him that wanted to protect or maybe it was because Oliver had people back home and Slade did not. Oliver was loved and needed, Slade was not.

Oliver distracted Slade from the darkness with his stupidity, his childishness, his kindness, his humour, the way he seemed to understand Slade, the way he was completely unafraid of the professional killer. His faith in Slade, his trust, his touch, his kisses, the way he wrapped the strands of Slade's hair around his fingers, stroking the older man's black hair when he thought he was asleep. That dopey smile on his face, so full of happiness like he was love drunk, but Slade knew that was too good the be true.

"Slade?" Oliver reached his hand to Slade's cheek, "You okay?" he asked, eyebrows down and eyes full of worry.

Slade nodded, giving a light smile. "Yeah," he said softly, "just thinking."

Oliver didn't like how his boyfriend was acting. The corners of his mouth had been pulled down and his eyes had looked near lifeless. Upon hearing Oliver he had smiled but only just, his eyes brightened and focused, but his voice was just quiet, not the usual "I can sound like the king of everything even when I'm whispering" quiet. The kind that turned Oliver on a lot more than it probably should. It was just so quiet, so vulnerable. Every about him was just so raw and open.
"Sorry," Slade said, having seen the look on Oliver's face. He leant forward and kissed Oliver's forehead.

"It's okay." It wasn't.

Oliver let it pass for now. He moved to get out of bed. "I'll get us breakfast," he said. He walked over to the door, still butt naked which made Slade chuckle lightly. He unlocked the door before slipping his head out; looking for anyone, even when he knew that at this point in the day everyone should be out. Thea at school, his mother at work and their cook Raisa would not be back until the evening. The years on the Island had taught Oliver to check, just in case. Better safe than sorry and all that. He leaned down, bending his knees slightly, and picked up the tray. This gave Slade a great view of his ass, which the older man was bound to be thankful for.

Slade watched the younger man move, admiring his toned muscles, milky skin, the curve of his spin and of course that perky arse of his. The tattoos and scars were part of Oliver and had all been necessary to bring him to this moment in time. The two of them safe and together. This made Slade love each and every one of them, only wishing that Oliver did not have to suffer to get them.

Oliver was kind, tender, funny, generally amazing, a hell of a fighter and just beautiful. One day he was going to make some very lucky man very happy, but today, and for as long as possible, he was Slade's. Slade smiled, eyes scanning over Oliver's body, focusing on the bite marks he had left. His favourite was the large mark on the side of Oliver's neck, above his jugular, followed closely by the one on Oliver's bottom lip, where a large patch was bruised, turning a faint dark purple. There was only one other bite mark but Slade was pretty sure he had made his message quite clear.

Oliver brought the tray over and placed it on the end of the bed. Their breakfast consisted of a glass jug full of freshly made coffee, two cups, a small pot of sugar and a small jug of milk, along with a plate of six pieces of toast well covered in melted butter that had since gone cold. Oliver guessed that Thea may have got help from Raisa, who wouldn't have asked.

They ate the toast and drank coffee, leaning against the headboard of the bed, pillows propped up to separate their bare skin from the bed's hard wooden frame. Slade was on his second cup of black coffee when Oliver sat himself on the older man's toned thighs.

Slade raised a brow, taking a sip of coffee before asking, "Can I help you?"

"You could fuck me." A simple suggestion without even a hint of shyness, unlike their first few experiences together. It was so strange how they had just stepped back into place, no hint of fear or worry.
"I didn't hear a please," Slade forced the smirk down, keeping his face completely unfazed.

Oliver took the coffee from Slade's large tanned hands, which seemed to be drowning the white porcelain cup, and placed it on the night stand where the tray already sat. He then leant forward, grinning as he whispered, "Please fuck me Slade," into Slade's ear, in perfect Mandarin.

Slade grinned; he almost chuckled at the memory of the restaurant. He grabbed hold of Oliver's hips and flipped him onto the bed, moving so he sat in-between Oliver's thighs, before kissing him.

Oliver ran one of his hands up Slade's spine, grinning as the older man shivered. Moving up he petted the thick black hair before gripping it and pulling the older man closer, opening his mouth to allow his tongue in.

The kiss continued; the two going back and forth, kissing and nipping at each other's lips, jaw and neck. Pawing and grabbing at each other's bodies, the familiarity quickly coming back. The next time they pulled apart for air, instead of one of them attacking the other neck, Slade started to crawl down Oliver's body, pampering his body with kisses. He started with Oliver's neck and collar bone, kissing the flesh lovingly, before making his way to Oliver's nipples.

Oliver gasped as Slade rolled the nub with his tongue, arching his back and grasping Slade's head to reserve more pressure. Slade grinned at this, moving to work on the other nipple before continuing his journey south. Oliver's hand just slipped off Slade head as he went, landing on his ribs, which were moving ferociously up and down as he panted, jolting to halt every time Slade found another spot to tease the younger man. Especially when Slade kissed and bit at the area under Oliver's ribs. The younger man sucked in a breath as if trying to move his body away but Slade knew better from the way Oliver also arched his back further.

Oliver's toes curled tightly, grasping the sheets. He tried to push his body down to get some pressure on cock via grinding up against Slade's thigh, but the older man felt the first signs of movement and grabbed Oliver's hips, pinning him to the bed. Whines escaped his throat as Slade dipped his tongue into his belly bottom, teasing the hole before pulling back slightly and lightly blowing warm air into the wet hole. Oliver whined but before he could tell the older man to get on with it already, Slade moved in-between his legs and started to kiss his toned thighs. Oliver dropped his legs open to give the man more room to work.

Slade kissed his way up Oliver's thighs, the younger man's pants becoming faster the further up he went, however Slade stopped and moved back down. Oliver whined in annoyance but that whine quickly turned into a loud moan, back stiffening and head thrown back from the electricity that coursed up his spine. Slade had bit down. The bite was on the inside of his right thigh which was,
unsurprisingly, very sensitive.

"Please..." Oliver said, so exhausted but so damn turned on. "Touch me," he groaned.

Slade ran the tip of his nose over the mark, causing Oliver to moan.

"Please," Oliver needed Slade so badly. "Please just- Ahh!" Oliver near screamed as Slade took him into his mouth without warming.

Slade smirked. He rolled his tongue around the head, sucking lightly, before teasing the slit with the tip of his tongue. Oliver grasped the sheets with one hand, with the other he grasped Slade's hair, thankfully he still had enough sense to remember not to grab too tightly. Slade sank the length further into his mouth, one hand grasping Oliver's length for leverage. The calloused fingers were rough against Oliver's sensitive skin, burning ever so slightly. Oliver stopped himself from bucking, even if it meant his cock could feel more of that burn and dive further into that mouth, the other hand had moved away from his hip which could mean Slade had something else planned and there was no way Oliver was going to ruin that, because his bucking would mean that that hand would have to be used to restrain him.

Slade did indeed have a plan. He removed the length from his mouth and proceeded to mouth at the underside of the length, sucking along the vein and occasionally returning to roll his tongue around the head and tease the slit.

Oliver rolled his head side to side, gasping and moaning at the things Slade was doing to him. Words half slurred but no less demanding, sounds of "Yes" and "More" and of course "Fuck" fell from his lips. Unknown to Oliver, Slade placed two of his own fingers into his mouth, getting them nice and wet, while at the same time massaging the younger man's length to keep him distracted.

Oliver could feel his orgasm just on the horizon and while this new burning yet relaxing sensation was doing wonders, he needed more and that's just what he got.

Slade lapped at Oliver's length, getting it wet, which would make swallowing him so much easier. Slade then once again took Oliver into his mouth. This led Oliver to gasp, grabbing at Slade's hair once more. Slade took more and more of Oliver, every time he felt like he was about to gag he would pull back; sucking the head, teasing the slit, tracing the vein and generally lapping at the length with his tongue, reading himself to go further, Oliver moaning all the while.
However the next time Slade pulled away, not wanting to risk Oliver suddenly cuming in his mouth, he ran his tongue up and down the underside of Oliver's length while at the same time jerking him off. He slid a finger into Oliver.

Oliver could not help pushing against the finger. The pleasure was amazing and just filled him in a way that made him feel so complete. There was something about having Slade inside of him that made Oliver feel so content, the same way he felt when, after washing himself in freezing collected rain water, Slade would come over and pull Oliver flush against his bare chest, arms wrapping around him. The warmth and just knowing that it was Slade seemed to push away all the cold and loneliness, fixing and completing him in ways Oliver never knew he needed.

Slade worked Oliver, first one then two fingers slipping inside of him. It didn't sound like much but Slade had large hands, which meant long thick fingers that were stretching Oliver's rim wonderfully. Slade quickly found Oliver's prostate and a few jabs at that and a few tugs of his length and Oliver was coming; body jerking, gasping like a dying fish, fingers and toes gripping the sheets. He had cum onto the older man's chest but said man did not seem to mind. Slade ran his index finger over his ribs and then proceed to lick the trace of sperm off his finger. Oliver's eyes rolled back into his head.

Slade kissed Oliver, slipping his tongue into the younger man's mouth, allowing him to taste himself. Oliver kissed the man back, allowing Slade to do all the work because Oliver was spent, still lingering on the dizziness of his orgasm.

After a few minutes of kissing, which quickly turned from tender to passionate, Slade ran the back of his index and middle finger over Oliver's balls and shaft, nails dragging along the sensitive skin.

"Ahh," Oliver gasped, pulling away from the sudden feeling, but it was very pleasurable.

Slade smirked. Leaning forward he kissed the shell of Oliver's ear before asking, "Do you have any lube?"

Oliver, eyes half shut from having that oh so warm breath against his ear, nodded, not trusting his voice. He pointed to the end table at his side of the bed.

Slade stretched an arm over and opened the drawer. Seeing as he had not moved his body that far he could not see what was in the drawer, so he felt around. After a second or two he found a medium sized plastic bottle, which he was just about to grab when his little finger brushed against something. It was soft although a little worn, likely a scarf, which Slade would have thought was for Oliver's "alone time" seeing what was standing next to it, had it not been for the fact it was so neatly folded. Slade may have asked had he not remembered why he was looking in this drawer in the first place.
He grabbed the bottle.

Oliver was now sat up; he'd been looking forward to this after all. They kissed for a while longer and when they broke apart for air Oliver pushed at Slade's shoulder and the older man allowed Oliver to push him back. This lead to Slade sitting, leaning against the headboard with Oliver on his thighs just like they had started, minus the bottle of lube still in Slade's hand.

Oliver lifted himself on to his knees, this was when Slade smirked; realising that Oliver probably wanted to have sex this way so Slade could not tease him further via slowing down. Oliver then wrapped one arm around Slade neck, while the other hand gripped his hair lightly.

Slade pulled off the cap, placing it on his end table. The bottle had a top like a soap pump like you saw it a bathroom, so Slade pumped out a good amount into his palm like it was some sort of painter's palette, before placing the bottle next to the cap.

Their eyes met; near black meeting a slightly worried looking aqua green.

Slade kissed Oliver tenderly and when he pulled away Oliver nodded and smiled.

Slade dipped two fingers into the lube, gathering a good coating before slipping one inside of Oliver. The younger man moaned and continued to do so louder as Slade thrust the finger inside of him at a nice pace, slow so that Oliver would accept him, increasing as the younger man did so. Before they knew it Slade had added a second finger followed by a third, he had also moved his other hand to pour a bit more lube on to his fingers the next time they pulled out slightly, before quickly thrusting back in.

Oliver gripped Slade's short hair tightly, bordering on the line of painful, but Slade ignored it for now in favour of smothering the lubricant onto his length and of course some onto Oliver's too, which was by this point was fully erect, to reduce any friction. Oliver once again pawed at Slade hair, gripping it hard and Slade had a feeling he was going to keep doing this.

An idea then came to Slade. He grabbed hold of Oliver's hands and locked them behind his back. Oliver seemed taken aback by this but a little more turned on. Slade then, not looking, seeing as he was loving the look in those beautiful green eyes, reached for the scarf in the drawer and tied Oliver's wrists together.

Oliver looked over his shoulder to see his wrists, before looking back at Slade with a mixture of
severely aroused and something Slade could not describe.

Slade grabbed hold of Oliver's hips and positioned Oliver over his cock; he held it straight with one hand while Oliver lowered himself down. It felt so damn good to be inside of him again; that tightness made Slade want to come right then.

Oliver threw his head back, moaning, and pulled lightly at his wrists, forgetting for a moment that they were tied together and with what Slade had tied them together with in the first place. Ever so slowly he pushed down onto the thick hot rod, body accepting it with only a light tingle of burning within, its lightly painful nature only adding to the pleasure.

Once Slade was all the way inside the two stilled, giving Oliver a minute to fully adjust. Slade kissed his neck and jaw, stroking his hands along the younger man's ribs and waist to soothe him. Not that Oliver needed it.

Oliver raised himself onto his knees and slammed back down, moaning loudly as he moved.

Slade also moaned. "Fuck," he gasped, grabbing onto Oliver's hips once more.

Oliver rode Slade's cock, picking up speed until be built up a good rhythm, while Slade shifted Oliver's hips here and there until he found...

"Oh fuck!" Oliver yelled. He pushed himself down as Slade thrust up to meet him. "So good," he moaned, smile on his face. God, he had missed this so much.

Thrust after the thrust, Oliver rode Slade, Slade fucked Oliver. The rhythm got faster and harder, the two hammering away at each other's bodies. Each pound at Oliver's prostate made him jerk like he was being struck with lightning; although Slade was pretty sure people who were stuck by lightning did not moan, never mind that loudly, nor ask the lightning to fuck them.

"Fuck me," Oliver begged, slamming himself down.

Slade thrust harder, pulling Oliver's hips down, grip hard enough to bruise. Each time Oliver jerked, his body tightened around Slade. The feeling was incredible; that warm tight heat clamping down on him was just simply amazing. Slade wrapped his long fingers around Oliver's shaft and squeezed. Oliver gasped and arched his back, wanting so badly to thrust his cock in Slade's grip but not
wanting to lose the length stretching him open, let along the pounding at his prostate. Slade grinned and used the mixture of lube and precome on Oliver's length to jerk him to his climax.

Jerking, thrusting, pounding. Gasps and moans filled the room. All working in rhythm until the end was close, bodies forgetting the rhythm for just the pure need to come. Slade came after one good hard thrust, filling his lover with his seed. Oliver came shortly after; the hot liquid inside of him was just too much, coming once again on Slade, his belly this time.

Oliver rested his forehead on the strong muscles between Slade's shoulder and neck, completely worn out.

Slade smiled. He was content. It was then that he realised that Oliver's wrists were still tied together. Oliver could get out easily, Slade knew, but he'd most likely forgotten. The older man had to admit his brain cells were feeling a bit frazzled too. The older man reached for the knot, looking over Oliver's shoulder to see what he was doing. The scarf was rather long, with small tassels, Slade had felt this much. What he saw, however, was that the scarf was black with a plaid pattern of grey. It was a keffiyeh... It was Slade's keffiyeh, the one he came to the Island with.

Slade untied the scarf and pulled it off Oliver's wrists. He held the fabric in his hand and just stared at it.

"I missed you," Oliver mumbled, peeking out from under Slade's chin at the scarf.

Slade paused for a second not knowing what to say. Oliver had missed him; "keep the only thing I have left of you next to my bed" missed him. Oliver still needed him.

Slade smiled; a true, happy smile. Choosing to ignore the future because right now, Oliver needed him. Slade wrapped the scarf around Oliver's neck. "I missed you too." Slade rolled them onto their sides where they kissed softly for just a few more minutes longer.

I need you too.

--

Diggle arrived at the club with Felicity (whom he'd given a lift). Diggle had not seen Oliver since yesterday morning, when he told him that he would be coming to the club with his sister that night. Diggle almost had the chance to question Oliver this morning, but then the man had sent him a text saying he would not need picking up. Diggle remembered laughing and saying, "It was never going to be that easy," but now the time was here.
Felicity typed in the code, the metal door opened and the twosome climbed down the metal stairs, the clanging becoming harder and faster the closer they got to the bottom to find...

Just Oliver; sitting on what had become Felicity's chair, looking at the computer monitors.

"Umm... Oliver?" Felicity asked softly, walking over to Oliver, Diggle following closely behind. "She is real right?" Why did she say that!? "Not that you're insane or anything!" she quickly added, "But this isn't one of those Cast Away with a volleyball called Wilson stories-"

She was cut off by Oliver's laughing; soft, only just stronger than a chuckle.

"...Is it?" She continued, feeling a little concerned. She looked over to Diggle who looked straight back at her. Neither of them had ever seen Oliver act the way he was acting recently which, from the smile on his face, seemed, once again, to be happy, which should not have been so strange. The two were just so used to seeing the "I'm not really happy but it'll stop people asking so I'll just fake it" brand and the "the remotely pleases me" brand that seeing Oliver happy, truly happy, and laughing was weird.

Oliver swivelled the chair to see his comrades and the looks of confusion and a little worry on their faces. "It's just that their last name is Wilson and I made that very same joke the first week we were together," he grinned. "So you want to meet them?" Oliver hoped that by saying "their" and "them" it was not too obvious that he was missing out words like "she" and "her". Slade had a thing for taking people by surprise (something Oliver had been a victim of many times, some of which he enjoyed) and Oliver had to admit that the wanted to see the looks on their faces too.

"Okay," Diggle said, wanting to know who this girl was that made Oliver act like this.

There was a pause.

"So..." Diggle said, looking around, but not noticing the dark figure that was slowly coming up behind the two.

Oliver kept a still face, eyes on Diggle.
"Can we meet her?" Diggle asked.

"That's funny," A deep voice said behind them.

Felicity yelped while Diggle froze, before reaching for his gun. The two quickly turned around.

"I don't remember developing breasts," Slade continued, knitting his eyebrows together in confusion. A smirk crawled onto his face from scaring the two. He then walked around the two, ignoring the gun the African-American, likely military man, was slipping back into its holster.

Felicity squeezed her eyes shut and blinked them open again to find that Oliver's love was still clearly a man. "Okay," she raised her hands in defeat, "I'm confused."

"I'm Slade," Slade said, standing next to Oliver and feeling like he was at alcoholics anonymous, "Aged forty, Australian, served in the navy until my early thirties whereby I became an ASIS agent," He held up his index finger, "That's Australian Secret Intelligence Service, by the way," he pointed out. "Six years ago I took a mission to find and save a man believed to be imprisoned on Lian Yu. He was, by people who were using him to cover their plans. I got captured, got free. Blah, blah, blah," Slade waved a hand, dismissing that matter for now. "One year later; Oliver washed up on Lian Yu and we started to work together to find a way to escape."

"So… Yeah," Oliver said. "This is Slade," he looked up at the older man, who saw the movement from the corner of his eye and looked down to Oliver.

The two gave each other a smile, before Slade leant down and linked them together with a chaste kiss.
"Wha-ah. Urr..." Felicity struggled to find the right words to say. "Congrats?"

Slade pulled away from the kiss, smile on his face, curling his fingers in his keffiyeh that was still wrapped around Oliver's neck, which only just covered the bite marks. Slade's own marks were hidden via the collar of his leather jacket. Slade looked at Felicity from the corner of his eye. "Thank you," he said, smile growing slightly. He turned back to Oliver and kissed the tip of his nose, before moving to lean against the black metal computer table, his happy smile turning into his usual pleased-but-business smirk.

Oliver turned to his two comrades, "I suppose you have a lot of questions."

"Just a few," Diggle could not help the grin that was pulling at his lips. "I've got to admit," he raised a hand at the Australian, "Slade?"

Slade nodded, crossing his arms in a thankfully comfortable manner.

"You're not what I expected," Diggle continued.

Slade's smirk grew.

Diggle cocked a brow, "You taught Oliver everything?"

Slade nodded again. "Minus the bow," He turned to look at Oliver, "And so the story begins."

"Oh joy," Oliver gave a fake smile

"Do exclude the sex scenes. They're a bit graphic."

Oliver backhanded his boyfriend's shoulder. "Dick." That's just what his boyfriend was sometimes, a complete and total dick, but Oliver could see right through him; what was Slade being a dick and what was Slade trying to take his mind of having to tell people about what happened on Lian Yu.
"I'd take a seat," Slade said, slipping his butt onto the table, "this is a long story." He turned back to Oliver, "I'd recommend the short basic edition."

Oliver nodded, giving Slade a smile with worry in his eyes and pulling at his lips.

Slade rubbed Oliver's back gently and left his hand there as they started their little story.

"Okay children, story time," Slade said.

Oliver shook his head at the older man.

And thus Slade and Oliver told Felicity and Diggle what happened; they covered their own side of the story, missing out certain moments like Oliver's father's death and Billy Wintergreen actions (telling the two that he had simply died in the plane wreck, for the time being anyway). Oliver also loosely covered the ship wreck. They told the two about their plan to leave on the supply plan, which failed (Slade said that it did not work before Oliver had a chance to take the blame, he knew Slade did not blame him for it), the mercenaries and Fyres. His life with Yao Fei, meeting Slade, meeting Shado, and Yao Fei's betrayal. Saving Yao Fei and getting away, hiding in the forest for the next couple of years; constantly moving and sometimes living in two separate groups for a night or two depending on the situation. The strong bond they had all built up meant that they all got on and cared for each other, with some favouritism between Yao Fei and Shado, and between Slade and Oliver, for what should have been obvious.

Finally they came to the end of their story; quickly covering the finding of the leader of the Solntsevskaya Bratva of Russia and the tattoo that he had given Oliver to symbolise his thanks (which is when they remembered Oliver's archer tattoo and explained that as well), along with the escape of the Island, Oliver being left behind, and his rescue later on.

"Wait," Diggle said, holding his hands up to signal a halt in conversation, "How did you get left behind exactly?" Diggle asked Oliver.

Oliver was about to continue with his "I got side-tracked" excuse, when Slade cut in.

"A group had seen who I was and I needed to get them away so they couldn't tell others before I took them down, else we would have been found out and killed on the plane," Slade explained. "I took the fight away, not knowing Oliver had followed far behind me to make sure I got back. I then
took another plane," Slade looked over at Oliver, "I'm sorry," he said. Oliver could tell that the older man was being sincere by that sad look in those dark eyes, turned black by the low lighting. Slade then looked away, that was weird.

"It's not your fault," Oliver said, smiling as Slade looked at him from the corner of his eye, giving his own small smile before looking away again. Oliver frowned, he had a feeling that this was not the only thing Slade was feeling guilty about from the way the older man had stopped looking at him, but Oliver had no idea what else it could be. What had Slade done?

Looking back at Diggle and Felicity, he spotted the metal poles he and Diggle had trained with, just as he had done with Slade and the bamboo back on Lian Yu. He stood, making his way towards them. "That's the story," he said as he picked up the four poles, two balanced in each hand. "Any questions?" Oliver asked. He spotted Slade's grin, the two had developed quite a knack for reading each other's actions, almost as if they could read each other's thoughts.

Diggle and Felicity looked at each other. Felicity raised a hand.

Oliver cocked a brow at her action, "Yes?"

"Want to order a pizza?" she asked.

Slade laughed lightly. "I second that," he said, "Loving the women in your life Oliver," he looked over at Diggle, "No offence."

Diggle just stared at him, not yet really knowing what to make of the man. The night was only just beginning, it wasn't even dark yet considering it was spring and food was a good idea, after all, the group did usually eat while they met up, which had now become pretty much every night. The corners of his lips pulled lightly, this should give him some time to get to know a little more about this Slade guy.

Diggle then realised something, "Women?" he looked over to Oliver, who he had quickly learned had limited lying capabilities; he could lie when it was planned in advance and thankfully he always planned for likely situations, but if caught red handed his lies were vaguely detailed or just plain unbelievable.

Oliver took a sharp breath, jaw clenched, not because of what Diggle had asked, but because Oliver now realised that he would have to come up with a story to explain how he knew and dated Slade
that did not involve the Island. "Thea saw us together," Oliver said, "I'm going to have to think of a story of how we met," he knitted his eyebrows together.

"We'll think of something," Slade said, smirk wide on his face. He held out a hand for his poles.

Oliver smiled, happy that Slade was going to help him. The older man had always been an amazing liar; Oliver could remember all the times Slade had convinced Shado or Oliver that something ridiculous was true. Slade would later tell Oliver that he was joking but he never did the same for Shado, letting her figure out she had been duped on her own. Most of the time she did, some however she still did not know were lies. She still thought to this day that some of the things Slade told her were true, the kind of lies that, when you really think about it, it should have been obvious that they were lies, which were just the worst kind. Yao Fei was different. He would listen to Slade, cock a brow and just carry on. Whether Yao Fei had actually ever believed Slade, Oliver was completely unsure

As nice as what Slade had said was, there was still that smirk that suggested he had a plan of some sort. The same one he had plastered on his face before he had started that prank with Shado and the ducks. It was one of the funniest moments of Oliver's life and every single time he remembered that moment he just had to laugh. Not just because of what happened but because it was the first and last time (for Shado anyway, Oliver was not so lucky) that Yao Fei had backed Slade up and made it worse.

Oliver gave Slade his poles. "Any suggestions?" he asked, grinning at his boyfriend.

"Well, since you asked," Slade said, testing the poles and trying to act casual, though clearly not trying very hard.

"Yes?" Oliver's grin grew.

"We should spar and each time a person gets pinned they have to come up with a piece of information about our relationship," he explained, readying the poles. "By the end we should have a full story."

Oliver thought about it; it was a good idea and fun. Oliver smirked. "Okay," he said, rolling his shoulders in preparation. "You're on."

With the pizzas ordered, Diggle and Felicity sat to watch the sparring match. The two men had yet to
start, they were still stretching, which Felicity had to admit she was really enjoying; Slade had stripped down to a black vest while Oliver, who had only been wearing a shirt, decided to go bare. They had seen Oliver's scars before and were unsurprised to see the scar on Slade's bicep, there were likely to be more hidden under his clothes. What did surprise the two however were the marks that covered the two men's necks, Oliver especially. Yes, they had both guessed he had bite marks considering the scarf he was wearing and the bruise on his bottom lip that he kept prodding with his tongue while Slade was talking during "story time", as if he was trying to stop it from healing. Even so, the sheer number and size of the marks were stupidly noticeable.

Slade cracked his neck, giving a relaxing "Ahh" as it gave a satisfying pop. He turned to look at Oliver and as if the man sensed it he turned to look at Slade. He nodded and Slade smiled.

The spar started with a simple tap here, tap there routine, metal poles clanging as they connected. It quickly became a fight; Slade struck forward, Oliver blocked, knocking one of Slade's poles off to the side before going in for his own strike with plans to pin Slade's poles while the older man was distracted, but Slade was far too quick and swung his poles inwards forcing Oliver's poles together before locking Oliver's poles between his own. He smirked.

Diggle and Felicity watched in amazement, the whole thing had taken less than ten seconds.

"Damn," Felicity said, mouth hanging open and not entirely sure what just happened.

"Okay," Oliver said, pulling his poles out of their trap, Slade let him. "We met..." he thought for a few seconds, "On the street," Oliver smiled, "It was your first time in the city, so I helped you find where you were going. We talked along the way."

Slade nodded. "Okay," he said but then pulled his brows together. "Where was I going?" He pointed out, "Where were you going?"

Oliver wanted to glare at the older man for picking holes in his story but instead he grinned and said, "That's for you to decide."

Slade grinned. About thirty seconds later he frowned, Oliver had pinned his poles; crossing both his poles and wrists. He had to admit however that he was feeling prideful. He smirked, "I was going to a supermarket. You were skipping college."

Oliver did not even dignify that with a reply, he did however give a smirk. It was believable. Oliver
did like the idea of them knowing each other before the Island because that meant they would have
known each other for longer, it would explain their close friendship.

Slade was pinned again but he did not mind, he had a good idea.

"I was on leave. I was going to be for a while due to injury," Slade said pointing with the top of the
pole at the bullet wound on his bicep. "I decided to visit America. I had done before but stayed away
from the cities, never really liked them. I chose to give it a go."

Oliver nodded, Starling City was a city but not exactly huge like New York or Vegas.

Slade had thought about a possible cover for him spending so much time with a young (er) Oliver
while he was putting on clean clothes in a hotel he had booked for two weeks, the younger man had
been talking to him about general stuff when he mentioned that he let slip to his family that he could
speak Russian.

"I like to keep busy so I volunteered to teach Mandarin and Russian," Slade continued, adding the
Mandarin just in case Oliver ever let a few words slip around his family. "When I told you this you
asked for a lesson in Russian to impress a female exchange student."

Oliver nodded, grinning. Now that was a good idea. Also seeing as Tommy would know (at some
point) he could back Oliver up.

The information giving went pretty much back and forth, each little "match" taking no longer than a
minute, seeing as losing only meant getting your poles pinned. They were about equal with wins,
and in a real fight it would have most likely been the same. One was younger, one was more
experienced, but neither of these points seemed to matter, the two men were equals. They may have
been masters of different weapons but they knew each other perfectly; their weak spots such as the
marks left by arrows, bullets and knifes, how to weaken the other's weapon by making them fire one
too many arrows or hit their sword against an unforgiving surface, what moves they favoured and
what secret weapons they hid. The two had never fought to the death, if they had Slade would have
most likely won but if there was one person on this earth who had the ability and the know-how to
kill Slade it was definitely Oliver.

The spar ended when a young male voice came through the speaker, signalling the arrival of the
pizza.
Slade smiled at Oliver, pointing the poles down. Oliver did the same. They bowed; a sign of respect and trust.

Diggle went to get the pizza but Felicity stayed down to get some drinks and towels, hot sweaty men need towels. She smiled as Oliver walk towards Slade and kissed him. Don't get her wrong, she did like Oliver, he was a great guy, but she knew he belonged with this man, it was clear even when you didn't know of their past together. The love was clear.

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The two men made their way to the men's bathroom to clean themselves of sweat. It was something they always did after training sessions although back on the Island it had been a lot colder due to the geographic location, so they would have do it while their bodies were still warm.

Walking around the bar to get to the bathroom, Oliver spotted Diggle walking back inside with two large boxes of fresh pizza. "Back in a bit," he called, "Just gonna wash up."

"Alright," Diggle called back, his dark eyes sharp. He was a little more yet also a little less wary of the Australian; more because the guy could clearly fight and had been though the same things as Oliver, more so even, which meant he could fight and kill all of them. Diggle had a feeling he had really been holding back, even if the sparring match had looked like a real fight. However, Oliver knew how the guy worked; knew how to catch him out and trap him. The two lived together long enough, Oliver had to know all his weaknesses, but by that logic Slade must have known all of his as well.

Oliver trusted this man and Oliver never trusted anyone, not fully anyway; not his best friend, not Diggle or Felicity, definitely not his family, but this man he trusted. Trust with Oliver was clearly something that was earned over time, a very long time. Diggle just hoped that the whole "brothers"... no, "lovers in arms" thing that brought them together was not just one-sided. Oliver was blind to the truth when it came to the ones he cared about.

--

The male bathroom was very fancy considering it was only a night club, but then again, Oliver did have the money for it so why not. The floor was made up of black granite, resembling the night sky with the small white dots, made into the stone to make the tiles sparkle. Strong white lines weaved in-between the tiles, indicating that they were set not that long ago. Slade smirked at the irony, that the only place in this city you could see the stars was on the floor.
The tiles up the wall were granite also, grey this time. Shades of black, brown and white gave the stone a nice aged look. The sections for the line of sinks dipped into the wall, the tiles only continued to just below the large mirror, the rest of the wall was painted cream. The area had a kind of Middle Eastern vibe while the rest of the bathroom was more designer. Overall it was nice.

"So when's the Queen popping round?" Slade asked, looking at the over-thought room. This was a place drunk people went to piss, for God's sake.

"Any day now," Oliver replied, placing the towels next to one sink before turning on the tap, filling his cupped hands full of water and splashing it onto his face. He did so twice before reaching for the one of the crisp white fluffy towels. Oliver jumped when he felt a pair of strong arms wrap around his waist, but then he relaxed. Pulling the towel away from his face he looked into the mirror just in time to see (and feel) his boyfriend kiss the side of his head then his neck, just below the hair line. Oliver leant back, allowing the heat of the older man's muscular arms and chest to engulf him.

"Your fighting has improved greatly," Slade said, lips moving against Oliver's skin, "Your strength has gotten better but you should work more on your speed."

Oliver nodded, smiling as he watched Slade in the mirror. It may have been years since they first met but Oliver still hung onto Slade's every word; smiling at every compliment like it came with a bouquet of red roses, listening to every piece of advice like tomorrow his life would depend on it, and Slade had no doubt that if he had found something to insult the man with he would have taken every single word to heart.

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The three men and the woman all sat together eating pizza. They chatted about a few things, seeing as it was hours before they would head out and they already had all the information they needed. Oliver was supposed to "talk" with Luke Morgan a few days ago but then he went away for a business conference in New York. Luke Morgan, the head of an insurance company in Starling city, was on Oliver's list. Now everyone knows insurance companies will try and get out of paying out claims, money going out is money being lost, but Mr Morgan's company really were the worst. They would accept almost any people for insurance of every kind; they almost seemed like miracle workers, especially for those living down in the glades.

There was one very big issue and that was that they would nearly never or just barely pay out. Luke used to be a lawyer years back and he could find every loop hole in order to stop his company from paying out. He even had his staff lie to customers about what the company covered, even small businesses, and being too poor to fight it they never got their bills paid back. They lied and tricked
people, even sending letters to say that the insurance had not been paid when it had been, just to see how much more they could get. Not a single thing could be proven in court to be illegal. So if it could not be fixed legally then it would just have to be fixed illegally.

The conversation was directed towards Slade's fighting abilities at one point, by Diggle. Oliver could tell the man was not overly trusting of his boyfriend but Oliver figured at some point the man would have to start liking him, Slade was a likable guy. Slade saw this too and told Diggle about his swords, throwing knives, daggers and then his guns. That last bit did the trick. Guns went to gun types, their pros and cons, which went to gun training and before you knew it the two were talking about their past experiences.

Oliver looked over to Felicity, who looked back at him. The message was clear.

Boys and their guns.

Felicity smiled at Oliver, she tilted her head to the side, indicating for him to follow as she got up for another glass of water. Oliver followed.

"Those two are getting on well," Felicity said, leaning against the sink.

"Yeah," Oliver smiled fondly as the ex-army and navy men chatted.

"Diggle was worried that he was... Well not using you," She quickly realised her words, "he would never use you. I meant, I don't really know that for sure. I meant the person mostly to kill a person would be the person in their bed," she threw her hands into the air, nearly throwing the glass across the room, "Not that he would, and you could protect yourself anyway, not saying that you can't, even if he is a big strong guy. Not that I like him that much! I don't like him at all- I mean I do but not like that I..." she sighed, "I'm going to stop now," she turned around the fill up her glass and hoped that when she turned back this would all be forgotten.

Oliver just cocked a brow at the blonde woman's actions. He was growing used to her ramblings and to be honest they were rather funny at times. Oliver knew it was unlikely, but he hoped she never did this to Slade because the older man would have a hell of a time with her. He'd fake taking offence to what she had said which would only make her panic further and, considering no reaction made her panic like an insane person, the results of Slade being involved would be catastrophic.

"Do you think they could be friends?" she asked, turning back to Oliver.
Oliver grinned, he had to admit she recovered fast; it almost made him want to push her buttons. "I think having us all work together will help."

"Is he going out with you? To," she waved her hand in a circle twice, as if trying to find the right words, "You know," she settled for.

"He said he'd just watch," Oliver said, "So as not to mess up my routine but he will be there to back me up if needed," Oliver then remembered, "Hey, Felicity?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you think you could do me a favour?"

"Name it," she smiled, looking at him curious.

"Well, as I said before, Slade and I went on a date last night," he said, trying to think of how to word the next bit.

"I see it went well," She commented.

"Yeah," Oliver said, resisting the urge to pull the scarf to further cover his neck, "Anyway some people saw us. I don't think they knew who I was, but if anything does come up on the internet about me being gay can you..."

She smiled, standing straight like a soldier she said, "I'll tell you and hold them for as long as I can but," she slowed, "I can't hold them forever."

"That's fine," he said and palmed her shoulder. "Do just that," he smiled at her, "For the time being I want to just spend time with him again. With you two also, and Thea," he smiled at the idea, "But if we do get caught out I want the time to tell my mother and Tommy..."

"Oh..." her eyes widened in realisation, "Telling Tommy would mean..."
"Telling Laurel. I know. And her dad," he sighed, "Something I want to try and soften, if at all possible."

Felicity nodded, "It's going to be a major shit storm."

"Yeah," Oliver could not deny that one. Cheating on Laurel was bad, cheating with her sister was worse, having that lead to said sister's death was much worse, and then saying that he had never been attracted to her or her sister in the first place... Oliver was fucked.

"So, how obvious were you two?"

"Well, we went on a date at this Italian place."

"Sounds romantic."

Oliver listed off as many things as he could think of: walking down the streets, clearly together, their date, their kisses in front of the girls.

"Wow," Felicity laughed lightly, "He's a daring one, isn't he."

Oliver grinned, looking over at his boyfriend, "You don't even know the worst of it."

"What?" Felicity stood in front of Oliver, he wasn't going to get away with withholding gossip from her.

Oliver smirked, "We both speak Mandarin and he started talking dirty to me out loud in the middle of the restaurant."

The blonde looked shocked, then she realised they must have been speaking in Mandarin, but it was still pretty shocking. "How bad?"
"Not graphic, still bad, but that was not the worst part," he smiled. He felt slightly embarrassed talking about this, but at the same time it felt very natural, especially with someone as understanding and non-judgemental as Felicity.

"One of the waitresses heard and understood what we were saying."

"Oh my God!" Felicity covered her eyes with her hand, and laughed. "That's so bad."

Oliver chuckled, surprisingly not red faced like he thought he would be.

"What are you two laughing at?" Diggle asked.

Slade cocked his own brow, taking a bite from a pizza slice.

Felicity tried to suppress her growing giggles as Oliver tried to think of something funny, there was no way in hell he was telling Diggle what he had just told the blonde IT lady. Maybe it was the fact that Slade was back, but the first thing he thought of was the moment with Shado and the ducks. The mixture of already being in a humorous mood and the memory of that moment made Oliver laugh.

Felicity cocked a brow which could not be seen, covered by her pink glasses frames, but the facial expression was clear. Not that Oliver could see it anyway, seeing as he was facing the floor.

"Remember the time with Shado and the ducks?" Oliver asked in Slade's general direction.

Slade looked away for a second or two before remembering. Where any normal person would have laughed and clamped their hand over their mouth so that they did not almost cough up their food, Slade, in his usual suave way, swallowed his mouth full, placed the rest of the slice on the table and said, "That was funny."

Felicity and Oliver returned to the table so that Slade could explain what happened, Oliver having said he had yet to get to the part with Yao Fei. Slade smirked at that.

"Now I'm by no means a practical joker," Slade started and Oliver let him have that. Diggle and Felicity would figure it out on their own one day.
"But one day I was out training with Oliver and Shado came along where afterwards we would teach Oliver how to hunt. We decided to move further out and that's where we came across," he paused for a second, "well it wasn't really a pond, more of a ditch that filled with water after a good amount of rain. Then again it did rain a lot, so it was pretty much there most of the year anyway," Slade smirked. "There were a load of duck's hanging around and Shado wondered if she could get them to come over. I told her she had the best chance seeing as she was female, that animals general felt safer around females, as they seemed less threatening. She believed it."

Oliver smiled, remembering how he pretended to be occupied with making arrows with his back to Shado, just in case she looked his way. He remembered it just kept getting funnier and he was having one of those "when you can't laugh it just makes it funnier and you want to laugh harder" moments. Slade had even thrown his scarf at Oliver so that he could hold it over his mouth.

"She sat there for a while letting the birds just go about their business, but every time she got closer they moved away. I told her that she should try talking to them and she did," Slade smirked, chuckling lightly. "Oliver here just about kept it together," he said, pointing at the younger man.

"No comment."

The Australian smiled before continuing, "She really went for it, determined that she could get them to come to her. I told her to tell them nice things, like a story. Animals can sense emotions so talking about something happy would make you happy and they would sense that," Slade grinned, remembering what happened next, "I knew I was pushing it but then Yao Fei showed up and he said she should try singing to them and she did. She really went for it," he laughed. "Oliver was dead to the world and I barely hung on. She kept singing until a few flew away and," he stopped to chuckle, "she froze. She turned around and yelled; 'You Bastard!'"

Oliver laughed. The look on her face had been just priceless. He remembered Slade had leant over, grabbing his stomach, and he had looked back just in time to dodge Shado who was coming over to punch him. Aside from being funny, it was the first time Oliver had thought of them as a family. Yao Fei and Shado only had each other, Slade had no family, and Oliver had lost one member and was likely considered dead by his mother and sister. The four of them just seemed to join together, first in a kind of brothers (and sister) in arms way, and then they became a family.

Diggle chuckled and Felicity giggled.

It was always funnier when you were there.
"What's your plan, Hood?" Slade asked into the chilly night air. He smiled as he made out a few stars. He sat on a bus bench, out of sight of traffic cameras (got to love that paranoia) and within sprinting distance was the building that contained the office of one Luke Morgan.

"Window left open," the familiar voice spoke from the earpiece, "Fifth floor, then I'll just work my way up."

Slade said no more, he guessed the blonde was likely scaling drain pipes and window ledges by this point and he did not want to disturb him.

"I'm in."

Slade smiled.

"Okay," Felicity said, "There are security guards in the hall ways of the sixth, eighth and ninth floor, but none on the stairs. I've put the security cameras for the stairs on loop. Just head on up."

"You'll do fine," Slade said before muting the speaker so they would not hear him. "You going to sit down or what?" A moment later Diggle sat next to him.

"You knew I followed you, hm?"

Slade smirked. "I've been trained to. Plus I had a feeling you wanted to talk to me privately."

"What are your intentions?" Diggle asked, getting straight to the point.

"To be with Oliver."

"Okay."
Slade cocked a brow. "That was easy," He turned to Diggle, "Why so trusting?"

"I could tell that you cared for him," Diggle smiled lightly, "Plus I may have only known Oliver since the Island, but I've never seen him this happy about anything."

Slade heart warmed, he ignored the idea that one day Oliver would be that happy for someone else.

"You travelled here as soon as you could?"

"Of course."

Diggle just gave Slade a curious look. "You were part of what was clearly a serious investigation, you were held there all that time, and then they just let you leave?"

"There was a lot of work to be done," Slade looked at him, "What are you getting at anyway?"

"Why didn't you contact him?"

Slade blinked, keeping his poker face.

"You really care for Oliver and I mean really care for him," Diggle smirked, looking out into the night sky, "If I cared for someone the way you do, I would have done the same thing. The first plane I could find, I would be on it. All that I can understand. That maybe you would not contact him before to keep him and his family safe. However," he looked back to the Australian, "you and I both know that journeys back home take time. So why not call him?"

"No time, and you can't use a phone on a plane."

"You didn't see Oliver in your first days in Starling city, you had time then."

Slade paused for a second. How did he know that?
"One night I drove and picked up Thea from the club, Oliver asked," Diggle's smirk grew, "That was two nights before your date with Oliver. I knew there was something not right about you when we met, I could just feel it. First I thought it was just me, but then seeing you walk out at the club, I remembered. I saw you at the club that night."

Slade sighed heavily, looking back at the stars.

"I know you care for him and he needs you."

Slade looked back at Diggle, the man looked dead serious.

"The guy deserves happiness, the kind that you provide."

"Luke has received his warning," Oliver voice suddenly said in both the men's ears. "I'm pretty sure I won't have to return."

Slade clicked his speaker back on. "That was quick," he commented, smiling, "Forget what I said before about working on your speed," he clicked the speaker off again.

"Thank you."

Slade's smile grew, imagining the slight smile and shy look on the younger man's face. So cute, when it should have been weird, considering that same cute man was wearing a leather and cotton hooded outfit to hide his identity as a killer. A body that dislocates and breaks bones, snaps necks and was near impossible to kill, wielding his best-used weapon, plenty of arrows, and a bunch of rather creative explosive devices.

"All I ask,"

Slade turned back to Diggle.

"Is that you don't hurt him," The ex-army man said. He stood, "That this is not one-sided."
"Mate," Slade said, standing as well, "I'd rather die."

"I'll see you two back at the club."

Diggle's eyebrows knitted together, he looked to the building but saw no hooded figure shaking his head.

Slade looked over as well before smiling proudly, he clicked on his speaker, "Good guess," he clicked it back off. He grinned at Diggle. "I taught him. Remember?"

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"Anyone in?" Oliver called. He stopped himself from grinning at the fact that right now Slade had likely made his way to Oliver’s room, having picked the lock of one of the first floor windows.

"Hey Ollie," Thea called back, walking in to see him. "Mum's gone to bed. So..." she grinned at him, "You spent the whole of last night and today with your boyfriend, he sneaking in again tonight?"

He shut the door. "No," a grin pulled at his lips

"You're a bad liar Ollie," she cocked a brow; "You really care for him, don't you?"

Oliver smiled and nodded.

Thea paused. "Do you...?"

Oliver turned away to put his coat on a spare hanger.

"Oh my God," Thea gasped, running over to grab his shoulder and pull him to face her.
Oliver smiled at his sister.

"You love him!" she squealed and wrapped her arms around Oliver, huge smile on her face.

"Yeah," Oliver confirmed, wrapping his arms around Thea. "I love him."

--

Oliver knocked on his bedroom door to let Slade know he was coming in, although it would have been funny to see the older man jump. Oliver opened the door to see his boyfriend sitting on the window sill. Boots and Jacket off to fully enjoy the cool night air, he sat with one sock covered foot on the windowsill, the other hanging out the window.

Slade looked at Oliver. "You can see the Stars quite well," he sat straight to make room. "You can even see Jupiter."

Oliver toed his shoes off, "Can you?" he asked. He made his way over and sat in the free space, both legs hanging out the window.

"I don't know. Probably," Slade shrugged.

Oliver glared at him.

Slade chuckled. "You can," he pointed to a cluster of stars, "Just off to the left, slightly orange. That's Jupiter."

"Where you seeing this?" Oliver scanned the sky.

"There are two stars together, below that another two, but far apart, and then an orange one."

Oliver grinned, spotting the orange light. "I see it."
"I think that... Never mind."

"What?" Oliver asked, turning to look at the older man.

"I was about to say that I think I saw a star constellation, but one of the stars flew away," Slade glared at the plane

Oliver laughed.
Meetings and Greetings

It had been three weeks since Slade and Oliver were reunited and over those weeks not much had really changed; Oliver still played his part as the vigilante, trained, ate and slept, the only difference being that Slade was there. Oliver had to admit that he always slept sounder with Slade next to him. Slade had found and started renting an apartment in the Glades. Being both a hard worker and a stickler for saving money, Slade had gathered a small fortune over the years and although the hotel was nice, he had no idea how long he would be looking for a place. The man decided it would be better to just get some temporary, rented apartment until he found something more permanent, rather than pay for another week or two in a hotel.

His apartment was small and only had the most basic furniture, but it was decent. With one bathroom, a kitchen/living room and an archway entrance to the bedroom, the place was just enough for one person. All of Slade's items fit easily, seeing as all of his stuff consisted of a large gym bag. It was much easier to carry around then a suitcase, and contained some clothes, a surprising range of bladed weapons and a box which he had received in the mail a few days ago. The box was small and longer than it was wide, made of rosewood and engraved with what looked like tribal vine and leaf patterns. The box was kept in good condition, which was understandable considering what was inside: Slade's medals from his time in the navy.

Oliver was sat on the simple, dark blue two-person sofa, looking down at the medals that still sat in the box, on the light brown, almost cream, wooden coffee table. Oliver would not dare touch them. He did not know whether the older man would mind if he did but out of respect he chose not to. He knew that they existed and the story behind each one, but seeing them was still a little overwhelming.

"They don't bite," Slade said, fishing two beers out of the fridge.

"I know," Oliver said. He reached out a hand hesitantly and ran a fingertip along the edge of Slade's Cross of Valour. It was the highest medal of bravery in Australia and was by far the greatest medal Slade had ever been awarded. The story behind this medal alone showed how much of a badass Slade really was.

Slade unbuckled his belt to use the buckle to open the beer; placing the cap between the pin and the buckle, he pushed the pin under the cap edge and squeezed the mental pin and buckle together, popping the cap off the green glass bottle with a familiar and much loved clunk. He did the same for the other bottle before doing his belt back up and moving to sit next to Oliver, placing Oliver's bottle on the table and taking a sip from his own.

Oliver went to get his beer when he remembered the small scar on Slade belly, the first of two scars that had earned him the Cross of Valour. He reached out and placed his hand where he knew the mark was. The scar was that of a blade wound, just over an inch long with dots from the stitches
along each side. It did not look like much, but the event that caused it was horrific, although unbelievably lucky.

Slade sucked in a breath as the mark was touched. He watched his boyfriend stroke the sensitive area lightly, the grey cotton shirt being the only thing that kept the slender, cool fingers from touching his distorted skin. Not that Oliver ever seemed to mind his marred body. The younger man smiled at each and every scar as if they had stories to tell and, to be fair, they did. Slade smiled at the younger man.

Feeling the older man relax, Oliver looked up to meet those dark brown eyes. His eyes were warm, as were his hands as they cupped Oliver's cheeks.

"Want to stay here tonight?"

Oliver knew he shouldn't. "Yes."

Slade's smile grew and he kissed the younger man. His lips, like the rest of his body, were large, engulfing Oliver in their protective warmth. Unlike his strong body and his rough hair and skin, especially his calloused hands, Slade's lips were the one part of the older man that was soft, feather light instead of hard and heavy. Unless you counted his eyes.

His eyes were both dark and void of all emotion; like two bottomless chasms, dark and empty, seeming endless. No feeling, no fear or joy, anger or sadness, no anything. This was Slade when he killed, and thankfully only then. Thick eyebrows down low, cold glare, muscles tensing in preparation to strike. He still walked, cocked his eyebrows, and smirked with his usual natural swagger; rolling his head to the side and giving his enemy an unimpressed look, if only to mislead them into thinking his cockiness would make him underestimate the situation. Not that it mattered whether or not the Australian did, after all, Slade could become deadly at the drop of a hat. There would be no time to react, to even ponder the possibly of danger. Nothing but black eyes and crimson stained hands.

Slade's eyes could also be bright. In the sun light they shined a dark honey colour, maybe treacle, to Oliver anyway. It could have just been because they seemed to brighten the day, the way a promise of dessert smothered in syrup could when he was a child. Slade's eyes were like windows to his soul. His feelings were so clear; joy, sadness, worry, guilt and one look he constantly gave Oliver, the same look he was giving now.

Slade pulled back for air, gazing into Oliver's eyes.
Oliver looked into Slade's eyes. So amazingly expressive and unbelievably beautiful and Oliver loved that he was the one who got to see Slade like this.

Slade kissed Oliver's forehead; an affectionate gesture Oliver had never experienced before Slade. The older man did it when Oliver was upset or he himself was very happy.

"I love you," Slade said, but he didn't really. His lips moved but there was no sound.

Oliver smiled, seeing the words on Slade's lips, almost forgetting about the lack of sound. Oliver frowned; there was no sound at all. No noisy neighbours, no car horns, no sounds from the people on street, not even their own breathing.

"What's going on?" Oliver asked, but no sound came out.

Slade just shrugged, grinning in a playful manner.

Oliver sighed, not that he could hear it or anything. "This is a dream, isn't it?" he asked, a part of him hoping it was not even if that meant that he had lost one of his senses, because knowing Slade had said those words would be enough for Oliver.

Slade nodded.

Oliver blinked and as his eyes opened he found himself in his bed. His heart sank. He frowned and sat up, Oliver was wide-awake; the ease at which he could just sit up brought him to the conclusion that he was not falling asleep anytime soon. He sighed, feeling thankful yet disappointed that he could hear it, having been so happy to see Slade say those words and the whole thing had never been real. He liked his dreams of Slade, having been bombarded with them on his nights on the Island, when it was just him and a load of unburied bodies of the enemy. He'd also had one or two every so often; many were happy, some were sad but the feeling was always the same when he awoke to find that he had been dreaming, a feeling of sadness. Sadness that Slade was gone and he knew his first night back that he would never see Slade again. At the time and right now looking back, Oliver was disappointed with himself for giving up so easily. But none of that was important anymore.

Oliver reached over for his phone; he clicked the screen on and squinted as the light burned his eyes. He blinked away the fuzziness so he could see the simple IPhone brand screensaver. He quickly found his pictures, most of which were just test shots from Oliver trying to figure out how it worked.
as well as a few pictures of Thea and Tommy. After a few seconds he found what he was looking for.

The first picture was of Slade and Oliver kissing. Slade's hand was in Oliver's hair while Oliver had his arms wrapped around Slade's ribs. Oliver had asked Felicity to take a picture of them together if she got the chance. He remembered winking at her before he asked his boyfriend for a kiss before he left and, of course, how could Slade disagree to that. Having heard the beep and seen the phone, Slade had just shook his head, but Oliver could tell from the slight twitch at the corner of his lips that he was happy that the picture existed.

Oliver smiled, missing those lips upon his own. He just stared at the picture for a long while, the strong light making his eyes dry out and sting.

He flicked onto the last and only other picture he had of Slade. It was the picture Oliver had taken for Slade's screen saver if he were to call; Slade sitting on his blue sofa, feet propped up and crossed on his coffee table. He wore a white cotton vest, his crumpled black dress shirt pooled around his hips, his strong arms crossed over his chest, showing off his amazing and unbearably arousing large muscles. He wore the usual pair of lace-up leather boots over a pair of skin tight grey cargo pants, just like the ones he had worn on the Island, the cargo pants clinging to his muscular legs and area between his legs. Oliver could not help but stare at that, telling himself he was just admiring Slade's dark hemp belt. He'd bought it the day before; a comfortable but durable belt with a simple metal buckle.

Slade was clean-shaven in the picture; something that took years off of him, although Oliver had to admit that he did like Slade's facial hair. It made him look more masculine, but it was nice to see him clean cut now and again. The same went for his hair; he suited his short spiked hair but Oliver remember how the older man had started to let it just grow on the Island. Long, black, wavy, wiry hair, tied back with string, seeing as years without any decent care and the sea air had made his hair thick, knotted and generally uncooperative. Oliver did miss the long wavy hair, the tips of the strands touching his shoulders, but the younger man had to admit it was good to see Slade all clean cut again.

Oliver just looked at the picture, entranced by Slade's perfect, powerful, and severely arousing body. When the screen went dark for the third time Oliver knew he should go back to sleep and he clicked it on one last time, smiling at Slade's grin. When the phone went dark again Oliver placed it back on to the table, slipping fully back under the covers and smiling at the idea that when he went to check his phone for the time in the morning there would be a picture of his boyfriend.

--

Oliver yawned as he walked into the kitchen, still dressed in his sleeping clothes; a grey shirt and a
pair of white, baggy pyjama bottoms.

Thea smiled at him. "Morning Ollie," she said, a little too happy. She must have had her community service today. Maybe it was because she was helping people or because after her time was done she could have it as a real job, but either way Thea had really taken to giving up her free time to work with Laurel.

"Hey," Oliver walked over and reached into the cupboards to get a glass.

"Did not sleep well, hm?"

Oliver filled the glass with water from the sink. "Not really," he took a sip.

Thea grinned. "Miss your boyfriend?"

"Maybe," he said, taking another sip.

"Aw Ollie, she hugged him from behind, just managing to stop herself from rubbing her cheek on his shirt, seeing as she had no time to reapply her makeup. She pulled away and stood by the side of him, looking up at her stupidly tall brother. "Mum wants to about this mystery lady," she smirked, "by the way."

Oliver sighed. The bite marks had only just healed, what with how large and dark they had been. Oliver had managed to hide them from Tommy, Laurel, even Detective Lance, with the sudden need to wear a scarf, even if summer was getting closer, but his mother and Raisa were not to be fooled. Diggle and Thea had sworn to secrecy for the time being but Oliver could not hide his boyfriend forever, he didn't even want to.

"Introduce Slade," Thea said, moving away to get her handbag.

"What, just like that?" Oliver asked, turning to his sister and cocking a brow.

She shook her head. "No," she picked up her bag, "as a friend. Someone for mom and Raisa to get used to seeing," she looked up at her brother. "No harm in them meeting an old," she rolled her head
to the side, grinning, "friend," she said in a teasing manner.

Oliver rolled his eyes. "I swear the only difference between you two is gender and age."

Thea laughed, then an idea hit her. "What's he doing today?"

Oliver crossed his arms over his chest as he leaned back against the counter. "Nothing important to my knowledge," he raised a brow. "Why?"

"Mum and I are going for lunch at one, you could tag along if you want," she pointed out, sounding excited, "then I could get a text that says I have to get back straight away, Slade could be in the area and could give me a lift and bam!" she smiled. "Mom meets Slade. Quick meeting, no time for awkwardness."

Oliver paused for a second, watching his sister. "You just want to ride the motorbike," he accused.

Thea smiled cheekily. "Maybe."

Oliver gave a light smile. "Okay. I'll ask," he said, uncrossing his arms and pushing away from the counter. "And I'll go with you to lunch."

"Okay," she stopped herself from literally jumping for joy. "I can't wait!" She glanced in her handbag to make sure everything was in it before nodding in approval. Walking out the kitchen to get her lift to work, she gave Oliver a light wave. "Remember to tell mum," she called as she walked away.

Oliver sent a quick text to Slade, asking if he was doing anything at around about two. He then took a deep breath and forced himself to go to his mother's study. "Hey, mum," he called, before he could re-consider.

"Yes?" She called back.

Oliver spotted his mother sitting at her desk, having paused her typing on her laptop. "Mind if I tag along with you and Thea for lunch?"
She paused for a second, a little surprised, and then she smiled "Sure, if you want. Den's at one."

Oliver felt a little wave of sadness; he'd forgotten that was where the two had taken to having lunch. "The place down the road from that bridal store?" he asked, poker face steady.

"Yes. Just before that hotel you and Tommy stayed at for your twenty-first."

Oliver grinned at memory. Two twenty-one year old, rich practically brothers, throwing back pre-drinks before the big night out, although Oliver did not remember much after that. It was one hell of a weekend. Oliver's thoughts were cut off by the vibrating in his back pocket. Fishing the phone from his jeans, he checked his messages.

I'm free. Why?

Oliver smiled.

"When am I going to meet her?" Moira asked, leaning back in her seat and crossing her arms.

"In time," Oliver sent back a reply.

Want to meet my mother? Thea has a plan and she wants to ride of the back of your bike.

"Any time soon?"

Oliver turned back to his mother; she had a light smile on her face. "I just..." Oliver's grip on his phone tightened. "This relationship is very important to me and I want it to last."

She just looked at her son. "And you think I won't like her?"

Oliver thought for a second before he shrugged and simply said, "Yes."
Moira's eyebrows knitted together. She shook her head. "Oliver," she looked him in the eyes "Over the last three weeks you have been more social, gotten more sleep and you're starting to act really happy. The kind of happy you always were before..." she looked away, "What happened," she looked back up at her son. "If she makes you happy, I'll like her," she smiled.

Oliver smiled back. His phone buzzed.

--

The mother and her two children sat outside a little café, the light spring breeze pleasantly cool considering today had been rather warm, more so now, seeing as the sun was closer to being at its highest peak. Den's, named after a man who supposedly work there a few years back, was a small café with light brown walls, wooden skirting boards, counters, tables and chairs, and one fern sitting just before the till. Not a very popular place, as the food and drinks cost more because it was a small family business and it was not very out in the open, but its charm, luck, and regulars kept the café going.

Den's had become the place the family would eat at when the father of the family had a break during work. Much like most things Moira and Thea had stopped doing after the disappearance of Robert and Oliver, they had started to do it again since Oliver had returned. Maybe it was the clarification that Robert was definitely dead and Oliver was not and had come back, but the family was little by little coming back together. There were still cracks, but maybe there would always be cracks.

The fresh warm sandwiches went well with a round of cool drinks; ice coffee for the girls and water for Oliver, who was still getting used to all the processed food and drinks he had been away from for five years. Like most things about the Island, it had given him a new perspective; he now chose to eat mostly fresh, healthy food, not just because he was used to it but because he knew it was good for his body and with the active lifestyle he had, a good diet was quite necessary.

Thea just happened to glance at her phone; she picked it up. "Crap," Thea groaned, looking down at the imaginary message. She looked up to see her mother's glare. "Sorry. It's just that I misplaced a folder and no one can find it."

"I can drop you off before work," Moira offered.

Thea sighed sadly. "I need to go in now..." she paused, "doesn't Slade live nearby?" she looked over to Oliver. "You think he could give me a lift?"

She could even lie like Slade, Oliver almost believed her. "I'll call him," he said, pulling out his
phone and dialling quickly so that Thea would be the one to handle the explanation.

"Slade?" Moira asked.

"Friend of Oliver's," Thea smiled, "real nice guy."

"You just want to ride his motorbike," Oliver pointed out, "I wouldn't be surprised if you made up that message."

"Shut up," Thea said, skilfully holding off a growl and a glare.

Oliver gave a grin which morphed into a light smile as Slade answered the phone. "Hey. It's Oliver."

"No shit."

"No need to be snarky," Oliver said, more amused than anything. "You anywhere near Bridges street?"

"Yep."

Oliver could practically feel the grin in the man's voice. "Thea needs to go to work and she can't get a lift in time."

"When?"

"Now, if possible," he added, to keep up the look that this was not prearranged.

Slade gave a chuckled down the phone. "Alright. I'll be outside waiting in about five. Looking forward to the Spanish inquisition from your mother?"

"Den's, past the bridal store, we'll see you in a bit."

"Bye," Oliver ended the call and placed the phone on the table.

"So,"

Oliver looked up to see his mother's grin.

"Slade, hn?"

"You'll really like him," Thea pointed out. "He and Ollie were friends a few years back."

"Yeah, one of my closest friends," Oliver was so thankful for their planned story right now. "I met him years ago. He was in the navy, on leave due to injury. I was going to introduce him but then he had to go back on tour and then well..." Oliver gave a sad smile, "The Queen's Gambit."

Moira gave a nod, looking a little sad at the painful memory, as did Thea.

"You'll like him though," Oliver attempted to change the subject. "He taught me Russian."

"Did he?" Thea asked.

"We had lot of free time, although his teachings were pure evil," Oliver said in Russian, smiling at the memory of Yao Fei, Shado and Slade only talking to him in Russian. It had been annoying at the time but understandably funny, and important to get Oliver to learn the language faster, of course.

"Wow," Moira said, it was impressive after all.

"What does it mean?"
"Basically; yes he did teach me," Oliver stood. "He said he'd be out front in five, so we should go."

The family went outside so Thea could get her "emergency" lift; Oliver left his coat on his seat so the staff would know that they were coming back. After a few minutes, during every second of which Thea was prodding Oliver to say more things in Russian, a motorbike pulled up in front of the family. The bike was large and very powerful looking, this was something Slade would always pay good money for; it was all black, including the leather seating, the only other colourings being the silver steel of the exhaust and the vibrant red writing just above the front wheel that stated the vehicle's make.

Slade wore a pair of black jeans, protective gloves, a leather jacket, this one thicker than his usual in case he fell or was pushed off as Slade was always prepared for danger. Lastly, he wore a dark helmet with tinted glass which he pulled off once he stopped and got off the bike, placing the helmet on the fuel tank which sat between the seat and the handlebars, having moved down the metal balance stand to keep the bike upright.

"Beautiful," Thea sighed happily.

"Why thank you," Slade held a hand over his heart, making his way around the bike to stand in front of the family. At Thea's glare he turned back to the bike. "These things are more fun to drive back in Australian, a lot more space, but this city is a nice challenge." Upon turning back around he spotted Moira. "Madam," he bowed his head, "I take it that you must be Moira," he removed his glove before holding out his hand. "It's a pleasure."

Moira was a little overwhelmed but the suddenness of this man's existence, but she shook his hand. "Slade, I take it?"

Slade nodded. "Yeah," he smiled, "It's nice to meet you but I have to get Thea to work. Sorry for having to cut this meeting short."

Moira smiled back. Slade was very polite and her children seemed know him quite well, although her mothering instincts still told her to be wary. "It was nice to meet you too." An idea formed in her head, she smiled, "What are you doing for Dinner tonight?"

Slade was surprised. "Eating at home I guess, why?"

"You are welcome to join us for dinner. Eight o'clock."
"Sounds wonderful," he smiled, he had a feeling this was either going to go very well or very badly. "I'll get directions from Oliver," he pointed out, just in case the two siblings got their observant nature from their mother. Slade turned to Oliver and gave a light smile, the kind that he reserved for his boyfriend and Oliver smiled back. Slade then turned to Thea, "Ready?" he asked.

"Yes," she looked up at Slade, whereas before she had been looking at the bike nervously.

"If you don't want to..."

"I want to!" she blurted.

Slade shook his head, letting out a light chuckle. "Alright, alright," he held his hands up in surrender. Slade turned around and took the spare helmet that was strapped to his motorbike, he held it out to her and she took it. "Just pull it on," he mimed pulling the helmet down. When she did so, Slade reached out and pulled the helmet down to make sure it had gone all the way. Pleased, he asked, "Comfortable?" to which he received a nod.

Slade took his glove from the leather seat and pulled it on as he walked around the bike, seeing as how the stand it stood on was on the other side. He kicked the metal stand back, holding the handles to keep the bike standing; he climbed on, keeping his legs on the floor to keep the bike upright.

Thea stood there for a minute, looking at the bike as if it were a nine foot fence someone had told her she had to vault over.

Slade smirked and held out an arm like he was going in for a one armed hug, making a 'come here' gesture with his fingers. Once Thea was standing next to him, he wrapped an arm around her hip. "Hold on to my shoulder," Slade told her and once she had a good grip he lifted her up. Turning his body, he placed her on the seat; thankfully, she had seen what he was doing and moved her legs around the bike instead of letting them get trapped under herself. "You good?" he asked.

Thea gave him a double thumbs-up. Slade could tell she was still nervous, but he could also tell that she was a brave one.

Slade smiled at Thea, then he turned to Moira, "She'll be fine," and finally he turned to Oliver. "I'll see you later," he smiled.
Oliver smiled. "See you later."

Slade's smile grew. He took the helmet from where it balanced on the fuel tank and pulled it on, his strong legs keeping the bike still, the same way his arms had lifted Thea with ease, never shaking.

The bike growled as it came to life, sounding low and gravelly like it's master, a warning of its quick and powerful nature.

Slade tapped one of Thea's arms with his index and middle fingers. She seemed to understand what he meant because in the next second Thea had wrapped her arms around Slade's middle, keeping a tight grip of the front of his jacket and her legs around the bike. Slade smiled under the helmet and not long after, the pair were whizzing off into the distance.

Oliver smiled, watching as his boyfriend went off with his sister. Oliver's smile turned into a frown, remembering when he had done that with Sara. He had just wanted to end his Relationship with Laurel without having to explain why, and being a man whore was a good cover. He'd never meant to kill her. Oliver mentally shook his head before putting on his best smile, getting it on his second attempt, and turning back to his mother. "Thank you for inviting Slade to dinner."

Moira pulled her eyes away from where the bike had shot off to, not that she could see it anymore, anyway. "He is a friend of yours, and Thea's too, it seems."

Oliver gave a light laugh. "Thea was a little unsure at the beginning but those two are carbon copies of each other, it was only a matter of time."

Moira looked at her son questionably. "Really?"

Oliver nodded. "Complete clones. Slade is very polite, but get to know him more and you'll see the two have the same attitude."

--

Slade and Thea both knew that the text message had been made up, but when they got to their destination, Thea realised that she still had a half an hour free with nothing to do.

"Ah, best laid plans and all that."
Thea cocked a brow at the Australian.

"To endure the winter's sleety dribble and hoar-frost cold. But little mouse, you are not alone, in proving foresight may be vain: The best laid schemes of mice and men go often awry."

Thea paused for a second in thought. "You can't get everything right?" she asked.

Slade nodded. "And you can't prepare for the unexpected."

Thea snorted. "You should have been a teacher," she gave him her helmet, "you taught Oliver Russian."

Slade cocked a brow and smirked. "Is that your way of saying you want me to teach it to you?"

Thea's eyebrows shot up then she glared at the man. "Mind reader."

"It'll give you something to do anyway," he said, picking his own helmet off from the seat, preferring not to leave the helmets out in the open.

Thea shook her head at the man. "Follow me."

--

Laurel and her friend Jamie, who also worked at CNRI, were talking about a case when James, also a lawyer, came into the room.

"Hey," he said in greeting, "Who's the Australian dude with Thea?"

"Who?" Jamie asked, she looked back to Laurel.
Laurel was confused; she stood and went to have a see for herself. Jamie followed, and James lead the way.

The three lawyers arrived at the staff room. It was just a small room, with two brown sofas, a wooden table with a couple of chairs around it and a kitchenette with a coffee machine, a cupboard full of mugs and a sink. Thea and the man sat at the table. He was the kind of man Laurel had always been into; he sat with one foot balanced on his knee, one hand in his lap and the other arm laying on the table, so relaxed and open, oozing confidence. Leather and jeans not really hiding that muscular body of his, with the boots and the hair making him look military, and the helmets on the table meant that he had a motorbike. He was older, forty maybe but he didn't really look it, dark hair and eyes and tanned skin. All in all, he was a sexy badass, with a deep, almost coarse Australian accent speaking what could have been Russian, maybe... Okay, now Laurel wasn't saying she was expert of languages or anything, but the Australian accent made the Russian sound weird - sexy, but weird.

Thea repeated the phrase Slade had just said, although her words were slow and spaced apart, trying to get used to the words. Slade repeated the phrase, then Thea did too. This time she just said the sentence, getting confused and messing up the last word, but she quickly re-said the word, getting it right.

"Impressive," Laurel said, drawing their eyes towards her. "Who's your friend?" she asked, looking at the Aussie.

"Slade," he said, holding up his hand in a motionless wave.

Laurel gave a light smile. "Nice to meet you."

"Mum had to go to work early," Thea explained, "Slade gave me a lift," she gave a huge smile, her white teeth showing. "He's teaching me Russian," she said, sounding ecstatic.

"Soon you and Oliver will be able to have your own little language," Slade gave a warm smile. He was no real fan of teaching, but he liked Thea and he knew his boyfriend would likely enjoy his sister's new talent.

"Wait," Laurel said, eyebrows low almost like she was glaring, she held up her hands to signal a pause in the conversation, "Oliver knows Russian?"

"I taught him years back," Slade said in a nonchalant manner.
Now Laurel was confused. "You knew him years ago?" irritation light, but there in her voice.

"I was in the navy," Slade explained, "I had to leave so we stayed in contact with letters. We did not know if we were going to stay in contact so we never bothered with telling anyone, I guess," the man crossed his arms. He was very protective of Oliver, Thea too.

"Okay," Laurel nodded in understanding, "but how come he never brought up the Russian? It seems like something he would show off," she commented.

Slade kept a still face. Who was she? A detective or something? Slade shrugged, "When I was here Oliver and I were close friends and he was not too happy about me leaving. Maybe he just lost interest in the language." Attempting to change the subject, Slade smiled and turned to Thea, "Just be glad I'm not teaching you the same way I did Oliver."

"Why?" Thea asked, leaning forward in interest.

"I had a friend here I was living with, he and I would only talk Russian when Oliver was around, which annoyed Oliver immensely," The Australian grinned. "Just when he was starting to get it, we switched to Mandarin," he gave a light chuckle, "He was not happy."

Thea laughed and lightly punched Slade in the arm. "Dick."

"Funny, your brother said the same thing," Slade said, making a clearly fake intrigued face by raising his eyebrows, however the light pout and the amused look in his eyes was the give-away.

Thea just laughed again.

"Anyway," Slade slapped his thighs, his hands making a dull thump, thump, before he stood. "I should get going. Do you want a lift home after work?"

Thea shot out of her chair. "Yes!" she tucked her hair behind her ear shyly, "If you can, that is..."
"That's fine," he picked up his helmet. "Keep your helmet for now."

Thea nodded, "Slade?"

"Yeah."

"What does loshad mean?" she asked.

Slade's eyebrows lowered, not yet a glare, then he shook his head. "Oliver told you that, hm?"

"What does it mean?" Thea pushed.

Slade sighed. "Horse. Old nickname," he mumbled, so the lawyers couldn't hear.

"Horse?" she whispered.

Slade pointed at his hair, leaning down so Thea could reach.

"Oh my God," she smirked, running her fingers through the wiry hair, "Just like a horse's mane," she giggled, trying to keep her voice low.

"Never talk of this again," Slade warned, which sounded practically light hearted, even in his gravelly voice.

Thea pouted, before giving him a light smile. "Okay," she held up her fist, awaiting a fist bump, "Only because I like you."

Slade smirked and fist bumped her. "I'll see you later."

Thea smiled, then her face turned serious, she stood straight and saluted the man.
Slade resisted shaking his head, instead he stood straight himself and gave a salute back at her, although his was of the British variety, as that was the salute used in Australia. The only difference was that distance between the hand and the face was greater in the Australian salute. After a second Slade dropped the stand, smirking, and ruffled Thea's hair with his free hand. She squeaked. "See ya, kid," he said, turning and leaving the room.

"Yeah, see ya," she growled, fixing her hair, but the lack of malice in her voice and the smile on her face said that she was not angry.

Laurel, Jamie and James watched Slade leave before turning back to Thea.

Thea picked up her helmet. "Need help with anything?" she asked, "And where can I put this?"

--

Oliver and Diggle were sitting on a park bench; the blonde sat with his arms hanging limply at his side. His head had fallen back onto the back support of the bench and he had Slade's scarf draped over his head, over all he was exhausted.

"Okay, what did she say exactly?" Diggle asked.

Oliver groaned.

"It can't be that bad," the older man continued.

"She asked if Slade and Thea were dating," Oliver mumbled.

Diggle blinked, a little taken back. "Oh," he said, "What did you say?"

"I froze," the blonde sighed, "So she thinks it's true, I tried to tell her but she thinks I'm lying."
"Well..." Diggle paused, trying to think what Felicity would say. Although she may have seemed haphazard, she was a very intelligent woman and a great advice giver. "At least your mother can get used to the idea of one of her kid's dating a forty year old navy man."

"Great," Oliver said sarcastically.

Then an idea hit Diggle. "You could tell her Slade is gay."

Oliver sat up at that, scarf falling into his lap. "That would work," he said.

"She might even figure out the two of you are dating," Diggle commented.

Oliver nodded, a smile pulling his lips, "Or, more than likely, Slade will just tell her."

Diggle grinned. "Please pass the salt. Oh and I'm dating your son."

Oliver laughed, "Yeah, that sounds about right."

Diggle laughed.

Oliver turned to look at his bodyguard/comrade and not far from being a real friend. After years of only trusting three people, of knowing that everyone else was out to kill him, Oliver found it hard to trust people. Tommy and Thea were trusted straight away, they were his family, but Oliver's mother was hiding things from her son and that made her difficult to trust. For everyone else new and old, trust had to be earned. Minus Slade, Yao Fei and Shado also if Oliver ever saw them again, which Slade said was likely, they were family too. Oliver like Diggle and Felicity, the two were honest, both had a gentle nature and Oliver knew he trusted them to have his back. They were his friends.

Oliver smiled, he was happy to see his friend happy. Since Deadshot's resurfacing Diggle had been in a noticeably low mood, his only real spark of life being the need for revenge. Slade had known of Floyd Lawton from his years in the ASIS; apparently, the "little fucker" had shot an accomplice in a human trafficking ring, having been hired by the leader to stop the man from leaking secrets. The people involved had disbanded, it took three years, but they believed they had finally found and had the evidence to commit the main people involved. However, they would have known for sure and would have got them all sooner had the accomplice not been shot.
"I'll grab him," Slade had said, "You shoot him."

--

Slade and Thea arrived at the Queen manor. Dinner would not be for another hour, but it saved Slade from going and coming back later.

Thea slid off the bike before pulling off her helmet, she spotted Diggle's black car. "Oliver's home," she said, "It looks like Diggle is here too. You've met Diggle, right?" she turned to the Australian.

Slade, who had turned off the bike and placed it on its balance stand while Thea had been talking, took off his helmet. "Yes," he said, "Nice bloke."

Thea smiled. "Let's go then. I'd offer you a tour, but I'm pretty sure you already know your way around."

Slade smirked.

--

Diggle and Oliver were just in the front room, drinking coffee and chatting about the next person on the list, when they heard the bike pull up. A minute later, the front door opened and there was Slade and Thea.

"Hey," Thea gave a light wave, making her way over to the two men. Slade followed behind her, after he placed their helmets on a table near the front door.

"Hello," Diggle smiled politely, standing to seem more professional.

Oliver stood as well. "Hey," he said, his eyes on Slade and teasing smile on his face.
Slade understood and smiled back. "Hey," he said in a soft voice, walking over to Oliver and giving him a peck on the lips.

"Wh-what..." Thea was shocked. Swiftly looking at Diggle, she found he was a little surprised but not shocked. "So, you're in the loop?"

Diggle rubbed the back of his neck, this was a little awkward. "Yes," he simply said.

Thea shook her head, looking at Slade, who now stood next to Oliver. "You could have warned... You planned that!"

Slade held a hand over his heart, "I did not." Technically, Oliver did.

Oliver gave a light laugh, as did Diggle, managing to hide the sound, his shaking shoulders and the smile pulling at his lips the only indication of his laughter.

Thea looked back up from the joined hands they hid between their bodies. "I will," she smiled.

The clicking of a pair of heels signalled the arrival of Moira and upon hearing it Oliver pulled his hand away.

Slade was disappointed, but he kept a perfectly straight face, just letting his hand fall down limply at
"Miss Queen," Diggle greeted.

"Ma'am," Slade dipped his head lightly in a bow, looking more like a slow nod.

Diggle cocked a brow and looked at the older man from the corner of his eye.

--

Slade and Oliver lay on Slade's bed, naked and covered in honey. The TV and their mobiles were switched off, the phone was unplugged, the door was locked, the blinds were down and the curtains were closed.

"Fuck," Slade said, "This week was insane."

"Yeah," Oliver agreed, crawling onto Slade's chest, wrapping his arms around the older man's ribs.

Slade hugged his lover, resting his chin on the blonde head, and smiled.

Today was Sunday, the last day of the week, one hell of a week. And as with all weeks, to Slade anyway, it started with a Monday: the Monday when Slade had dinner with the Queens.
Monday

Chapter Notes

First day of the week and things are already getting interesting, well I just hope you guys agree. :)

Dinner was understandably awkward, for Moira and Oliver anyway. Slade could feel it in the air but kept up telling Thea about all the places he had been, as per her demand.

"Africa?" Thea asked.

"Yes." was all he said.

"Middle East?"

"Yes. A lot."

"You going to tell me what any of these places were like?" she grinned.

"I was busy working," Slade pointed out. "Unless you want to know about the weaponry, I can't help you," he gently stabbed his fork into lamb meat, so as not to scratch the plate, followed by a bit of sweet potato. The meat and vegetable, both of which had a light covering of gravy, made the man smile as it touched his tongue; the taste was just the right mixture of flavours. Then again, his giddy nature could have been from being sat between two of his favourite people, one of which had his foot pressed close to Slade's, in apology for snatching his hand back earlier.

"Why were you there?" she asked. "In," she rolled her wrist in a circular movement, as if somehow, magically the word would appear "all those places?"

Slade placed his fork down, expecting the conversation would last a while. "It's all political, most of which-"
Before he could say "I can't tell you," Thea said "Is classified," she grinned, sounding excited with a look of amusement in her eyes.

"Kinda," Slade smirked at her.

"Just admit it."

Slade looked raised a brow at that.

"You're a spy."

Oliver paused in his chewing, very near almost choking. Thea was not far off.

Slade chuckled lightly before saying "Kinda," grinning in a manner that let her know he was clearly joking. Thank the Gods that Slade could act.

"More a ninja," Oliver said, "Given your obsession with the whole asian culture."

"Maybe I just like black," Slade smiled "It is slimming." Those words just sounded plain wrong in his deep, rough voice.

"You would look fabulous," Oliver grinned.

Thea faked a grimace at the sudden mental image. "God, you in skinny jeans would just look weird," she said, holding a hand up to Slade, her beaded bracelets sliding down her arm.

Oliver smirked at that. "What did you say when you first saw Slade?"

"I don't remember," Thea said, turning away and taking a large gulp of water from her glass.

"Yeah, you do," Oliver's smirk grew.
"No, I don't."

"Yes, you do."

Slade said nothing, just leaned in his chair and turned his head side to side, as if he was watching a tennis match, as the two siblings spoke between themselves. Moira, who Slade could not help but remember was still there, sat watching as well.

"Something about a nice ass?"

Slade cocked a brow, looking at the youngest Queen.

"Wha- No!" Thea stammered, "I did not!" She pointed at Slade, "I did not," she then glared at her brother. The look in his eyes said that he would go on so she sighed. "I said that you were good looking," she said, looking Slade in the eyes, her head held high.

"I'm pretty sure the sentence was 'Oh God was he good looking',' Oliver gasped dramatically. Oliver looked over to his mother, who just watched the scene unfold, food completely forgotten. "No wonder mum thought you two were dating," he commented.

"What?" the two said at the same time. Thea had a deadpan expression while Slade looked more amused than anything.

Thea looked at her mother. "Why would you think that?"

"You seemed very close," Moira said, sitting back and trying hard to resist the urge to pull her sleeves over her hands much like her daughter did when she was uncomfortable. "So you're not?" she asked, looking at her daughter, then Slade.

"I'm gay," Slade said, without even a flicker of embarrassment or worry.

"Oh," Moira said. What else could she really say? "That's... Unexpected," she smiled, still feeling a
"You see," said Thea, "he'd more likely go for Oliver then me," she pointed out.

Oliver, realising this was revenge for before, placed his forehead on the table, hoping that his mother would believe his actions were more from embarrassment then stopping her from seeing the truth in his eyes, that he and Slade were more than just friends.

"Trying to get the image out of your head?" Slade asked, grin pulling at his lips. Under the table Slade grasped Oliver's hand gently from where it lay on his thigh.

"Oh God," Oliver covered his eyes with his spare hand. Who said he could not act just as well as the dark haired pair?

Slade gave a grin, his 'planning evil plans of evilness' grin, dubbed unsurprisingly so by Felicity. "Come on honey, it's not that bad," he said in a teasing manner.

Slade did not need to put emphasis on the word honey, the joke "we're in a relationship" was clear from simply saying the word. Thea and Moira would laugh, Oliver would give a malice free glare and that would be that. However Slade had said honey, not babe, darling, sweetheart or any of the obviously cute nicknames that could be used for the joke. The only time Slade ever called Oliver honey was back on the Island, when he was hinting that tonight he would like to fill Oliver with the thick golden liquid and so on...

Oliver's face flushed red, he sat up straight "How is it that I was on an Island for five years and you're the socially inept one?"

Slade smiled, loving how flustered he had made the younger man. "It was worth it to see that face."

Oliver couldn't help but laugh at that. "You dick," he said, reaching forward to grab the older man.

Slade grabbed hold of his wrists, holding him in place. He chuckled, just as he had the first day they had met when Oliver had punched him after getting out of that chair. Oliver had always been the most fun to annoy; he tried so hard to stay calm but you knew when something was getting to him because his left eyebrow would angrier he got the more it twitched, until he lost it. But Oliver was smart and when he lost it his face would go completely still like he was planning something, which
around Slade was likely a good idea.

Oliver attempted to get loose for a second before he started laughing, near hiccupping from the rush of laughter. It only lasted for a couple of seconds before he let his head fall forward onto Slade’s chest, his shoulders still shaking. "This," he said, pausing to catch his breath, "This is why I’ve missed you," Oliver smiled. Oliver leaned back into his seat, Slade thankfully letting go of his wrists as he did so. He placed a hand over his eyes again, feeling the heat radiating off his face. The blonde chuckled lightly, not sure that he should be or why he still was, but he couldn't help it.

"Inside joke."

Slade's voice made Oliver notice the silence in the room. Oliver removed his hand to see his mother looking at him with wide turned to his sister who was smiling, looking a little confused and taken back by the whole thing, but smiling none the less.

"Sorry," Oliver said, feeling a little embarrassed.

"No," Moira smiled lightly, "It's good to hear you laughing," her smile grew.

Oliver looked away and ran his hand through his short hair, willing the heat in his face and the embarrassment that caused it away. He felt Slade stroke the top of his hand under the table, an oddly gentle movement, an apology in case he had pushed it too far. His face, Oliver knew would be completely unmoving to keep up the ruse, but he was sorry. Oliver linked their fingers, squeezing the large tanned hand in his.

"Best eat your food or it will go cold, honey."

"Keep calling me that and I will punch you."

Slade chuckled and stroked Oliver's hand slowly with his thumb.

--

Slade made his way back into the sitting room (having left to use the bath room), to find the two
Queen siblings sitting on one of the sofas; Thea was pointing at a range of DVDs spread across the coffee table, which Oliver looked a little annoyed by.

"Dare I ask?" Slade asked Moira as she came towards him, offering an open beer. "Thank you," he added, taking the green glass bottle with a light smile.

"You're welcome," she said, sounding a lot less tense than before now that she had gotten used to the man's presence. He was a nice man, a little mysterious, but her children certainly thought the world of him. Moira was not a stupid woman, she knew he was acting differently around her, softer and more polite then he likely was in reality, but Oliver and Thea did shine light on his coarse outside, showing bits of his hidden personality. A more sarcastic and crass person, that did care for the siblings in his own little way and that's all Moira could really ask for when it came down to it.

"Thea is once again attempting to catch Oliver up on the pop culture he has missed," Moira continued, looking at her two children fondly, eyes catching on Oliver. She was still in shock that he had laughed like that, she had not heard her son laugh so openly and with genuine joy in years and oh, did it warm her heart so. Maybe that was why she had welcomed this man to stay the night, maybe be he could guide Oliver just that little further out of his shell, maybe...

"You wouldn't happen to know who Oliver is seeing, would you?" She asked.

Slade's beer stilled in place, a few inches from his full lips. "Oliver told you?" he smiled, his bright white teeth on display. "That's good to hear. And yes I do but I don't really think Oliver would want me to tell you. Not right now anyway," he added, before taking a swig of his beer.

"Is she good for him?" she asked.

Slade did not know how to answer that. His smile fell and he thought about what to say for a second before answering. "Honestly..." he turned his head to watch Oliver and his sister, the latter of which did not look like she was going to let her brother go anytime soon. "I hope so. It's hard to say," he turned back to Moira, "I do know however, that she would never mean to hurt Oliver, she loves him more than anything," he smiled reassuringly.

Moira nodded, it was the most she had gotten out of anyone about the mysterious woman, but she had one more question. "Does he love her?" she asked.

Slade kept his face still in a smile, even if inside he felt like his organs were slowly rotting into
nothing but putrid slosh. "I like to think so, yes." Even if Oliver did, in time he would come to realise that was a mistake.

Moira looked into Slade’s dark eyes with an unexplainable emotion before nodding, as if finally understanding something. The light frown that pulled at her lips said it was not something good.

Now Slade was the one in the dark. "Something on your mind?" he asked.

"Nothing to worry about," she said.

Slade did not push the subject, even if it did leave him wondering. Instead he made his way over to the two siblings. "Hey," he greeted the pair, taking a seat on the sofa next to the one they were sat on. He didn’t say anymore, figuring the pair would likely drag him into the conversation.

"Slade, please make Oliver social," Thea pleaded, throwing her arms up in frustration.

"Lost cause I’m afraid," Slade told her and took a sip from his beer.

"Funny," Oliver mumbled, eyes still scanning over the DVD collection.

"What do you think Oliver would enjoy?" Thea asked, raising her hand up to the DVDs.

"The blind leading the blind," Oliver commented.

"True," Slade grinned and turned to Thea. "I’m about a year behind him," he said, waving a hand in Oliver direction.

"How?" Thea asked, looking down at the carpet, eyebrows knitted together in confusion. "He," Thea started, pointing at her brother, "has an excuse. What have you been up to?"

"Being a spy takes its toll," Slade gave a sad sigh.
"No wonder you're not in the navy anymore, it sounds like a total bitch." Thea commented.

"You're not in the navy anymore?" Moira asked, taking a seat on one of the large cushioned chairs.

Slade nodded. "The last few years were, as you Americans say; A total bitch."

Thea grinned.

"You two should just go to the beach," Slade commented, waving his beer from Oliver to Thea, "a bit of bonding."

"Now that's an idea!" Thea gave her large Cheshire cat, 'I've got you trapped' grin at her less than amused brother.

"He's Australian. That's his answer for everything," Oliver pointed out, attempting to throw the idea out the window, but he knew there would be indestructible glass waiting there to take every hit, in the form two dark haired pains in the ass. "Got a broken leg? Go to the beach. Bit by a shark?" he exaggerated, "Go to the beach. Just found out you have a STD? Go to the beach."

"I'm not sure about the first two but the third could be true. If you have crabs, they'll want to go home," Slade said with a completely straight face.

Moira shook her head, a smile pulling at her lips.

Oliver glared at his boyfriend. It was like the last few moments in a game of chess, there were only so many moves Oliver could make, but it didn't matter because either way he was going to lose.

Thea laughed hard, leaning back into the sofa and grabbing her belly with one hand from the sudden stitch that was pulling at her muscles.

"Okay Oliver, I'll give you a deal," Slade offered, raising his palm up as if the deal was sitting invisible on his hand. "You don't have to go and we'll never bring it up again."
Oliver cocked a brow.

"There's a large mirror in the bathroom," Slade said. "If the skin of your arm is darker then the skin of your arse, you don't have to go."

Thea held her giggles back behind her hand.

Oliver had to admit he had a point. "Fine," he said.

"I have no school this week and I have tomorrow off. Let's go," Thea said with a grin. Oh she had him trapped. "You can come too," She said to Slade, and didn't that grin just grow.

"Um?" Slade's eyebrows shot up.

"Well," the grin surely could not get any bigger at this point, but it did become more devilish, "it would be unfair to have to take Diggle to look after Oliver and I when we have a perfectly good naval commander who suggested the whole idea."

Slade was taken back for a second but then he grinned. She had trapped the both of them. "Oh mini me," he sighed happily, "you are so perfect."

"How am I ever going to survive with the two of you?" Oliver questioned.

"You're not," Thea said simply. Without looking she raised a hand up to Slade.

Slade smirked and high fived her.

Moira just watched the whole display, having no idea what so ever of what to feel. So for now she would let things play out and wait to see what would happen next. Before she did that however, she needed to speak with Oliver. There was something he should know.
The rest of the night went by smoothly; the family and their guest chatted together in the living room until past for Oliver the idea of watching a film had been forgotten about, though the idea of going to the beach had not. Also, due to the lateness and the alcohol Slade had consumed, Moira offered him a room for the night, which he accepted with polite gratitude. The nature of Slade's crass yet very polite personality was unusual but, and Moira would not admit this, likeable. He was a rough and mysterious, yet kind and funny individual.

"Oliver," Moira called to her son as she came down the staircase, "A word."

"Sure," Oliver said, feeling curious.

Thea was showing Slade a free room as per Moira's request, so the ground floor was empty aside from the mother and son.

Moira took a seat at the sofa a few strides away from the bottom of the stairs and held out her arm in 'please sit' gesture.

Oliver took a seat opposite her. "Mom, what's wrong?" he asked, a little confused.

"I don't mind you and Thea going away with Slade. He seems like a good guy," She started, "but I think there is something you should know first."

"Okay," Oliver said, patting his legs. "Go for it."

"Slade likes you," Moira said.

The thumping of Oliver's heart quickened. "Okay?"

"The way he looks at you, the way he talks about you," she listed, "he smiles every time you speak and always sticks close to you." The sad look in his eyes when she asked if Oliver loved his girlfriend. She sighed, "Oliver, he likes you. I just want you to understand that."
The words 'I like him too' pulled at his mouth, wanting so badly to come out, but he couldn't do it. Oliver shook his head with a grin. "First Thea and now me," he joked.

"As much as I hate to admit it..." Moira smiled weakly, "It's good having him around, for you and Thea. If you let him think that there's a chance for much longer, you may lose him as a friend all together," she warned.

Her words were of no use, seeing as she didn't understand what was really happening, but it did make Oliver think. He wanted to be seen standing close to his boyfriend by his mother and his friends, he wanted to hold Slade's hand as they walked down the street, he didn't want Slade to be a secret. Oliver may have not been leading Slade on the way his mother thought he was, but in another way he was; being with him and then hiding that relationship away when he was in public. It was just plain unfair. They had trained, worked and fought together for over four friendship and the relationship they had built in the few moments of freedom had given them an unbreakable bond. Slade would not give up on being with Oliver if he was hidden away a little longer, but he shouldn't have to.

"I have misled a lot of people in my life," Oliver said, remembering his countless relationships that should have never been. He looked his mother in the eyes. "I will never do that to Slade."

--

Oliver walked down the hall, following the sound of Slade's voice. Turning the corner he found the older man was talking on his mobile.

"Yes for tomorrow night. If we need the room for longer, can we tell you that night or the following morning?" Spotting Oliver from the corner of his eye he turned and gave the younger man a smile. He then pointed to a door belonging to one of the spare rooms.

Oliver returned the smile and headed inside.

Thea sat cross-legged with her laptop on her lap on the spare double bed. Spotting her brother, she waved him over.

Oliver closer the door softly behind him, so as not to disturb Slade, and sat down with his sister on the bed.
She opened a tab to the website of a hotel in New Jersey. The pictures showed a rather attractive interior with cream walls and white staircases, a large bar area and a few pictures of the beach – or possibly beaches, Oliver wasn't sure-, nearby. "It's real close to Bay Head beach, which doesn't allow food and most others things, so it shouldn't be as crowded as most beaches," she said, smiling at the screen.

"You're really looking forward to this, aren't you?" Oliver asked.

"It's gonna be a lot of fun, Ollie," her smile grew.

Oliver frowned, touching the one of the larger scars on his chest.

"Okay," Slade said, walking into the room, "the room is booked. We have a room on the second floor, two bedrooms, two double beds," he said.

"I'll go with Slade, I'm used to his octopus ways," Oliver said, smirking.

"Hello pot, I'm kettle, you're black," Slade shot back, then he turned to Thea. "Do you want me to get you a night light along the way or do you want to bring some of your stuffed animals?"

Thea looked at her brother, who looked back at her. After a few seconds they nodded, turned to Slade in unison and said "Dick."

Slade chuckled.

Thea's phone started vibrating on the bed, indicating she had a call "Back in a sec," she said, picking up the phone and exiting the room.

"Rather late to be getting a call," Slade commented.

--

"Who are you calling?" Tommy asked his girlfriend with a yawn.
"Thea," Laurel said, eyebrows knitted together. "She sent me a text asking if we could talk as soon as possible."

"Odd," Tommy commented.

"Yeah it- Thea? Hey," Laurel smiled lightly. "What's wrong?" she asked. After a few seconds she held up her hand as if that would make Thea pause in what she was saying. "The beach?"

Tommy raised a brow.

"You're taking Oliver to the beach?" she smiled. "That sound great, when?" she listened for a few seconds, then she grinned. "Oh I see. Yes, you can have tomorrow off. Have fun. Night."

"The beach? How did she manage that?" Tommy pondered, rubbing his chin as if he had an invisible goatee.

"Maybe that Slade guy helped," she pointed out.

"Oliver's bodyguard mentioned him. Still haven't met this guy," he said, crossing his arms.

Laurel blinked "Wait," She said, "You don't know him?"

"Never heard of him until last week, no idea when Oliver met him."

"Five years ago."

Tommy lowered his brows. "Come again?"

Laurel took a seat next to him on the sofa. "They met five years ago. He taught Oliver Russian."
Tommy shrugged his shoulders. "Never heard of the guy."

"Nobody has..." Laurel looked down in thought. Spotting her phone, she got an idea. "Let's see what dad can find out."

--

Detective Lance stretched his arms out until his shoulders popped, it was about time he headed home. He mobile chimed and buzzed on his desk. He raised a brow, but grabbed it nonetheless. 'Laurel', it read. What could she want at... Lance glanced at the cheap plastic clock hanging on the wall, after this call he was going home. "Hello," he said into the mouthpiece, a smile pulling at his lips.

"Hey dad. Can you help me with something?"

Lance tensed in his chair, worry bubbling in his stomach. "Okay."

"Could you run a background check on someone for me?"

"Name?" he asked without hesitation, reaching for his mouse and shaking it left and right until the computer awoke.

"Slade Wilson."

"Odd name," he commented, typing it into the search engine.

Laurel laughed lightly. "Tell me about it. He's about forty, Australian and in the Navy."

"Found him," Lance said, eyeing the man in the picture. "What do you want to know?" he asked.

"Anything you can tell me, especially about where he's been in the past five years."
Detective Lance typed away for about half a minute before he said "That's weird."

"What is it?" she asked.

"Wilson was in the Navy from age 18 to thirty-one but he was not honourably or dishonourably discharged, he took a job with specialised training."

"How special?"

"I can't tell at this point but it looks like he went away to do it and..." a notice appeared on the screen when he clicked to try to find out more. "It's classified."

"Classified?"

"By the ASIS?"

"Who?"

Lance typed for a few more seconds before saying "The Australian Secret Intelligence Service? What the hell..." he frowned but was determined to find out more. He looked into Wilson's credit history and found something interesting. "Now this is really odd."

"Go on."

"Wilson has multiple accounts and goes without using his accounts for months at a time. A lot of the time he's moving money to different accounts which I can't track," he said, "But the weirdest thing of all is that he stopped using his accounts altogether on September, and starting using them again in March."

"What's weird about that?"

"The six years of absolutely no use in-between," Lance sat back in his seat, trying to figure out what was going on.
Laurel gasped. "That's not possible," she said, "I know someone who said they met him here in Starling City five years ago."

"Your friend is lying," Lance said, eyeing the dates on the screen. "He last used one of his accounts six years ago in China."

"China..." she repeated.

"He's been using a hotel here for two weeks, then he bought a place in the glades," he glanced down to the last thing Wilson had bought. "And he's just paid for a double room in a hotel in New Jersey."

Laurel did not reply.

"Laurel? What's wrong?" Lance asked, concerned

"This guy is just full of mysteries," she said. "Please tell me if you find out anything more."

Lance sighed. "Please tell me you're not after this guy."

"I'm not. He's just one weird guy."

--

Slade, Oliver and Thea stayed up for a while longer, chatting about what to do when they got to New Jersey, before Slade decided enough was enough.

"I never thought I would be the responsible adult, but we need to get to bed," Slade said, standing up off the bed.

"It doesn't suit you," Oliver said. "I'm the only one here who hasn't used drugs," he realised.
Slade clicked his fingers at Thea. "Write that down, we'll have to get back to that."

"Wait, what did you do?" Thea asked.

"Weed."

"That's not that bad."

"For about ten years."

Thea was taken back by that. "Wow," she said, "How did you never get found out?"

"I was always sober when I was in the Navy," he said.

"What were you running away from?" she asked.

Slade blinked, she was a rather clever young woman. "Loss of family. Christmas was the worst," he said.

She nodded. "I understand. Who'd you lose?"

"Thea." Oliver scolded.

"It's alright," Slade said, sitting back on the bed. "I was fourteen. Australia is warm all year round so one night in the winter I went camping with some friends," he smiled sadly. "Christmas is great for family gatherings, especially in our house, seeing as it had a lot of bedrooms," he said. "Family gatherings, however, are not good for a methane leak. I lost all of them."

Thea froze, not knowing what to say.
"The trick is to keep the memory of those you have lost and cherish those you have left," he smirked. "From my cousin, from Canada, who became a brother," he looked over to Oliver, "to those who, although they have no blood relation, treat you like family," he smiled.

--

Slade switched on the lamp, which brought light to the pitch-black room. Not that he minded the dark but the light had the advantage of giving him sight. Removing everything but his boxers, he took the rest of his clothes, folded them neatly and placed them on top of the Chester drawers, minus his boots that sat next to the large wooden set of drawers. Spotting his iPhone on the side table, next to the lamp, he picked it up and set an alarm. He was not very big on technology, but he had to admit he liked his phone. Mobiles had come a long way since he'd been gone. Lastly, he slipped his legs under the covers and propped his back up with pillows, as the headboard was made up of a pattern of cold, black metal.

Slade sat for about a minute and a half in wait before he heard movement behind the door and smirked lightly as the handle turned.

"Hey," Oliver said as he opened the door, slipping in before turning and ever so gently shutting the door behind him.

"Hey," Slade said, giving his boyfriend a light smile.

Oliver returned the smile and made his way to the bed. When he got there, Slade moved aside and pulled the overs back for him. Oliver quickly pulled off his pyjamas and climbed inside, wrapping his arms around Slade's waist.

"Christ, you're cold," Slade said. Without a second thought, the older man slid under the covers and grabbed hold of Oliver; one hand on his shoulder and the other on his hip. He then manoeuvred Oliver into straddling his lap and pulled the younger man's chest to his, running his warm hands up and down Oliver's back, who arched his back slightly every time Slade dipped down the slope of his spine.

Oliver lent up and kissed Slade's full lips before he tucked his head under the older man's chin and wrapped his arms around his ribs. "Goodnight," he very near mumbled, energy quickly leaking from his body, his eyelids becoming heavy.
"Goodnight Oliver," Slade said, one arm curled protectively around Oliver's ribs, the other moved to turn off the lamp, which was thankfully just in reach, before slowly petting the dirty blonde hair.

Oliver unsurprisingly fell asleep quickly, a blissful smile plastered across his face.
Due to writing more then I was meant to, the chapter "Tuesday" will be spilt into two parts, this being part one. Also on a side note I have realised that I can not fit in certain ideas (nothing to due with the plot, just a few fun moments) So I will be starting a second Slade/Oliver story to put the ideas there, I don't know how far that story will go but we will see.

Oliver (as seen on the show) does have a Chinese writing tattoo down his side, I looked it up:

'It seems to consist of a bunch of random characters which do not make sense when put together. Individually, the characters mean "mouse", "ginger", "Yao" (normally used as a surname), and "pig".' I found this out of a site and decided to change it to help with the story.

- Lian Yu -

In winter it snowed, just as it did in Philadelphia; the snow came quickly, and long before it stopped it would become impossible to get around without calling someone to get the roads cleared. Oliver liked snow, or maybe he had just gotten used to it, but either way he could not deny that the white, almost soft looking blanket that covered the land was beautiful. The thing that Oliver liked most about the snow, however, was being able to see the beauty and feel the cool air and then going back inside to change into some warm clothes, in the warm living room, in front of the fire, with some hot food and drinks waiting there for him. Lian Yu was different, however.

The snow would stop for several hours before starting again, but being mid-winter the snow had built up to just below Oliver's knees. Yao Fei said it was a light winter and Oliver had hoped they would not be on Lian Yu for a heavy one. Now however, as he eyed the blood pooling in the snow, he really hoped they all would.

He'd been out with Yao Fei; the man would hunt with his bow while Oliver carried their haul. Yao Fei was teaching him archery but with food currently being vital the archer decided to hold off Oliver's teachings until the winter had passed. Shado and Slade also hunted, once again using Oliver as a pack mule, but the blonde was not annoyed. His talents were limited in survival and if he was useful doing the basic jobs then he was still being useful.

The group moved around a lot, they hid their tracks well and Fyers could only spread his men out so far before they became easy targets. The group had little hiding places for stolen weapons and other
goods and they had multiple living areas they switched between when they needed to. The cold and
the snow was making getting around more difficult, especially considering it was a lot harder to
cover their tracks, in the short-term, if they were caught. In the long term it was great because snow
covered everything. So the group had made a little camping site on the other end of the Island, far
away from Fyers, to hold up for winter. Far enough into the forest to stay out of the cold breeze, they
had set up a large tent - courtesy of Fyers of course - layered with as much tarpaulin and other
insulating materials as they could get their hands on and hand-made wooden poles put up to support
the extra weight. Using anything white they could find; sheets, clothing, even bandages, they had
whitened the sides of the tent and left the slightly pointed roof to get covered in snow, making them a
hard target to find in the white environment, especially when the wind picked, filling the air with
rapidly moving, almost eyeball seeking, large puffs of falling snow.

Oliver turned around so Yao Fei could put the freshly killed rabbit into the military backpack Slade
had donated. Another bad thing about snow is that blood was easily seen on it, they couldn't take any
chances. Two rabbits and a good-sized bird was not much, even if Slade and Oliver had gone out
hunting before, Yao Fei and Oliver again before that and Slade and Shado were also out hunting at
this very moment. Four grown people doing a lot of work need a lot of food. Time was dedicated to
hunting only, to save energy, and they would have to keep going like this until the snow melted
away. If they could survive mercenaries, they could survive this.

Four shots rang out, then nothing. Yao Fei looked around, trying to figure out where the sounds had
come from when in the distance he saw a flock of birds flying out of the trees. Animals always run
away from danger. Yao Fei took off to investigate the shots, Oliver following along behind.

Yao Fei got to the scene and a second later he was speeding towards it.

Oliver knew that was not a good sign. The blonde made his way over to where Yao Fei had stood.
Looking around the tree he could just see five black clothed bodies, a patrol group who had likely
been ordered to search the area. Luckily, Oliver and his newfound friends never hunted near their
camp. It was impossible to know who fired what gun and how many times, but at whom was an easy
question. Oliver was making his way over when he heard what Yao Fei must have seen. Shado
sounded panicked.

Oliver picked up speed; he spotted Yao Fei and Shado behind the trees. They were bending over
and...

Oliver froze. "Slade?" he mumbled. "No." he ran over to where Slade knelt, body hunched over,
holding on to his stomach. As Oliver got closer he saw all the blood. "Slade..." Oliver stood a couple
of feet away, trying not to get in the way. It looked really bad.

"Shot?" Yao Fei asked as he pulled out the emergency bandages he had in his coat pocket.
"Stabbed," Shado said.

Oliver smiled meekly, fear still pulling at him. Stabbed was good, better than being shot, as long as the wound was not too deep.

"S' okay," Slade said through gritted teeth. The Australian forced himself to slowly roll on to his back, grunting lightly. His dark eyes met Oliver's aqua green eyes, appearing a vibrant blue in the bright light. Slade gave the younger man a reassuring smile, which he barely kept when his wound was touched.

Yao Fei and Shado got to work on holding off the bleeding, both to keep Slade well, as well as someone could be after being stabbed anyway, and to stop the blood leading a trail right to them.

"We've got to go," Slade said, breathing hard. Thankfully he had the sense not to force himself up, but any more time and he probably would, stab wound be damned.

Shado looked at her father. He nodded.

"I'm sorry, my friend," Yao Fei said.

Before any more could be said, Yao Fei and Shado grabbed hold of Slade by his shoulders and back, and with one big pull they forced him on to his feet. Slade, understandably, swore very loudly, staggering to the left, very nearly falling back down but supporting himself at the last second. Yao Fei took one of Slade's arms and wrapped it around his shoulders.

"Shado," Yao Fei turned back to his daughter, "You go ahead, plan us the shortest safe route back you can find."

Shado nodded, running ahead and scouting the area.

Yao Fei turned to Oliver. "Oliver," he tilted his head to make a 'come here' gesture.
Oliver didn't need to be told twice. He touched Slade's other arm, the hand of which was tightly clamped over his wound to hold the bandages.

Slade looked into Oliver's eyes, a look of worry but trust. "Hold it as hard as you can," he told the blonde.

Oliver nodded. He covered Slade's hand with his own and when Slade pulled his own hand away Oliver pushed down hard, sealing off any chance of the blood escaping.

Slade grunted but wrapped his free arm around Oliver's shoulder, making sure to put most of his weight on Yao Fei.

A few seconds later Shado appeared. "Follow me," she said.

They all stood there for a second before Slade forced himself to move. Turns out a lack of food, sleep and then being stabbed takes a lot out of a guy.

"I know you're not one to follow orders," Oliver said as they started walking, "But it's kinda important right now."

Slade smirked, making sure not to laugh, as the movement would only cause more pain.

Oliver looked at the Australian. The colour was draining from his face but he looked more awake and pained than drowsy. Oliver prayed that Slade would be okay, he could not lose him, not like this.

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Oliver jolted out of his dream... Well, memory. His eyes were wide open and he was panting but thankfully Slade was still fast asleep. He was, however, a light sleeper, so Oliver did his best to stay perfectly still, breathing deeply and waiting for his body to calm again. Oliver hated the dream of their first winter, really hated it. He wanted to just fall back to sleep but he had a feeling that doing so would not be easy, judging by his past experiences with this particular dream.
Oliver's breath started to even out as he watched Slade sleep. The older man was lying on his back still, even after Oliver had rolled off. His eyelashes were fluttering, indicating that he was dreaming, although Oliver had no clue if it was good or bad. Oliver sighed at his tiredness but then he smiled, Slade was here, after all. Oliver tucked himself between his boyfriend's side and arm, his smile growing as said arm curled around his body unconsciously. Oliver reached a hand down ever so slowly, to the scar left by the blade, proving to himself that it was over and dealt with. Slade was alive, not dead, not dying, alive.

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Oliver woke up when he heard a beeping sound and the warmth next to him moved away, making the mattress lift and give out a soft and thick crinkling sound from the shift in weight. He blinked once before opening his eyes; green gems looking around in confusion from the mixture of what was happening and his dazed state from being awoken.

A warm hand rested on his cheek. "Go back to sleep."

Oliver looked up to see Slade and smiled.

"I've got to grab some clothes, but I'll be back to get you and Thea, Okay?"

Oliver nodded.

Slade quickly got dressed before he sat on the edge of the bed to do up his boots. Oliver watched, wrapped up in the covers to keep in the heat, feeling more saddened as each item of clothing was pulled back on.

Glancing at the blinds, Oliver noticed that the cream blinds only had a tinge of light illuminating them. "What time is it?"

"Early." Slade said. He tied up the last bits of his boots before he crawled up onto the bed, making sure his boots stayed away from the sheets. He crawled over to Oliver and lay down next to him, wrapping his arm around the younger man's duvet covered waist and kissing his forehead. "I'm sorry that I have to go," he said, lips moving along Oliver's skin gently.

"It's okay," Oliver said, moving up to kiss Slade's lips.
"I'll be back soon," Slade said as the two separated.

"Okay," Oliver murmured.

They kissed.

"The plan is to have breakfast when we get there, by the way," Slade said.

"Good to know," Oliver replied.

They kissed.

"I'm never going to leave, am I?" Slade asked.

"Probably not," Oliver grinned, which grew when their lips joined once more.

The two kissed (and tried to say goodbye) numerous times before Slade finally pushed himself up and off the bed, knowing he would never leave otherwise. As he opened the door he turned to look at Oliver one last time and smiled as the younger man cocooned his body with the duvet. The Australian forced himself out of the room.

Only when he was out of the room and walking down the corridor, filled with early morning light, did his smile slip. He had received a text just shortly after he had nodded off to sleep; the buzzing had thankfully not awoken Oliver. At the time he decided to ignore it, which was unlike him but he was happy, in bed, with his gorgeous boyfriend, so who could really blame him? This was not, however, a text that should have been ignored. It was a message from one of his colleagues at ASIS, a tech to be exact, asking Slade to call him as soon as possible. There was only one text, no calls and it was from a tech agent, not a special forces agent like Slade or their Director-General, but an agent needed to talk to him nonetheless.

Slade fished his phone from his jeans pocket once he had gotten outside, clicking the call button as he gently closed the front door.
"Wilson?" a male voice asked.

"I would have answered before but you texted me just after one in the morning," Slade commented, making his way over to his motorbike. "What's on your mind?"

"Someone looked at your credit and job history, anything they could get their hands on really."

Slade froze, leg pausing in mid-air, he pulled it back. "Can't you tell me where they are?" First things first; who was looking him up and why? The only people who knew that he and Billy Wintergreen were the seemingly mythical duo of Stroke of Death, or DeathStroke, were those who had clearance at ASIS and the people who had resided on Lian Yu, who were either dead or imprisoned in a secret facility, or back at home in China and the manor Slade had just left.

"Starling City police department in Pennsylvania."

Slade smirked. "I don't remember getting a warrant for that. Was it a detective or possibly Sergeant Lance, by chance?"

"Detective now, demoted as Sergeant a while ago," said the tech. "He stopped after he saw the ASIS notice. Followed by Googling what ASIS was."

Slade snorted, then his tone became serious. "Wipe everything ASIS."

"Yes sir," the agent said, immediately typing.

"This is a personal matter. I'll take care of it. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Slade ended the call, slipped the phone back into his pocket, removed the bike from its stand and walked it down the path, not wanting to wake anyone. He sighed and forced a smile, he was going to enjoy his trip; the matter of Detective Lance would have to be handled later.
Detective Lance sat at his desk with a cup of hot coffee. Over the last five years he seemed to be adding more and more instant coffee to his coffee cup, five more years and he would be filling each cup half-full of the strong, dark brown granules before even adding water. Maybe he should just get a pouch of instant coffee and eat it with a spoon; better yet, he could get a bag of coffee beans and eat them like nuts. The only other people in the building this early were the lab techs, due to the number of machines that had to be turned on and updated before the day even began for the officers. Lance had always got on well with the lab techs, even way back when he was a beat cop.

The tech and police tended not to get on due to differences in opinion that could, and often would, clash; a police officer could find the culprit who committed the crime but due to the tiniest piece of somehow vital evidence - or lack thereof - he could get away. Lab techs were often also the ones discovering evidence that showed an officer behaving in a manner that could get him demoted or fired. However on the other side, officers blamed techs for disproving evidence, when it was only their job to present all of the facts and not just those that a judge and jury could be persuaded by. Also, the techs rarely got any real recognition from all of their hard work, which was just plain insulting. Lance always treated the techs well, thanked them for all that they did for him and his cases, and Lance often got his tests back first. He never asked that of them, but it was nice nonetheless.

Detective Lance went to look at Slade Wilson's accounts again. He was looking to see if the dates that he was in different countries corresponded with certain events happening around the same time, to see what this man was really up to, but when he got there, he found nothing.

"The hell?" he squeezed his eyelids shut as if it would stop what clearly had to be the coffee making him hallucinate... Right?

Everything between leaving the navy and living in Starling City was gone.

"How the hell if this possible?" he quickly went to Wilson's profile to find that all information about his training after he left the navy was gone. Everything between leaving the navy and coming to Starling City was gone, nine years of information, completely gone. Lance then realised that he had never looked at how long this man was due to stay in the United States, and for what reason he was here. It can't have been for just a visit if he had an apartment. The detective near yelled in demand of 'How the hell is this possible?!' when he found that the bastard had a Green Card. A person can't get one unless they'd lived in the US for at least five years, three if they were married to a citizen. This guy had only lived in the US for what, three weeks? How the hell did this guy get his hands on a United States Permanent Resident Card?

Lance pulled up the account details and basic history, leaving out the identification information -
because if this guy was dangerous, he didn't want anyone else getting involved in this - then he made his way over to one of the techs.

"Hey John, do you mind helping me out with something?" he asked.

John had light blond hair and dark brown eyes. He was only in his early thirties, but was the head of the department on the forensic side of things. Overall, he was reliable and was close to the detective, someone who would never sell out the older man but at the same time was not afraid to tell him when he was walking on thin ice. "Um?" he raised a brow, walking over to the detective. His young trainee (more there for paper work really) Bradley trailing along behind, big brown eyes full of excitement even this early in the morning and his spiky black hair wobbled lightly side to side, slightly too long for the gel he was using.

"I was looking at some account details and work history of this guy last night," Lance explained as the techs arrived at his desk. "I didn't find anything incriminating, just odd, and at one point a classified notice on one piece. Anyway, I just went to go over it and all the weird bits are gone."

"Gone?" John asked, blinking quickly as if he himself was hallucinating.

"Not blocked, no notice of classification, just plain gone," Lance said.

"That's not..." John stood there stunned for a second, eyebrows low in confusion.

"Is that even possible?" Bradley asked, curious and not even remotely concerned.

"Can I use your computer for a second?" John asked the detective, who quickly got out of his seat. Taking the seat, without even a smile or a nod from his still paralysed brain, John typed away with knitted brows, trying to see where the information had got to. After a few minutes of typing and mumbled half-sentences like 'where did…?' and 'how did…?', John gave up and sat back in his borrowed seat.

"What is it?" Lance asked.

"Okay," John started, holding his hands up as if he had hold of the explanation and yet he still had no idea what it meant. "Information always leaves a trail of where it was moved to and by what manner, to a degree. It the case of legal information such as this; you can only move or classify it - it
will always exist. But in this case..." he held up a hand to the computer, pausing and holding his breath for a moment, not believing what he was about to say. "It's gone."

"Just gone?" Bradley asked, shocked by his teacher's reaction.

"There should be a notice, saying that the information can't be accessed," he said, waving a hand at the computer. "There is nothing saying anything has gone anywhere. Like it never even existed," he shook his head, trying to make sense of the matter.

"Who was the classified notice from before from?" Bradley asked the detective.

"From ASIS," Lance said. "I had to look them up. It's like the FBI or CIA of Australia."

"The Australian Secret Intelligence Service? Those guys are really secretive," John noted. "They have been around for fifty odd years, but only came out of the wood work a few years back."

"So deleting everything was just counter-intelligence?" Lance asked.

Bradley raised a brow, looking over to see what his boss had to say.

"Stopping secret information from being found out," John explained before turning back to Lance. "From their secretiveness, the rules that don't seem to apply to them and their clearly advanced technology, I would say that they handle some serious information. I wouldn't push the matter, detective. They will already know that you were the one who looked up this information."

Lance leant against his partner's desk. "So I should wait for some ASIS agents to come and take me away?" It was then that he realised that he should call Laurel and demand how she knew this man. He grabbed the mobile from his desk but paused at what John said next.

"If that was the case, you would have been detained already, for questioning when they got here," John said. "The fact that you're not could mean that what you found wasn't that important and the matter has been taken care of any how. I hope for your sake that that's the case."

Lance frowned, searching for his daughter's number as he made his way out the room.
"Who's calling this early?" Tommy groaned into the back of his girlfriend's neck as her 50s home phone ringtone rang out loudly from where it lay only a foot away.

Laurel reached for the phone with her eyes still closed. She missed it the first time, and slid her fingers along the nightstand, eventually feeling the cool plastic cover and grabbing hold of the phone. She opened her eyes just enough to see the answer button, pressed it, and held it to her ear before closing her eyes once more, the stinging sensation numbing. "Yes... Dad?"

Tommy froze.

"Wait what?" she asked. "One thing at a time dad. Hang on," she moved out from under Tommy's arm, which had been wrapped around her waist. "You go back to sleep, I'll deal with this," she said to her boyfriend, walking out of her bedroom and likely to the kitchen to make a cup of coffee.

"Crap," Tommy hissed, grabbing his own phone to send Oliver yet another text. He couldn't think of a single thing to say to Laurel last night. Walter had covered for Oliver once before when he had spoken Russian at dinner and honestly Tommy hadn't really thought of it since; Oliver had a few more pressing secrets at hand. Then Laurel had called her dad and found even more information Tommy could not process, let alone explain. He was getting sick of Oliver lying to him and even sicker of having to lie to Laurel.

Tommy sighed and threw the covers off of his body, shivering as the cold hit him, but at least it made a decent wake up call. He made his way over to where his drawer was, smiling at the fact that Laurel had given him one, and pulled out a pair of pyjama bottoms, pulling them on before making his way to the kitchen. Unlike Laurel, who slept in a Pyjama top and a pair of shorts, Tommy much preferred to just sleep in his boxers and even though her father was not actually here, it still made Tommy feel a little uncomfortable being in the same room as that man's voice with his daughter and being near butt naked. Tommy stopped just before he reached the bedroom door and went back for a shirt.

"That's just... Yes, how the hell could he have done... Well, any of that?" Laurel said, glancing up at her boyfriend as he made his way to the coffee pot.

Tommy busied himself, trying to make a cup of coffee as slowly as humanly possible as a way of waiting for Laurel to finish the conversation with her father. She did so, thankfully before Tommy had to make a second cup in case he drank his first too quickly.
"You would not believe what my dad just told me," Laurel said, grabbing her coffee and moving to sit in the living room.

Tommy glared out the kitchen window, hoping it was facing the direction of the Queen manor. "I swear, Oliver," he warned through gritted teeth.

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- Lian Yu -

Yao Fei and Oliver worked together to keep Slade walking. He slid here and there due to having to walk on the partly melted and therefore very slippery snow under the trees. They did this do reduce the chances of leaving tracks, but the more they walked the stupidly too far way back to camp, the more drained Slade became and the more he slid. At one point he slipped and fell forward, just managing to catch himself, the leg he had done so with shaking ever so slightly. Yao Fei and Oliver went slowly for a few steps but then Slade's legs buckled and he fell to his knees.

"Slade?!" Oliver gasped, having lost grip on the bandages as Slade fell. He quickly wrapped his arm around Slade's belly.

"Fuck's sake," Slade groaned weakly.

At that moment Oliver felt the most unbearably cold pain in his rib cage. Slade sounded so weak. He should be forcing his body to stand, ordering his legs to move at least, but he just sat there, pissed off but too weak to do anything. He was too pale for his naturally tanned skin and his breathing was heavy and raspy.

"How much longer?" Oliver called to Shado.

The young woman gave him a sad smile.

Oliver sighed. His shoulders sagged as exhaustion hit, he felt the weight as fatigue pulled at his arms and legs.
"We will rest for a while," Yao Fei said, placing a hand on Slade's shoulder. "You should rest my friend," he advised.

Slade did not say anything, no 'Don't think that's a wise idea mate.' nor a 'Just for a bit.' Not a thing.

Oliver tried to smile, tried to joke to Slade about Yao Fei's voice sounding like Mr. Miyagi from the Karate Kid film (with a possible glare from Yao Fei because Mr. Miyagi was Japanese), but Oliver did not even have the strength to say 'Yes sensei'.

The two sat there for a few minutes. Yao Fei and Shado had quickly slipped up to find a shorter way back to camp. Slade stayed on his knees, but his breathing had gotten better. He chuckled weakly as Oliver moved his keffiyeh to cover more of his neck.

"How am I looking kid?" Slade asked, looking out to the trees

"Well, on the dulux colour chart you were mocha, now you're more summer fruits."

Slade laughed lightly, which shifted his wound and caused a sharp bite of pain at his nerves. "Fuck," he gasped. He leaned forward in pain and wrapped his arm instinctively over his wound, his arm curling around Oliver's, his hand resting on the younger man's.

Oliver moved so instead of being at Slade's side he was behind him; sat on his knees, he wrapped his other arm just above his and the older man's arm and rested his chin on Slade's shoulder, smiling faintly as Slade's leaned back into him and rested his head against Oliver's. After a few moments of silence Oliver spoke up. "At least you have a tan, I'm probably the colour of milk at this point," he joked.

"Probably?" Slade said, smirking.

"Shut up."

Slade's smirk grew. "I would have said cream. Don't worry kid," he said, turning and kissing Oliver's cheek, "I like the taste of your creamy skin, especially when it's drizzled with honey," he whispered, licking Oliver's skin lightly with the tip of his tongue.
Slade froze for a second, hearing crunching snow. Not long after, Yao Fei and Shado appeared.

"Really?" Shado asked. "Really? We were only gone for about ten minutes."

"At least most of my blood is not going to the wound anymore," Slade commented.

"I can assure you that we did not need to know that," Yao Fei said, making his way over to help Slade up.

Oliver went back to his side, face flushed red.

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Oliver woke lying flat on his back, gripping the covers tightly in his clenched fists. He could feel the sweat on his skin and he was breathing heavily. He looked over to where Slade had slept and placed a hand on the space, which, although cold, did give the blonde a small spark of comfort. Oliver lay there for a while, waiting for his breath to even out before he got out of bed. There was really no point in trying to go back to sleep, he would have to get up soon or later anyhow. That's what's he told himself anyway seeing, as the lack of sleep from staying up last night and not being able to sleep well the night before had drained him. He had not paid a visit to anyone on the list for over a week and he always slept easily after one of his active, dirt-bag-visiting night outs, falling asleep once his head hit the pillow. It was a lot like his years back on Lian Yu. Apart from the first few nights with Yao Fei and then with Slade, all the energy Oliver used up just had him, in Slade's words, 'knackered'.

Oliver put his pyjamas back on (which had been abandoned on the floor) before sneaking back to his room, listening out for his mother if she was up, which could be likely. Once he was back to his room he grabbed a few items of clothing for today, tomorrow, a pair of shorts for the beach, a towel (in the very unlikely event he did swim) and a spare shirt, because there was no way in hell he was showing the people on the beach his chest. His scars were not attractive and even if Slade did not care about them, a beach full of people might. As well as that, he was lucky Thea had not mentioned the tattoo on his chest last time, let alone the one on his back. He could have lied and said he got them before, but it was clear by the fuzzy detail and thick ink that they were not good quality, like a man from money, like Oliver, would have.

After a quick shower and hair wash, Oliver quickly got dressed, which was good because just as he was doing up the last button of his shirt there was a knock at the door.
"Come in," he called.

Moira entered the room. "Getting ready to go, I see."

"Yeah," he smiled, moving over to the bed and folding his clothes and towel into a neat pile. "I got a text from Slade this morning. He went back home to grab some things. Oh, and we'll be getting breakfast in New Jersey." Oliver knelt to get the gym back from under his bed. He took a quick peek inside, seeing as how the last thing he had used it for was getting tools to hidden hideout back when he had started rebuilding the place, before putting it onto his bed and shoving his items inside.

Spotting the towel, Moira just had to ask. "You're really going to the beach?"

"Yep," Oliver said, zipping up the bag.

"And your..." she paused, not really wanting to say anymore. It was bad enough what happened to Oliver, let alone having scars to remember it by. Her heart welled with pain as she thought about what the doctor had said, she could not imagine her son like that, she just couldn't!

"I'll keep my shirt on," Oliver said. That was another thing Oliver missed about Lian Yu. No one in his little Island family ever made Oliver uncomfortable about his scars being on show, no comments or coos; they all had their own scars after all. Not to say there were no initial sad looks and guilt did tend to raise in Slade, both on behalf of his ex-partner and general 'as your boyfriend I should have looked after you' guilt. Yao Fei, also, always felt a sting of guilt every time he saw the arrow scar, more so if he saw the torture scars Oliver had sustained from protecting him.

Maybe it was after Oliver had just lost his dad, but Yao Fei had become like a father to him, pushing Oliver to keep going, to survive, even when the lessons were harsh. Oliver looked up to the man and even though archery had been something Oliver seemed to have a natural knack for, it also felt special, like something Yao Fei had given him. The bow Oliver had privately made in China took just over a week to make (which, luckily, was just under the amount of time it took to have his identity verified and travel plans back to the US made) and was made by a man Yao Fei had recommended, if by chance they ever got off the Island. The customized piece was a recurve bow, unlike Yao Fei's, but the shape made it easier to fight with, as did the fact that it was made of metal, which only made it pack a harder hit. Although the hand piece was the only part made of wood, it reminded Oliver a lot of his mentor's bow; the bow itself was metal, but it was the same jet-black colour as Yao Fei's leather grip. Yao Fei's bow also had darkened yellow ribbon strips on each side of the grip, while on Oliver's bow there were metal pieces that held the metal to the wood and the string to the bow, which were golden coloured. And that wasn't all. Oliver knew that even though he was sneaking around in a city, not a forest, and a mask would have probably been a better idea, he
still wore the green hood, just like he had done with Yao Fei back on the Island. It gave him a connection to his past and his Island family.

That wanting to remember his family and his past had even inspired Oliver to get a tattoo just a day after he had got back to Starling City. It was better quality than his other tattoos, seeing as this one was professionally done. It went down his side and it consisted of names in Mandarin; thick black writing, so skilfully written it thinned out in the places to make the name 'Oliver Queen Yao'.

In Chinese culture the surname is often put before the first name. Yao Fei's real name was Fei Yao, or just Fei, but being proud of his family's heritage he always kept his last name when introducing himself. So, over time, everyone simply called him Yao Fei. It may or may not have been obvious, but Oliver though of them all as a family. Being that both the surname and race majority was in Yao Fei and Shado's favour, as they were living in China and Oliver learned Mandarin first, Oliver had always seen the four of them as the Yao family - if he had to put a name to it, that is. Queen for his biological family and Yao for his developed family, it seemed fair. It wasn't until after Slade came to Starling City that Oliver wondered if he should add Wilson to his tattoo. But, when you think about it, the name Wilson was Slade's origin and in a way it also felt like Oliver was hinting at marriage or something, so he thought against it. As well as that, Slade quickly realised and liked the meaning.

"I know Thea has seen them," Moira said.

Oliver looked up to meet her sad eyes. "She has, yes."

"Has anyone else?" she asked.

"Slade," Oliver grinned. "He doesn't mind them, he's pretty scarred too. When we first met we tried to play top trumps with injuries and scars, at least I'm in the running this time," he joked. At his mother's forced, sad smile, Oliver decided to take a different approach. "My girlfriend doesn't mind them, either."

Moira perked up at that. "Oh?"

Oliver smiled, remembering something Slade had once said. "She once said that they proved I was a strong person and to show them proudly like badges of honour... That might be a bit too soon," he added.

"As much as it pains me knowing you have them," Moira smiled, "my happiest day will be the day
that you can do that."

Oliver smiled back.

Oliver’s phone buzzed twice on his bed. Sitting snug between his pillow and duvet, Oliver picked up the phone to see that it was a text from Tommy. He opened it.

Answer asshole!

Oliver frowned, but then noticed that he had three missed calls and ten new text messages and every single one of them was from Tommy. "Oops," he looked back to his mother "Tommy needs to talk to me about something but after that I'll be downstairs. Is Thea up yet?" he asked.

"Surprisingly, yes," Moira said.

Oliver nodded, impressed. "That is surprising."

"She's excited," Moira said. "I'll see you downstairs."

Oliver nodded and as soon his mother was out the door he rang Tommy. The phone rang for a long while and for a second Oliver almost thought he was going to get the answering machine, but then his childhood best friend answered.

"The hell have you been, Oliver?!" Tommy whispered sharply into the phone.

"Why are you whispering?" Oliver asked.

"Hang on."

Tommy said and a minute later he returned, breathing heavier than before. "I didn't want Laurel to hear us talking."
Now Oliver was confused. "Why?"

"Well, let's see,"

Tommy said, sarcasm practically dripping from his voice, "You're a liar and your friend Slade is involved in somehow with the ASIS."

Oliver stood there stunned. "Wha- how..." he blinked and sat down on the bed. "What?"

"Laurel asked her dad to look your friend up."

Oliver stood up. "What do you know?" What does he know?

"He'd not in the navy anymore, he took special training in some foreign country and when Lance looked into his credit history he found that the guy would disappear for months at a time."

"There was a notice by the ASIS saying that some parts were classified. The Australian Secret Intelligence Service, that's what it stands for Oliver," Tommy's voice was bubbling with anger at this point. "And this morning he went back to have a look and everything is gone Oliver, so they know he was looking at it."

"Tommy," Oliver said, trying to get his friend to calm down.

"You know what the worst part is Oliver? Do you?"

Tommy asked, voice calming ever so slightly. "All this stuff, Laurel believes you have a chance of not knowing. I know that you hide a lot of shit so it's un-fucking likely and Lance does not know you are involved, but you still had a chance of not knowing any of this."
"Tommy?" Oliver paused in his walking. Tommy sounded upset, anger no more than a spark.

"You lied," Tommy said, sounding hurt. "You told everyone you met him five years ago but when Lance looked into his history he found no trace of him for the past six years. Six years, Oliver. How could you have met him? How, Oliver?"

Oliver thought for about two seconds before he spoke, just as Tommy continued to rant in that hurt voice of his. There was no other way and in that instant Oliver decided enough was enough.

"How Oliv-"

"We met on the Island," Oliver said and almost instantly a wave of calm flowed through him and he felt lighter. "We met on Lian Yu," he said. "He works for ASIS. He went there six years ago to save a man and find out what was happening on that Island." Oliver sat back down on his bed. "The place was full of hundreds of paid soldiers with automatic assault rifles who would, and almost did, kill me. They tortured me, Tommy," he said quietly, closing his eyes. "Slade kept me alive. He only knew me for a week and he lost his chance to go home so he could save me. He trained me to fight and he made me strong enough to protect myself." He gripped the pillow tightly as anger built. "He stuck by me no matter what. He risked everything to make sure I would get back home. He's part of my family, he's..."

With his eyes closed, Oliver could picture Slade standing there, in his grey shirt and cargo pants, black bullet proof padding, gloves, boots and belt, his grey and black keffiyeh, even his beard and the light smudges of dirt on his neck and face from living out in the forest. Slade would chuckle, that wonderful, deep chuckle that Oliver had grown accustomed to, he would smirk at Oliver. "Might as well kid," he'd say. "in for a penny, in for a pound."

"He's my boyfriend of nearly five years," Oliver said. "I love him."

Tommy said nothing, and no one could really blame him with that much unexpected and/or unbelievable information coming at him all at once.

"I hate lying to you, Tommy and as good as it feels to tell someone who was not there for it, all that happened to me, I still hate that you know it, but..." Oliver opened his eyes, sighing as he let his body fall back, bouncing on the bed. "You're my friend."

"Well... I'll admit, I did not expect any of that," Tommy said, thankfully no longer sounding hurt or
Oliver smirked. "Years ago I would never have imaged that I could date a guy."

"I don't know man, you went out with some beefy girls," Tommy pointed out.

"Funny."

Tommy laughed.

"Hate to add more unexpected things to the mix, but as long as we're being honest?" he smiled meekly even though Tommy couldn't see it.

"Go on then."

"When I said I never thought I could date, it was because I never thought I would ever build up the courage come out."

"Wait, you're gay?" Tommy said, sounding shocked.

"I did just tell you I'm dating a guy, right?" Oliver joked. "It's just that I never met anyone who was openly gay, and with my dad..."

"He would not have handled that well," Tommy admitted. "Thanks for not lying."

"Again," Oliver added.

Tommy laughed lightly.

"Thea, Slade and I are going to New Jersey for the day, but can we meet up when I get back? Haven't really spent much time with you since I've been home."
"Yeah, sure. I'm sorry Oliver,"

Tommy said, his voice sincere.

Oliver didn't know if Tommy was sorry for getting angry at him or about what had happened on Lian Yu. Oliver was pretty sure it was the latter, but still felt a little uncomfortable talking about it. So, he went for the first option. "At least now I know what they know, Slade and I can come up with an excuse for as much as we can."

Tommy was quite for a second. "I guess," he snorted. "I guess now we can't play the 'who'd I do' game at clubs anymore."

"We can, you just won't agree with me. Also, you're taken, I'm taken," Oliver smirked. "Plus, Slade's definitely the hottest guy I've ever seen."

"Good to know."

"He's got a hell of a body, can pick me up like I weigh nothing."

"Don't need to know."

"He's great in bed."

"Oliver!"

"He does this thing where I swear I-"

"I'm hanging up!"

Oliver laughed. "Alright, alright. Sorry, I couldn't resist," he smiled. "I'll see you when I get back."
"Alright, but if you happen to accidently send me a dirty text meant for you boyfriend, I will never talk to you again," Tommy warned, but there was no malice in his voice.

Oliver snorted. "Promise. Bye Tommy."

"Bye Oliver."

XXXXXXXXXXX

After the called ended, Tommy slipped his phone into his jeans pocket and smiled. It had been a long time since he'd heard Oliver laugh and joke like his old self. But still; Oliver, gay, since fucking when? Forever, apparently. Tommy leant against the white walls belonging to the stairwell of Laurel's apartment building and sighed. He had told Laurel that he had to go to the club to check and order inventory, so he couldn’t exactly go back now.

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Slade had only just parked when Thea appeared at the front door.

"Morning," She called before taking a sip from her favourite, large, lime-coloured cup filled coffee. She gave a happy sigh before asking, "Coffee?"

Slade removed his helmet. "Sounds good," he got off the bike and knocked the stand out with his boot. "Oliver up?"

"Allegedly," she said, adding, "He's on the phone with Tommy."

"Ah, right." Slade smiled as he made his way over to the youngest Queen. "Looking forward to New Jersey?"

"Hells yeah," she grinned.
Slade chuckled and his smile grew when Oliver appeared next to his sister.

"Jesus!" Thea borderline yelled, jumping to the side, some coffee spilling from the side of her cup. "You scared the life out of me."

"Sorry," Oliver said to his sister before looking over to his boyfriend. "I need to talk to you."

Slade cocked a brow. "Alright." Slade sat down on one of the steps leading up to the Queen manor and held a hand out to welcome Oliver.

"I'll go make some coffee," Thea said, pointing inside with her index fingers. "Milk and sugar, Slade?"

"Black, one sugar," he said. "Thank you."

Thea nodded and went inside, shutting the door behind her.

Oliver sat down next to Slade. He said nothing, looking out to the garden and enjoying the breeze that flew by.

"What's wrong?" Slade asked, placing his hand on Oliver's shoulder.

Oliver sighed. "Tommy called me this morning," he said. "Detective Lance looked into you; he knows that you have something to do with ASIS, took specialised training, disappeared for months at a time and that you were missing for six years."

"I know."

Oliver perked up and he quickly turned to Slade.

"I got a call this morning from a tech at ASIS. I had him wipe everything, I know it's too late, but it'll stop this detective from finding out anything more," the older man explained.
Oliver sighed, head falling limply on to Slade's arm. "I don't know what to do," he chuckled sadly.

"Um?" Slade looked down to the younger man.

"I pretend to be a fool, I push people away and act cold, all so they'll leave what happened to me in those five years alone," he smirked, moving so his head lay on Slade's chest. "I finally give into something that I really want and..." he looked down, eyes beginning to water. His hand moved to rest on Slade's thigh. "The truth comes spilling out."

Slade wrapped his arm around Oliver, holding him close to his chest, his other hand resting on top of the younger man's. "It's not a flood yet," Slade said, kissing the blonde hair. "We'll find a way around it."

"I know," Oliver said. He smiled as Slade's warmth flowed into him and kept smiling even when a tear rolled down his cheek.

Raisa watched from one of the living room windows, her eyes boggled, her mouth open in shock, but then she smiled and walked away.
And to New Jersey We Go

Chapter Notes

Hiya! Did you miss me. :D

Also, as a special treat do all my wonderful readers; the next chapter will be out tomorrow. Yes tomorrow, no joke.

Keep up the comments, I love hearing from you all.

Oliver sat in the back of the Queen's family many cars. This particular car was new; black shining paint and leather seats, it was one of their travel cars, used by the family's staff to drop off and pick up the family members during events. Even though it had never been as far as New Jersey before, it could easily take it, although Oliver wouldn't be worrying about it anyway because he was fast asleep.

Thea (who was also sitting in the back) leaned forward and poked Slade in the shoulder.

Slade glanced into the rear-view mirror. Spotting Oliver, he smiled. "Well, isn't that cute," he said, removing one arm from the steering wheel to slip off one of his jacket sleeves.

"It's been years since I've actually seen him sleep. I was starting to believe it was a thing of myth and legend," the dark-haired Queen said, watching her brother sleep.

Slade frowned, glancing into the rear-view mirror once more before returning to the job at hand. "Don't worry about it kid," he started, pausing as he switched arms, "we're going to New Jersey. Now granted," he said, drumming his fingers on the wheel, "cities are not my cup of tea but today it's just the three of us, so leave your worries back in Starling City." Slade moved his arm closest to the centre of the car, around his back, grabbing hold of his leather jacket and holding it out to Thea.

Thea smiled and took the jacket. "Kid, um?" she raised a brow at the rear-view mirror, catching the near black eyes.

Slade looked back into her crystal blue eyes, like the shining blue waves over a white sand beach. He grinned, looking back at the road. "I used to call Oliver kid, years ago," he said, smiling when he looked back up to the rear-view mirror to see Thea draping the jacket over Oliver, who was still dead to the world, the only sign of life being the slow puffs of breath fogging the car window.

"Really?" Thea asked, smiling at her brother before turning back to Slade.

"Yes," he grinned, "and in all fairness he was one. I taught him Russian and a number of self-defence moves but I put him down on his arse more times than I can count." His grin grew, "He picked it up in the end though."

Thea nodded, listening intently. "Another thing for you to teach me."

"Oh, dear."

Thea giggled.
After a minute of comfortable silence, Thea poked Slade in the shoulder again.

Slade looked into the rear-view mirror to find that Oliver was still in dreamland. "Hm?" he glanced to Thea with a cocked brow.

"Why don't you call him Ollie?" she asked.

Slade looked back at her for a second before turning back to the road. Had she really just prodded him in the shoulder when she could just out right ask him? He smirked lightly. Had Oliver been awake Slade knew he would have said she was as big of a pain as he was. The only sister Slade had ever had was Shado, but he had to admit that he really liked Thea.

"Hello?" she poked him again and then a further three times.

"I heard ya," Slade said, batting her hand away. "And he introduced himself as Oliver. He'd told me once or twice that 'Ollie' was his nickname but I never really thought he suited it." That and they were fighting a war, he needed to treat him like a fellow warrior and not something that would always need protecting. He'd only ever called Oliver by the name Ollie numerous times on one particular day when he was teasing the kid, in a thankfully friendly and not demeaning manner.

"Do you use any nicknames?" Thea asked.

"Oh, you know; sweetheart, darling, the whole shebang. I never was a fan of the word babe."

"Mate," She suggested with a grin.

Slade chuckled at that. "Now that would have been funny."

- Lian Yu -

Shado and Oliver worked together, going back and covering their tracks. The walk was long even for them, but it had to be done. The snow had yet to come and they could not risk Fyers even wondering why one of his teams was late before their tracks were covered. Once Fyers got a got a group together and on their tracks that was it, they could not move Slade and even if they could, moving would just mean even more tracks to follow. So they would be absolutely, for want of a better word, fucked.

"It's going to be alright," Shado told Oliver, watching the blonde as he brushed away their tracks with a branch from a white pine; a native Chinese tree and the only thing that still had leaves at this time of the year.

Oliver just kept brushing.

"You've just got to give these things time," she continued, sound a lot like her father.

Oliver continued to brush. He knew why she was avoiding saying anything about Oliver being okay, that he could get upset and angry when he should ensuring their survival. He also knew why she was not saying anything about Slade being okay because in all likelihood... Slade had survived the blood loss, so far, but even if he survived the night, there was still the risk of infection, and organ damage, and hypothermia, and any number of illnesses or complications that could be caused by the cold, or the lack of food, or the blood loss, and everything fucking else that could and would kill Slade. Slade would be gone, gone forever. Oliver just could not think about it.

" Olive-"
"What do you want me to say?!!" he growled. "You have your father and if," he scoffed, "if we ever get out of this hellhole, you'll just think back to some guy you once knew. I can't lose him," the branch fell from his gloved hand. "I can't."

Shado looked at Oliver for a second. She was only slightly surprised by his outburst, seeing as she had seen it as a possibility. "My father and I will do all that we can to-" she froze, spotting the branch.

Oliver saw the look on her face and looked down.

The pale branch lay there, snow caught up in-between its close packed needle leaves, ice flecks shining like crystal. While the snow itself was bright white and fluffy, the one thing that stood out was a smear of blood around the bottom of the branch, where Oliver had been holding it.

Oliver lifted up his shaking palms; one only had a bit of blood on his palm and only up to the bend of his first knuckles but the other hand, the hand Oliver had held the wound with, was covered in thick, life depleting blood.

Oliver's lips tightened, his eyebrows knitting together and his fists clenching under the leather jacket, one of which let out a light click.

Slade's ears perked up at the sound, but his attention went to Thea when she started talking.

"You guys really don't have anything nicknames for each other?" Thea asked.

"He's called me a dick quite a lot, but I have a feeling you were aiming for something more cute," he said.

"Well, yeah," she said.

Slade smirked.

"Up and at 'em kid" Slade said as he shook Oliver's shoulder lightly.

Oliver jumped ever so slightly from being woken up. He eyed his boyfriend, who was still sitting in the driver's seat. Spotting the discarded seat belt, he wondered if the older man had worn it or if he had forgotten, seeing as the last time they were in a car, Oliver had been too drunk from red wine to notice. "Kid?" he questioned. "My time machine worked then," he said to himself, moving to stretch out his arms only to find a leather jacket in the way. Oliver smiled at the jacket, handing it back to Slade. "Well, aren't you cute."

"Shut up," Slade said, resisting the urge to smack the blonde over the back of the head. "Come on, your sister is waiting."

Oliver smirked, knowing Slade could not think of a comeback. Then, remembering what the Australian had just said, Oliver looked out of the car windows to see if he could spot his sister. Looking out the window he had been leaning against, he spotted her leaning up against a waist high white wall that encircled the car park. Before he could reach down for the handle, the door was opened for him, Oliver glanced up to see Slade holding the door wide open for him. "I feel like a women in the 50s," Oliver said, a small smile pulling at his lips.

"I hope you weren't expecting not to have sex before marriage," Slade said in Russian, "because we would have had at least four, maybe five kids by now."
"Hey!" Thea called, "No Russian until I catch up."

"Defiantly five, maybe a sixth on the way," Slade continued in Mandarin.

"We've really got to start using protection," Oliver replied resting one hand on his flat stomach and slamming the car door shut with his other.

"Chinese as well? Really Ollie?"

Oliver and Slade looked over to see Thea now standing straight, hands on her hips. There was a light pout on her lips and squinted eyes were glaring at the twosome, but there was something else in those bright blue eyes and the smile tugging at her lips confirmed it. She was amused.

"Wow," Thea said, walking into the living room/kitchen where Slade leant against the sofa arm, waiting for the siblings to get their things together before they went to get breakfast.

"Some people just have to live in squalor," Slade pointed out.

"Shut up," Thea shot back. "I like it. It feels nice."

"Descriptive, aren't you."

"Again I say, shut up."

Slade smirked.

The dark haired pair waited for about a minute for Oliver, but he still didn't show.

"I'll get Olls. Why don't you head on down?"

"Olls?" Thea cocked a brow.

"Trying out nicknames," Slade explained, innocently.

Thea shook her head at the older man. "Is calling him Ollie really that hard?"

"Oll-" he grimaced as if the word tasted foul and when he spoke again it looked forced, like his tongue had been taped down. "Oll- No. Can't do it."

Thea laughed at the man. "Alright, I'll see you guys downstairs," she agreed, "Just don't take too long." She went into her room and grabbed a backpack with a few items for the beach. Walking out the front door, she called "See you there."

Hearing this Oliver broke out of the staring contest he had with the mirror, where he had been eyeing his scars for God only knows how long. He grabbed a short sleeve shirt and quickly made his way to the bedroom door. Before he could reach for the handle, however, the door opened.

"Hey," Oliver smiled. "Thea gone down already?"

"You do know that you can't lie to me right?" Slade eyed the blonde.

Oliver let his smile drop. The younger man sighed as he turned round and went to sit on their bed. "Yeah, I know."

"What's wrong?" Slade asked, taking a seat next to his boyfriend.
"Honestly, self-conscious I guess," Oliver said. "I kind of have a lot to go on show," he waved his hand over his chest.

"Well," Slade started, "you can either not be ready and keep a shirt on, or be ready and take it off. It's simple. Do remember, however, that you still are sexy as hell," Slade grinned, kissing Oliver's ear and slipping a hand up his grey shirt. He ran his fingertips up the blonde's sternum, sticking his pinkie out to brush against a perked nipple.

Oliver's lean into the touch, eyelids half shut.

"So, can you do it?" Slade asked.

Oliver should, he could tell that Slade wanted to but... "What about the tattoos?" Oliver pointed out.

Slade gave Oliver's ear another kiss before pulling back. "If you did not have the tattoos, could you?"

Oliver looked away sheepishly. "I don't know. Maybe."

"You have everything else ready?"

Oliver nodded.

"Okay," Slade nodded as he stood, an idea coming to mind. "I think I can help with that," he said. Spotting a white dress shirt, he passed it to Oliver. "You'll need this."

Taking the shirt, Oliver cocked his head at his boyfriend with a raised brow. "It's too thin," he pointed out. The thick black tattoos would be clearly on show.

"You don't put it on yet," the Australian grinned and walked out of the room.

Oliver sat there for a second, still very confused, before he grabbed a cheap plastic shopping bag with his basic beach supplies inside; a towel, sunscreen and a bottle of water. The blonde eyed his shirt in his other hand one last time before he walked into the living room, just in time to see Slade walk into the kitchen with a cotton short sleeved shirt and the six inch jagged dagger he kept in the altered hidden pocked of his baggy cargo pants.

"Okay, I'll bite," Oliver held his hands up, the shirt and the plastic bag clenched to his palm with his thumbs. "What are you doing?"

All Oliver got in return was the sound of a shirt being cut, followed by silence, but Slade was still hard at work.

After a few minutes Slade stood straight from where he had been hunched over the kitchen counter. "Right," he said to himself, eyeing his work. He smiled, turning around and presenting Oliver the shirt. "Voilà."

"You made a crop top," Oliver said in disbelief. That was a sentence he never thought he'd say.

Slade had indeed created a crop top. He'd taken one of his own shirts and cut a line through the shirt. The line was straight and frayed at the edges, making it look professional, like it had been designed to look... Well, like someone had cut it in half. The sleeves had been removed via untying the stitching, which looked a lot neater. It looked good for a crop top but... it was still a crop top.

"It won't cover the whole of the tattoo down your side but don't mention the 'Yao' part and you'll be
fine," Slade said.

"What if I want to swim?"

Slade raised a brow and gave Oliver a 'you can't fool me' look. "You were never going to swim. You can't stand large bodies of water."

Oliver looked away.

Slade was right. Since the Queen's Gambit Oliver would avoid going near the sea at all costs. The sounds of waves and seagulls crawling over his father's corpse, the taste of salt on his lips, that sickly, almost thick water smothering his skin, water-logging his clothes. He hated it. He didn't mind fresh water but he wasn't going to swim in a lake anytime soon.

Oliver sighed, taking a seat on the soft light brown sofa.

"Wear it under your shirt. If you want to you can take off your shirt. If you don't, I'm not going to make you."

Oliver looked up at that, smiling as he met those dark eyes. "Okay."

Slade walked up to his boyfriend and dropped the shirt into his lap before he kissed his forehead. "You'll be fine love, just remember the sexiness."

Oliver laughed lightly, meeting the dark eyes again. "Love, un?" The blonde had to admit that that word from Slade's lips, with Slade's voice, warmed the embers in his belly.

"Trying out nicknames," Slade smiled.

"I like it," Oliver smiled back, before leaning forward and kissing him.

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After a well-deserved full English breakfast with eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, beans, toast, a second round coffees and a rather difficult to get cup of tea for Slade, the three were on their way to Beach Head.

"What do you Americans have against tea?" Slade asked.

Oliver and Thea laughed, smiling at the memory.

"Tea, please."

"Tea?"

"Yes. You know, a cup of tea."

"Oh, okay. One Ice tea."

"What? No."

"Sir, I'm confused."

"Okay. Ice tea; made with a tea bag, with cool water and ice. Yes."

"Yes."

"Well put hot water in it instead, no to ice, yes to milk."
"Bloody Americans," Slade cursed, glaring at the siblings as they laughed harder.

The beach was pretty much empty, with just two groups of people sat on other sides along the beach; a pair of girls and a guy who fell asleep sunbathing and what looked to be a father playing with his son and daughter in the sea. It was just before noon and it wasn't overly bright, then again, it was a Tuesday, so it was unlikely that the beach would be filling up for another few hours. The temperature was warm, the waves were calm, and the beach was clear; all in all, it was a good time to be there.

The three had set their towels down and were sitting around chatting. Thea had changed into a pair of shorts and a vest, the straps of her bikini top poking out ever so slightly. She wore large sunglasses that rested on her head and her thick long hair up loose in a large, metal, crocodile mouth shaped hair clip that shone almost blindingly when it caught the sun just right.

Oliver felt protective over his sister. Anger had burned in his belly when he saw that guy that was about to have sex with her on her birthday, who had only just left that room standing because Thea had distracted him. Oliver swore if he ever saw that guy again he was going to break his neck because that's what older brothers did – though most of them probably only thought about it really. It was one of the very few times Oliver wished that he could tell people about really happened on Lian Yu. However, if anyone deserved to know, it was Thea. Oliver wished he could tell her, but she would never look at him the same and he knew that. He would rather have a sister that grew to hate him for his lies than no sister at all, one who saw her brother as a killer.

"It's been years since we've been to the beach," Thea said, watching in awe as the shining liquid spilled over the sand, white foam claws reaching further with each wave before being forcefully pulled back.

"This may sound hypocritical coming from me," Oliver started, "but are you going to be social or work on your tan?"

Thea could not think of a good comeback, but thankfully Slade had that covered.

"Is that what you used to do?" Slade asked, "Work on your tan?"

Oliver couldn't help but smile at that. Leaning his shoulder against his boyfriend, he said, "Maybe I suit being pale."

"It's all I've ever known you to be," Slade said, stretching an arm out behind Oliver's back. It gave the blonde the option to lean back into it, if he so chose.

Oliver leant back, enjoying the feel of the bulging muscle curled protectively around his back, along with the warm hand on his hip, just above the low riding knee length shorts. Knuckles softly stroked his hip, only the thin dress shirt separating their skin.

They could not help their meeting eyes and smiling.

Slade only just saw the dark mass from the corner of his eye, when the clunk of a camera taking a picture rang out.

The twosome turned to see Thea there with a black Nikon camera in her hand and a grin plastered across her face.

"You can't expect me not to take pictures when the two of you are being cute," she justified.
Slade laughed, although Slade's laugh was more a borderline chuckle, it always was.

"If we get him to Australia for a day or two," Thea started, saying the country's name with its accent, "maybe he'll be as dark as you."

"All natural, Dr Seuss," Slade told the youngest sibling, waving a hand over his face.

Oliver smirked at that, shoulders shaking lightly.

Thea smirked, then remembered what he had said first. "Really?"

"Yes," he nodded, "I'm Māori."

"What's that?" Thea asked, tilting her head to the side.

"My parents were both Māori, they were natives of New Zealand," Slade explained.

"Wow... Wait," she turned to her brother with a raised finger, "I told you he was from New Zealand!"

"You said he sounded like he was from New Zealand. His race is Māori, his accent is Australian."

"What's the difference?"

"I find that racist," Slade said.

Oliver listened to his boyfriend and sister argue with a warmth bubbling in his belly and he realised something. In this moment, the three of them sitting on towels on the sand, the sea air for once in a long time felt natural, healthy and not sickly thick. It was weird how even without his father, mother, Tommy, Yao Fei and Shado, this moment... No, every moment the three of them spent together felt perfect, felt like home. A more intense and wonderful feeling than Oliver had ever felt before. He belonged.

A smile pulled at his lips as he watched the pair with their banter. He had been right, they really did get on.

Oliver looked down, where he could just see the dark ink making the end of the word "Oliver", peeking out from under the crop top. His smile fell. The blonde wondered if he could do it.

Oliver looked at his boyfriend, dark eyes so full of humour and happiness. Then to his sister, her blue eyes sparkling with entertainment and joy.

He could do this.

"So, where were you born?" Thea asked.

Oliver lifted his head. He was ready.

"Albany, Western Australia. A fair distance from the nearby cities."

As the two chatted about Slade's life in Albany, Oliver started to unbutton his shirt.

"Oh, Oliver's stripping," Thea cooed, just as Oliver had got to the last button before his skin would show.

Oliver knew Slade was looking at him, they both knew what came next, Thea did not which
explained a great deal about what she did next.

Thea quickly grabbed her phone, typing away and mumbling sentences like "Yes, signal." and "Thank you internet." before she held her phone up. The iPhone started to play the tune Stripper by David Rose, a classic 60s burlesque tune that became universal and only ever described one thing; stripping.

Oliver froze, he knew he must have looked like a rabbit sitting two foot away from a pair of speeding head lights. The hand gently squeezing his hip was what brought him back to Earth and Oliver knew he had to continue. Slade, as much as he liked Thea, would, if he already hadn't, glare her down for making things difficult for her brother, his boyfriend, at a time like this.

The grin Thea had been sporting fell slowly as Oliver's skin and the tip of one large scar started to reveal its self. Once the last button had been undone Thea realised the music, as low as it was, was still playing, so she span her phone around and shut it off.

Oliver leant forward, away from Slade, before slipping off his shirt and then leaning back. "Your right." Oliver said, turning his head to look into those dark eye which were wide in shock "I can do it. Although I'm still aware that I'm wearing a crop top."

Slade smiled, "I'm proud of you, love." he said, grabbing hold on Oliver's chin and kissing him.

The camera sounded.

Slade did glare at her for that, "Really?"

Thea looked a little intimidated by the look Slade was giving her, Oliver knew better than most that those looks were scary as hell.

Oliver rested his hand on Slade's shoulder, "It's okay." he said, squeezing the Aussie's shoulder reassuringly, "I'm good."

"I'm sorry Ollie." Thea said, head bowed and looking to the floor, "I just can't believe that you could... And out here."

"And wearing a crop top?"

"Enough about the damn crop top." Slade groaned.

The siblings smirked, be it lightly.

Slade shook his head at his other half before turning to Thea, his features softening, "Sorry about that, kid."

"It's alright." she smiled shyly, "I was out of line."

"Nah, it's sweet." he said, "Did not take you for a big picture taker." he added, hoping to lighten the mood.

"You were when you were younger." Oliver pointed out, suddenly curious about the matter.

Thea turned the camera off and placed the cover back on the lens, "Yeah. I remember." she glanced down at the camera "When I was eleven, dad got me this camera for some school project or something but after I couldn't stop taking pictures."

"Why did you stop?" the blonde asked.
Thea snorted, shaking her head, "One night, you and Tommy went out drinking 'not so legally' and there was support to be a storm coming either that night or the next so I was worried and stayed up for you two."

Oliver cocked his head; he thinks he knows the night she's talking about but he does not remember her staying up.

The youngest Queen shakes her head, long hair waving side to side, "You guys took a while." she smirked, "I turned on a lamp or two and took some pictures with objects in front of them, thinking I was an artist or something. You took so long that I got a blanket and fell asleep on the sofa. I woke up when you got back." she said, "The two of you were in the kitchen so I went to say hello but my camera was there too and you two were looking through my pictures and laughing like a pair of drunken fools, which you were but..."

Oliver could not believe he had hurt his sister like that. She had taken pictures non-stop for almost three years and he, her brother, the one who was supposed to look after and love her, ruined it. "Thea. I'm sorry."

Thea shook her head and held up her hand, dismissing him, "I was young, about to become a teenager. I took it to heart." she smiled weakly, "It wasn't until I thought that you were dead that I realised that it didn't matter anymore but by then I didn't really feel like it anymore and I had nothing I really wanted to take pictures of."

"Well..." So much for brightening the mood, was what Slade wanted to say, he instead went with, "When else will you ever see your brother in a crop top."

Thea smiled.

"Could have been worse." Oliver pointed out, "Could have been hot pants."

"Oh, God no." Thea giggled, shielding her eyes with her hand.

"You'd look good in those." Slade commented.

"Stop it!" she begged, giggling.

Slade wrapped his arms around Oliver's middle and pulled him to his cheat "Come on. You can be our paparazzi for the day." he grinned.

Oliver was a little taken back but went with it.

Thea looked at the two and laughed "Okay, okay." she picked up her camera, it shook slightly as she giggled but she managed to get a picture, "You two just look unbelievably gay right now, it feels like I'm at gay pride."

Oliver could not really blame her for saying that. He was wearing a crop top and Slade had stripped down to his black vest, with his buzz cut and stumble alone he looked like he should be wearing a pair of leather pants and hat at gay pride.

"You were right," Oliver said to his sister, who glanced up, "I'm not going to survive with the two of you."

"You'll be fine." Slade said, kissing Oliver cheek, holding the kiss longer then necessary for Thea to get a picture of the moment.
Thea and Slade sat on a bench in a small park, the group had stayed at the beach for a chatting and throwing rocks in Thea's propped up camera case and other such low maintenance games they could come up with before they decided to leave and have lunch at a café. They ended up walking into a nearby park whereby they spotted an ice cream stand. Slade, who was quite content with his takeaway coffee, took Thea to find a good place to sit while Oliver was in the queue.

"Shame we didn't have a swim." Thea commented.

"Next time." Slade said, "I'll teach you to surfboard."

"All Australians seem to be Crocodile Dundee and/or surfer boys."

"Well I do have a six inch hunting knife back at the hotel."

Thea laughed.

Slade saw Oliver coming towards them from over Thea's shoulder, ice-creams in hand. Slade held up his hand in greeting, a small smile on his face.

"You can't surf can you?" Thea asked, already knowing the answer.

"I said I would teach you. I did not say I knew how to."

Thea smirked.

"You two seemed entertained." Oliver commented, passing his sister her strawberry ice-cream on a half a diamond-shaped cone.

"Thank you." Thea said, accepting the treat.

Slade spotted that Oliver's ice-cream was yellow as he sat at the Australian's other side, "I know that I never told you not to eat yellow snow but I thought that was kind of obvious."

"Lemon."

"Ah." Slade nodded in understanding.

Thea shook her head at the two.

Just as Slade was about to lift the coffee to his lips, his phone started to chime.

Slade glanced at the caller ID before answering "привет."

Oliver gulped. He turned to see his sister looking confused, he pointed at the phone and mouthed 'Hello', to which Thea nodded but continued to give her brother a confused look.

"I'm a little busy at the moment." Slade listened for a few seconds before nodding, "But of course." he held his hand around the mouth piece, well that's what it looked like from where Thea was sitting anyway. In actual fact the mouth piece was not only uncovered but pointed at Oliver. "I will be back shortly."

"That's quite alright." Oliver replied, confirming to the believed mechanic Alexi Leonov, with a set of prearranged words that the Solntsevskaya Bratva captain was giving the conversation his blessing.

Slade gave Oliver's knee a gentle squeeze before covering the mouth piece for real and turning to Thea, "Sorry. Old friend." he explained.
Thea nodded in understanding, watching as Slade left.

Oliver watched him go too. He hoped Alexi had found something Slade could use. He was worried about asking the older man about his plan for Detective Lance but Slade could be a real smooth talker when the situation depended on it. Then again he was Slade so maybe Oliver had a right to be worried.

"You alright?" Thea asked, "You seem a little out of it."

"Just tired." Oliver said to his sister. It was true, they had gone to bed late last night.

"Having trouble sleeping again?"

Damn.

"I would have though having Slade there would have helped." she said.

"No, it did." he sighed, sloughing in his seat, almost like he had done with Diggle just the day before. "It's just that I've been restless recently and last night and the night before I had these dreams that just confused the hell out of me."

"What were they about?" she asked.

Oliver looked out to where Slade stood in the distance, chatting and likely plotting. He would be a while. Plus Oliver knew he wanted to ask Thea about it, no one accidentally traps themselves like that unless deep down they want to talk. "Be careful that it doesn't melt." Oliver pointed out before he started, making sure to keep an eye on his own.

"So, you going to tell me?" Thea asked.

"Yeah." Oliver said. Oliver gave a quick explanation of his first dream in Slade's apartment.

"Slade has medals?" Thea smiled, looking at the man in the distance in awe. Oliver nodded, "Yeah. Mostly acts of bravery. You should ask him about it."

"Wow, Ollie. You know how to pick em."

The brother grinned, "Anyway, we talked and at one point I noticed that the sounds of the city are no longer there. I don't really think about it until Slade tells me that he... Um." a shy smile pulled at his lips and he looked away sheepishly "That he loves me but I can't hear."

Thea was about to Aw but at the last bit, changed it to a; "Oh?"

"And then we both realise that it must be a dream and then I woke up."

"Nm?" Thea knotted her brows in thought, "What about last night's?" she asked.

Oliver took a few licks of his ice-cream before replying, "That one was even weirder."

"Go on."

"Well," he said trying to think of they best way to explain it "it's like a rerun of a real day, a real event that happened. I dreamt of it last night, woke up and dreamt of it again, and then again in the car but it always starts off from where I last left it."
"What happened?"

"Oh, well." Oliver eyed his ice-cream, "It was this day Slade and I had a fight, it only lasted for a few hours and it all turned out well in the end. It was the first fight we've had since we've been together and at the time I felt like I was pretty close to losing him." he shook his head, a weak smile crawling onto his lips. "I guess almost losing him, now that we're together, was just really stressful." That much was true.

"I imagine." Thea said, sounding surprised, "What was the fight about?"

"Something stupid but kind of personal." he answered, it should have covered it nicely.

"Oh, okay." Thea nodded, eyebrows knitting once more, "Well if it keeps moving forward, then maybe the ending is important."

Oliver did not think so. Slade passed out when they got back, then he woke up the following morning and Oliver pretended that he did not watch the man as he slept, tears running down his cheeks and begging him not to die. Slade got up, got better and life carried on.

"Either way you have to see the ending, so you may as well see if you could lean what that head of yours is trying to show you."

"Yes, Slade."

"Not an insult, Ollie." she said, "Your boyfriend kicks ass." she added, "Oh, and as for the first dream."

"Hm?" Oliver looked up at that.

"I think it means that you want to hear Slade say it. I don't know much about love but I know that he will say it one day."

Oliver eyed his sister, "What makes you say that?"

"He's coming round to meet the family, he's being pretty serious with someone who if the media found out about, would put the story on TV. Everyone would know that Slade Wilson is dating Oliver Queen and that does not seem to bother him." she smiled widely.

"I'm holding us back on that." Oliver said, disappointed with himself.

"These things take time, Ollie." Thea laughed, "He cares for you, he's not going to rush you... But you so have to go public with this. It would be so cute!" she squeaked.

"I don't know..." Oliver sighed. He peeked up at his sister, "You really think he loves me?"

"I bet we could put a few feathers behind his ear and draw lines under his eyes with my ice-cream," she said holding up the strawberry ice-cream, "And the most likely think to come from his mouth would be," she grinned, putting on a deep Australian accent, "I'm a native New Zealander, not Indianan."

Oliver laughed.

"Ollie, he's older, more prideful and used to having people respect him. Who else but for his love and their family would he happily drop that for?" her grin grew.

That warm feeling burned in his belly, this one was more uncomfortable, borderline painful from a
mixture of nervousness, love and an overwhelming fear of rejection. Thea had a point and Oliver just hoped that she was right but if she was not, what would happen? What really could happen? He doubted Slade would just leave but... Not saying it back. Knowing that there was no love in his eyes, no love from his warm hands on Oliver's skin, no love in his words. Was that not just as bad?

If they stayed together would he still feel the abandonment? The pain? Or would he feel empty? Slade had been the one who kept Oliver together when he was at his worse. A mentor in his training, his friend in his loneliness, the one you kept him moving after his first human kill, the one that looked passed the blood and kissed him after his first cold-blooded kill. His savour, his friend, his lover. Roles that people all had before him but never all of them.

Slade kept Oliver together, made him feel loved and important but if that was not so, if he did not love him, if he was not important to the man then what? Would he brake? Would he shatter? Would Slade try to catch his pieces and hold him in place when the only thing that would work, he would not give?

No. Oliver did not want to know.

"I can't risk losing him." He said.

He could not risk knowing, for if he did he knew it would never be the same.

"I need him too much." he said and gulped, trying to hold back the sadness.

"Ollie?" Thea grabbed her brother's shoulder.

"I can't." he said, his body tensing under her grip.

At least living in denial meant he could still be happy. Ignorance is bliss and all that but for how long?

Oliver closed his eyes and took a deep breath and let it out. He took another. In and out. He turned to Thea, "Sorry about that." was all he said.

Thea just looked at her bother, eyes wide. His eyes were dull like all the emotion had drained from them, like his emotions had just been switched off.

The siblings just sat there for a several seconds. The moment was not awkward, nor was it comfortable however.

"You two are being quite." A deep familiar voice said.

The pair looked up.

Slade could tell something was wrong when they did so. The first thing he noticed was Oliver was surprised by his arrival, he must had been heavily distracted. He looked happy to see the older man but his eyes looked empty and Thea looked confused and sad, the corners of her lips were dipping down and her eyes shone with sadness and unanswered questions. Lastly, he noticed a line of yellow that ran down Oliver's thumb and palm. Had he really not noticed that?

Slade turned to Oliver.

Oliver shook his head, he did not want to talk about it.

Slade understood and said nothing. Instead he leant forward and placed a kiss on Oliver's cheek,
"Come on, let's head back to the hotel and watch a movie or two." he suggested, looking over to Thea and giving her a smile.

"Um... Sounds good." she nodded, not sounding very convincing.

"Yeah." Oliver said quietly, looking away.

Slade lent back and held a hand out to Oliver, who accepted, their fingers entwined.

The three walked back to the hotel side by side, completely silent until Thea asked about Slade's friend on the phone. Oliver was back to faking being okay, being happy, something he had pretty much gone without doing for over three weeks. The only thing that showed his true feelings was his hand that squeezed Slade's in its uncomfortably tight grip.

The rest of the evening, leading into the night went smoothly... From what Thea could see anyway.

The three of them watched The Dark Knight Rises and Slade was impressed by the realistic martial arts fighting moves and accurate capability of weaponry displayed in the film, to a point anyway. Once the movie had ended it became apparent that it was starting to get dark outside but it was a little too early for dinner so they decided upon another film.

"How about..." Oliver clicked his tongue, scrolling down the lists of films, "2012. It's a film about the apocalypse?" he cocked a brow at the description.

"How heart warming." Slade commented from kitchen, where he was looking for numbers of nearby takeout options.

Thea frowned, "Kind of loses its edge when we're in 2013." she pointed, before walking into her room.

Oliver turned back to the movie list.

"Hey, Oliver?"

Oliver looked over to his boyfriend, "Hm?"

"Drinking with Thea. Yay or nay?" he asked.

Oliver thought for a second before nodding, "Sure."

"What does she drink?"

"Vodka and tequila mostly."

Slade smirked, "Want to introduce her to beer? It'll work better with takeout, plus I think I can find something she would like."

"Sounds like a plan."

"What does?" Thea asked, walking into the living room with her duvet.

"Getting comfy there?" Slade asked.

"Yep." she grinned, "I like watching movies like this, don't judge." she said, laying the duvet out on the sofa, "If we can have yours too, we could put it over the top."
"Alright, I get." Slade said, moving to his and Oliver's bedroom.

"I can get it."

"It's okay, I have to hide my AK anyway."

Thea shook her head at the older man.

A little while later Slade reappeared with the duvet over one shoulder, handing to Thea, he asked, "I'm going to make a beer run, are there any brands you like?"

Thea paused, looking over to her brother who just smiled and went back to looking at movie. "Um, well not really. Nothing bitter, I guess."

"I'll find you something good." he said, moving to grab his leather jacket, "I'll be back in a bit."

"Don't get mugged." Oliver called, without turning around.

"I'll try." Slade called back.

It was only when he got out the door that he frowned. What was going on with Oliver? He would not look at Slade half the time, he would hold he hand and his grip would be strong, painfully so but he keep his distance when they sat together but when they spoke he seemed okay. He kept switching from wonderfully warm to distant and cold. Had he crossed a line? No, if Oliver did not want to show his skin then he would not have, he was no flower, the guy could look after and stand up for himself. That's the Oliver Slade knew anyway. What ever unset him must have happen while Slade was on the phone but what?

Had Thea said something, was it someone passing by or a text? Had Oliver realised something that had...

Slade froze just as he was about to push the button for the elevator.

Had Oliver realised that the relationship was not bound to last?

"It can't be..." Slade said, body going slack, his head falling forward, "Is it?" he asked, running a hand through his hair, "Is it really over? Just like that?"

Is this really how it was going to end? Would he come back to find Thea walking out of the door with her bag be packed and a sad look on her face? Would Oliver being sitting on the sofa, his own bag ready? What would he look like? Would he cry?

Slade blinked. Oliver had told Tommy. Was it the possibility of having to come out that did it? Is that when he knew that he was not willing to do it and never would be because this, them, their relationship was never meant to last? Slade knew deep down that one day he would lose him but he hoped that he never would.

This could be one of their last nights together, if they even got this night to keep pretending. He had to make it last.

Slade took a deep breath and stood up straight, like a soldier going to war. He pressed the button.

Slade had spent many mouths and years of life fighting against the jaws of death. If there was a hope, if Slade had a chance then maybe, just maybe they could stay together.

"Maybe my arse." Slade growled with a grin as the elevator doors opened. He stepped inside "We
Slade took a deep breath as he reached the door before knocking. Thea answered, "Hey." she smiled and stepping back to let him in. "Hey kid." Slade stepped inside, he looked over to where Oliver had sat and did not find him, his insides felt twisted and heavy. He must have been in the bathroom. "Okay." he said, putting the brown paper bags down, bottles clinking together as he did so "Three of everything, although anything you don't like I'll drink anyway."

Thea smirked, taking a seat on one of the stools at the breakfast bar, "Okay."

"We have one American," Slade said taking out three brown bottles, "one Spanish," he took out three more bottles, these however had green glass and had what looked like trumpet on the white and gold label. "Fancy." Thea commented.

"And lastly," Slade pulled out three brown bottles with a blue label and cap, with honey coloured banners around the label, "Australian."

"Oh ho, you even found something Aussie." her smirk grew, she slapped her hands on her thighs "So, what first?"

"Well the Australian is the strongest of the three, followed by the Spanish, so I would say let's see what you American's have to offer." he took one of the brown bottles and when to fish a spoon from the draw and pop the bottle open before handing it to Thea "M'lady?"

"With a spoon?" she cocked a brow at him but took the bottle non the less.

"I know beer." was all he said. Hearing the bedroom door open, Slade looked over and willed away the feeling of dread. "Up for some take out and beer?"

"Yeah, sure." Oliver said walking over, "What kind?"

"I don't know." Slade turned to Thea "Chinese?"

"Sounds good."

"Chinese, Oliver?" Slade asked, turning back to Oliver.

"Okay."

Slade had to fix this.

Turns out Thea really took a liking to the Spanish, which was good seeing as that happened to be Slade's favourite brand of beer and always kept a few bottles in his apartment. The Chinese was good too, as was the movie but Oliver no long reached for Slade's hand. The three of them ate, chatted, drank and watched a movie with their bodies covered with a warm duvet but the distance was there. After a while even Thea began to feel uncomfortable. Which is why once the movie had ended no body objected to going to bed.

Slade dressed down to his boxers and got into bed, while Oliver put on a pair of baggy pants and for
the first time since they got together they did not curl and cuddle into each other. Slade lay on his back and Oliver on his side, away from the other man. The two of them lay there for what felt like hours saying nothing.

Oliver had been distant and he knew he must have been seriously confusing Slade but he just could not do it. First just holding his hand, knowing he was still there had been enough but then he could not do that anymore. Feeling Slade there with him was just too much to bare. He had to love and be with him or he had to be gone. Oliver did not want him to go but he could not take being stuck in the middle. Not knowing but he just could not say it. He wanted to so badly to but he just could not. He was a coward and Slade deserved so much better than him.

"Do you want to tell me what's wrong?" Slade asked.

Oliver curled into himself, "I just want to forget about these last few hours."

"Wake up tomorrow and pretend it never happened?"

"Yes."

Slade shook his head "I'm sorry but I can't wait that long," he said, rolling onto his side and wrapping a arm around Oliver, pulling the blonde to his chest. "I can't be without you that long, it's killing me." he said, kissing the younger man's ear.

"I'm sorry." Oliver said, trying to curl further into himself "I'm sorry for always holding you back."

"What?"

"I'm sorry, I-" Oliver was cut of when Slade forced him onto his back.

"Don't you ever say something like that, ever." he growled, trying to stay quite, "You don't hold me back, you never did." he paused and placed his hands on Oliver cheeks, "You mean the world to me and you don't hold me back." he lay a chaste kiss on those wonderful lips. Pulling back he looked into those wide emerald eyes and a smile made it's way to his lips, "I want to walk at your speed. If you want to run forward, I'll run with you and if you want to sit down I'll sit beside you."

"Can I sit on your lap?" Oliver asked.

Slade chuckled, "If you want." he placed a kiss on both of Oliver's cheeks, the tip and bridge of his nose, his forehead and finally his lips.

Pulling away Oliver smiled, "Slade, I-"

"You better not be about to say that your sorry." Slade warned, "You never need to be."

"I was going to say that I wanted to thank you."

"Oh."

Oliver laughed.

They kissed.

Oliver wished in that moment, more than any moment in their time together that he could of said it. It's was the perfect moment for declaring his love and the worst possible moment to be rejected after having heard Slade say that he would stand by him.
When they broke apart Oliver turned onto his side and wrapped an arm around Slade's ribs, burying his face in the crevice between the man's pecs. "I am sorry for confusing you." he said, "For being cold."

"Don't worry about it." Slade said, kissing Oliver hair, while running his hand down the blonde's spin, smirking as he shivered.

"Goodnight Slade." Oliver said, the 'ade' of his boyfriend's name becoming caught in a yawn.

"Goodnight Oliver." Slade kissed Oliver hair and wrapped his arm around the younger man, his other lay trapped between them due to the position they were in.

Oliver's arm was also stuck in-between them, smiling he moved his arm up, the back of his hand in Slade's palm, where by the large hand engulfed his, the burning heat warming his cold fingers. Oliver enjoyed the moment and felt lighter than he had before. Maybe one day he could say it because this was worth it, being able to do this for the rest of his life was worth it.

- Lian Yu -

Oliver watched Slade as he slept, wrapped in a cocoon consisting of two sleeping bags and blankets but his skin was still cool to the touch. Slade was always moving; fighting, tracking and hunting, even working out in his spare time, so his skin was always warm, which admittedly always made Oliver shiver that much more when Slade touched him. Now his skin was cool, his nose and fingers cold, his naturally tanned skinned made his recent paleness deceiving but when he was awake the exhaustion in his eyes made his weaken state apparent.

Yao Fei and his daughter, Shado had long fell asleep on their cots, knowing there was no more they could do for Slade and Oliver. The youngest needed the time to do what he had to do and he did not need audience. Being a naturally light sleep, Yao Fei woke sometime in the night to the sound of Oliver sobbing, the sentence "Don't die." both whimpered and ordered from the blonde's lips.

Oliver lay shivering in his cot, which stood next to Slade's, having given up his sleeping bag and draped it over the unconscious man. Oliver rolled his sleeves over his gloved hands and pulled his legs to his chest, trying to seal in as much warmth as possible. He watched the Australian, not really sure what he was expecting. A twitch perhaps, to show that the navy commander turned ASIS agent was still alive and kicking in there.

It was the very early morning and even then it would not become bright until much later, meaning it would be cold for much longer and the icy wind and snow outside was relentless. Oliver's eyes were bloodshot and sore, he'd passed the point where he could cry but that's all he wanted to do. Not long off a year of hunting, training, fighting and here he was crying. Until Slade was awake, there was really nothing else Oliver could do and sleep was out of the question.

The next time Oliver felt a wave of sadness, instead of crying, he spoke. "When Tommy and I were sixteen, we stole this really expense rum from a cupboard in my dad's office. There were two of them and they had been there since I was five and I have no idea why but he never drank it." Oliver chuckled, sniffling slightly, "It was so big and obviously very high in alcohol and we passed out in the garden, behind a hedge." he smiled, "Thankfully his dad though we were at mine, and my family though we were at his. We ended up filling the bottle with watered down Coca Cola to get the colour right and we put it back."

Oliver moved forward to put his forehead against Slade's temple, frowning at the cool skin "Just stay with me. I want to be able to show you them all one day. Tommy, Thea, Raisa, even my mom." the
corners of his lips pulled down, his eyes watered, "I need you." and that's when he felt it, "I love you." Oliver paused when the words left his lips and he knew, he knew he meant those words. He loved Slade. He smiled before realising where he was, what was happening and the tears ran down his cheeks. "I love you, Slade."

To feel love for someone like this was an amazing feeling, to feel like you would soon be losing all of that was by far the most painful thing Oliver had ever felt.

Oliver's eyes shot open. He understood.

They were still in the same position and Oliver was sure he had not been that long, going back to sleep should have been easy now that his dream had reached what had to be its end, that was unless you happen to need to pee, then not so much. The urge was only slight and if he had not felt so wide awake he would have just gone straight back to sleep but as it was he might as well just go and have a better chance of falling asleep when he got back.

Oliver pushed himself away from Slade's naked chest ever so slowly, knowing from experience that it was the best way of moving from the man's grip without waking him. Thankfully, he did manage to manoeuvre his way out, sighing with relief when he was standing next to the bed, before throwing a shirt and heading to the bathroom.

On his way, he noticed that there was light coming from under Thea's bedroom door and it was still there when he was finished.

Oliver went over to the door and tapped it with his knuckles.

"Come in." she called.

Oliver opened the door and stuck his head through "Hey." he gave a gentle smile, "Can I come in?"

"Yes." Thea said, looking over her book, she appeared expressionless, until Oliver had shut the door behind himself, upon turning around Thea frowned, her arms crossing over her chest.

"Thea, I-

"I don't know how hard you tried with relationships in the past but Oliver," she said his name with a growl, "if you want to keep this relationship, you can't fuck around people around like that." she added, "Mind my language."

She really was Slade in female form. "We talked, we're fine." Oliver said.

A smile pulled at her lips, "Good." she paused, before gasping "Did you..."

"No," Oliver sighed, "But I did reach the end of that dream and I know what it means now."

"That's important, I agree," she said, waving away the matter with one of her hand, "But what did you tell him."

"Really?" Oliver groaned, seeing the determined look in his sister's eyes he sighed, "Okay."

Thea folded the corner of the page she was on before putting the book on the night stand, next to the lit lamp, their only form of light. She patted the space next to her, pulling back the covers with her other hand.

Oliver just looked at her for a second before walking around the bed and hopping on, slipping his
legs under the covers, resting his back against the headboard.

"So?"

He eyed his sister for a second before saying, "I just said that I wanted to forget about these last hours. Seeing as how I had been distance since the park, even more when he got back from getting beer. I apologized but he said I did not have to, he..." he turned to his sister "No laughing." he warmed.

She help up her hands, "No laughing." she agreed.

"I said that I felt like I was holding him back and he..." Oliver paused, rubbing the back on his neck and looked at the wall, "He said that I meant the world to him, I did not hold him back. That he wanted to move at my speed, ran forward if I did and that he would sit beside me if I sat down. So, yeah, he said that." turning back to his sister he saw her mouth was open but she was smiling and her hand was on her heart. "Thea?"


"Thea-"

"That's love, Ollie. That. Is. Love." she smiled, "What else could that possibly be?"

"Partnership." Oliver pointed out.

Thea paused at that, thinking for a second before cocking a brow, "What?"

Oliver shook his head, "Never mind. Can I tell you about the dream now?" he asked, hoping to change the subject.

Thea squinted her eyes at her brother but ignored the matter for now. He had been honest about a lot lately but the whole park conversation and now this. Partnership? What like in the police? She would find out but for now she was kind of curious about the dream. "Okay, how did it end?"

Oliver frowned, how could he not? "The argument ended and I went to stay at his for the night. I did not realise when I was dreaming but it was the same day that I, well that night when I was about to fall asleep and I looked over, he was already asleep and I..." he stopped himself, beginning to feel like Felicity when she went on a rant, "I told him that I loved him, he was still asleep but I did it."

"Oh, wow." Thea grinned wildly, "So he told you but you could not hear it because you told him and he couldn't hear it." she shook her head, "You do know the meaning of these dreams, right?"

"To tell him." And just hope to never face such pain in doing so, "To risk it."

"And to hear him say it back. Ollie, there is no risk." Thea laughed, "He loves you. Anyway you can't just sit around wondering what if. Your just suffering. Your personally made hell."

"Lian Yu." he commented.

"Again, I say What?"

"It was the name of the island." he said, "It means Purgatory."

"Yeah, well case in point, you've been there long enough."

Oliver laughed.
"What a cheerful name." she commented.

"Slade said the same thing once." Oliver smiled.

"Okay." Thea wrapped her arms around her brother's neck, "You deserve this Ollie," she said, voice muffled, "I want you to be happy."

Oliver returned the hug, "I am."

Moving from the hug, Thea pushed Oliver, near knocking him off the bed, "Go back to your boyfriend."

"Alright, alright." Oliver said, getting up and moving to the door.

"I'll email the photos to your phone when we get back." she said, smiling.

"Thank you." Oliver smiled back, before taking his leave.
Wednesday

Chapter Notes

Note that hànzì are Chinese characters (words and letters).

Also the song Is Carry Me by Papa Roach.

Waking up, Slade found that he was laying his back. He deduced that it was still dark outside; from the lack of light radiating from under the curtain. The Aussie was not too sure what woke him but he smiled when he felt the warm breath on his shoulder and the warmth along his arm. Turning his head to the side he saw Oliver at his side. The blonde's arm was curled around his bicep and his naked chest was pressed up against the arm. He head lay on the pillow, the tip of he nose poking Slade's shoulder. His mouth was open ever so slightly and his eyelids were gently shut, not flickering with dreams. He looked relaxed, peaceful.

Slade leant forward ever so slowly and kissed the blonde's forehead, then he closed his eyes, falling asleep once more.

Slade awoke later to the feel of a fingertip drawing hànzì characters along his chest. He kept his eyes closed, his breathing slow which made his chest feel a little tight but he wanted to know what his boyfriend was writing. The feeling of a cross finally gave Slade his answer, he knitted his eyebrows, "Did you just write wheat?" he asked, his eyes still shut.

Oliver hummed, "I just always remember it, seeing as we used to leave random messages like that to fuck with their heads." he laughed.

Slade smirked, he remembered the first time they did that. Yao Fei and Slade knew all there really was to know about the Island so getting around was never a problem but the second year Shado got a chest infection which did not really bother her until she kept frightening animals away while hunting with her coughing, plus it did not help much when she was trying to aim her bow. Also Yao Fei was understandably worried about his daughter, not that Yao Fei was a really emotional guy, he was always level-headed but they had all been around him enough to know that those lingering looks meant that he was worried.

They would have just harvested some of that herb Yao Fei and been planting around the Island but it was too early and they had none in storage. So, Slade and Oliver volunteered to sneak into one of Fryers camps to get some antibiotics but after searching through some documents they found that the only camp that had them was the main camp which had recently become more guarded due to the newest supply shipment. If they were noticed, that was it, all hell would brake lose. The risk was just too high.

So one day Yao Fei went out a few miles out from this main camp and wrote the seeming random word 'North' on a tree, a another mile away he wrote 'East' and in another mile to the left he wrote the words 'nothing' and 'time'. The words meant nothing at all but Fryers thought otherwise and spent the next week sending soldiers out to find more signs. The group waited a couple of days to make sure the mercenaries were distracted before they went to the camp, in the middle of the day no less, seeing as how they would not expect it and they got what they needed. As Slade, Oliver and Yao Fei
were able to get in; they even grabbed some low key extras like salt; both for food and to pack wounds to hold the bleeding, and other items like matches, bottles for water storage and cups. They never took anything that was likely to be counted, minus the antibiotics and they got away with out ever being noticed.

They would steal from the camps a great deal but stealth and never taking anymore then was questionable was key. They built up one hell of a surplus over time but they always made sure never to fully really on or overuse the mystery witting distraction tactic. As far as they knew Fryers always believed it to be a sort of code, which due to regular changing to keep the air of secrecy about it, he could never figure out.

"Yeah, I remember." Slade let out a sigh at the pleasant feel of cool fingertips kneading at the muscles in his chest.

"Want me to massage your back?" Oliver asked.

Slade hummed in thought. Thea was in the next room but she should have the sense to knock and nether of would be likely to have sex when she was just there, so there was no real harm. "Sounds nice." Slade agreed, opening his eyes and tilting his head up to meet Oliver, "Morning."

"Morning." Oliver smiled, his bright green eyes sparkling. He pushed himself up to support himself on his elbow and then he leant forward and kissed Slade. Pulling back from the kiss, Oliver sat with his legs crossed, waiting.

Slade smirked and rolled onto his front, stretching his arms out until they clicked before crossing them under his chin.

Oliver mounted Slade, resting his behind of his boyfriend's.

"Literal bummimg." the Aussie commented.

Oliver snorted, "Way to ruin a moment."

"I try."

Oliver shook his head at his boyfriend. He started to run his hands up Slade's sides, fingers curling around his body. When he reached the top he moved to Slade's neck, running his hands down the man's neck to his shoulders, holding down and dragging his thumb to add a bit of pressure to the massage. Oliver did this again, smiling at the way Slade was relaxing under him and how he arched his back as Oliver ran his palm down his spine. Oliver ran his flat hands along Slade's ribs, starting at his spine. Once for the top set and then for the bottom to make sure all was accounted for, before ran his hand down Slade's spine once more, adding more pressure in his finger tips.

The massage went on for about a two minutes in a comfortable silence, Oliver worked the muscles and enjoyed the way Slade leaned into his touch and the blonde had to admit that he linked being the one to treat for a change. He loved the way Slade cared for him, he'd never been in a relationship where his body was practically worshiped before and it felt amazing. Maybe it was because Slade liked to look after Oliver, Oliver was younger then the other man, and, he hated the term because they were both men for God sake, but he was 'girl' when they were sexually together. Oliver would being lying if he said he didn't forget that he should be treating Slade too, he wanted to treat the man. It could have just been the incident last night but it did make Oliver think about some things, this being one of them.

"What other words to you remember?" Slade asked.
Oliver had to think for a moment before remembering their conversation before. "Oh, yeah. Um, letters mostly." he said, "Words?" he hummed to himself, running his hand down Slade's spine, adding a gentle pressure with his palm, as it dipped into the curve of Slade's lower back. He stopped and smiled, before using his index finger to write down Australian's side.

Slade hummed in thought, upon feeling the 'L' after the partial box shape, he groaned, "Horse." burying his face in his crossed arms, "Figures you would remember that. Frickin' giraffe" he said, voice muffled.

Oliver smiled, he moved forward and lay his naked chest on Slade's back, enjoying the warmth that it provided.

Slade just chuckled lightly.

Oliver went about absent-mindedly drawing the few words and letters he remembered, smile blooming onto his face each time Slade named it. As he drew he remembered Thea and he thought of an idea, an idea that had would not left his head.

"Slade?"

"Um?"

Oliver paused, not quite knowing how to go about this, "If, um no, who could," he exhaled, knitting his brows, eyes staring down at Slade' back, "would you, um…"

"Oliver?" Slade asked, moving his cheek to rest on his arm, so he could see his partner.

"It's nothing bad but," he took a breath before just saying it, "do you think I should tell Thea about the Island?" he asked, "None of The Hood stuff but I, I guess I, um." he sighed.

"Want to tell her." Slade finished, "You're siblings, it makes sense."

Oliver perked up, shimming up Slade's body to rest his chin on the man's shoulder, so their eyes were only a few inches apart. "You think?"

"She's a strong kid and she seems to want to know from what you've told me." Slade said, "How much do you want to tell her? Fryers, Yao Fei, Shado and I? Wintergreen?" the last word felt bitter on his tongue.

"All of it. If she wants to know how exactly I got the scars then I'm not going to lie to her." he added, "I know that many of the things she'll wish she could forget can only be realised once she knows but yeah, I think she'll be able to handle it, it's just," he groaned "I don't want to upset her like that."

"We'll tell her bit by bit." Slade assured.

It was then Oliver smirked.

"What?" Slade asked.

Oliver moved his arms to rest crossed on Slade's shoulder blades, his chin in the dip of his elbow, "She already thinks we're the world's cutest couple, wait till she finds out we've been together for nearly five years."

"She'll explode."

Oliver grinned. Looking into those dark eyes, he felt embers ignite in his belly, "Thank you."
"You have no need to." Slade simply said.

With their bags loaded into the car, the group decided to go and have breakfast, grabbing a few takeaway coffees before they left. The morning was cool and the sky was covered in thankfully white clouds and not the dark, rain filled ones but the somewhat gloomy weather did nothing to spoil the good mood the three were it.

Thea was bright and beaming this morning; maybe she was just in a good mood, maybe it was because she had a great time but most likely it was because her brother and his boyfriend were back to themselves, affectionate and cute as ever.

"Aw." She cooed at her brother as he got in the back next to her, having seconds ago kissed Slade on the cheek, chatting and smiling in goodbye, even when they were going to be in the same car.

Oliver smiled shyly, running his hand through his short hair, a nervous habit. Thea had no idea what Slade and he were about to tell her.

"All ready to go?" Slade asked as he opened the door.

"Yep." Thea gave the man a polite smile.

Seeing the look on his sister's face, Oliver frowned, he was worried. What would she think of him? He was not some guy who had grew a few issues from being alone for five years, he was a guy who had been dropped in the middle of what seemed to be a one-sided war zone. He had killed, first accidentally, then to protect and save his friends and at last, just cold-bloodedly. Then there was Slade who had trained him not just to survive but to kill, even if every kill was his doing and his alone. They lived, fought and killed together. When you thought about it like that the whole notion of being together for five years on an Island did not seem as romantic as many would have believed.

"It's your choice." Slade said in Russian, taking his seat in the car and slamming the door shut behind him, "She loves you, remember that."

Oliver paused, he took a deep breath and exhaled, turning he saw a very confused looking Thea, "Thea, I need to tell you something."

Thea nodded, "Okay?"

Slade put the car in gear, manoeuvring them out the parking spot and then out the car park all together.

"You going to tell me or what?" Thea crossed her arms over her chest. What was going on with these two all of a sudden?

"I want to tell you everything." Oliver said, "My scars, the Island. All of it."

Thea felt her breath stop for a second, like when a TV show revealed that the big secret was about to he told.

"But you have to understand that I did not want to tell you because... Well, I did not want you to hate me, not when I finally have you in my life again." he said.

"Oliver," she shook her head with a smile on her lip, "I could never hate you. Go for it. Tell me." she lent back in her seat, waiting. Then she realised something, "Slade knows?" she questioned.
"Slade knows." Oliver confirmed, "But will get to that bit later."

"Okay." Thea said, eyeing the back of the dark-haired man's head with curiosity, before turning back to her brother.

"The first day I got to the Island," he paused remember his father; dead and cold, being attacked by birds. He held down the bile that threatened to raise up his throat, "I was walking around. Wondering what to do, what I was suppose to do at a time like that when I saw a man."

"You weren't alone?" Thea's eyes widened.

His shoulders shook slightly with a silence chuckle, "Not even remotely close."

"Why didn't you say?" Thea asked, brows knitted in confusion.

"Some of the moments you would have believed and the rest you would not, trust me." he said, "His name was Yao Fei, he was a solider in the Chinese military and he was made to take the blame for massacring people, he was sent to Lain Yu as a prisoner."

"Wha-"

"The Island was full of soldiers; Chinese, American, English, Middle Eastern, African. They all were mercenaries, all in it for the money, hired by a man called Fryers." he said.

Thea just sat there, mouth open, eyes wide, not knowing what to say.

"I knew nothing of that at the time." he said, "Yao Fei kept me safe, cleaned my wound and then-"

"Wait." Thea said, holding up her hand, "Wound?"

Oliver unbuttoned his shirt by a few buttons, pulling his dress shirt and shirt down on one side to show the mark Yao Fei had given him, "Yao Fei needed to know I was not a threat to him, so he, um, stabbed me."

"Wha- what?!" Thea borderline yelled, "Why? The hell Oliver?" she demanded, "Why?"

"To weaken me and find out if I was a solder in disguise, it was unlikely I could be anything else." he said, "If you want me to tell you everything, you have to know that those five years were painful, bloody and they changed me, so that I could cope, else I would have been killed." he smiled, remember his time there, the good times, "But there were people who cared for me and in all honestly I would not take back those years. They made me stronger, they taught me to never waste my life and gave me people who I could trust with my life and who could trust me with theirs. I would be lying if I said I don't miss them."

Thea nodded, eyes still wide, mouth still open.

"The next day, Yao Fei brought me a wild bird in a wooden, cage thing he had made and he said Shengcín." he said, "It Chinese, I thought it mean bird. I had no idea what he wanted from me but every time I asked he just kept saying it. Eventually I learned that he knew English, not that much but enough to understand simple sentences. He told me that Shengcín meant survive, not bird and if I wanted to eat I would have to kill the bird."

Thea nodded, listening calmly but the worst was yet to come.

Oliver looked in to his sister's bright blue eyes, not believing what he was about to say.
"Oliver, you came this far," Slade said in Russian "you need to go on. Stopping now won't help. It'll only make her imagine the worst."

"What could be worse?" Oliver asked in Russian but he knew Slade was right. He turned back to Thea, "Yao Fei told me that it would not be the last time I would have to kill and the look he gave me a look that was so serious, I did not understand for the longest time but..." he didn't want to see pain in her wondrous big blue eyes but he had to, "The first time I killed an animal it was to stay alive and the first time I killed a person, it was for the same reason."

Thea looked at her brother in horror, "You- you killed a man." she said.

Oliver nodded, "It was the first time but it would not be the last. I had to do a lot of things I never wanted to do, never imagined I could," he remembered the man in the cave, the one he thought had been on the Queen's Gambit, "but when it came to staying alive and keeping those I cared about safe, I did what I had to do."

There was silence in the car for the longest time, Thea had her elbow leaning against the car window, chin in her hand, thinking. To her credit she was calm, her eyebrows would knit, trying to put everything together in her head, trying to make sense of everything. "What happened next?" she suddenly asked.

Oliver looked over to her, not believing how calm she was.

She turned to Slade, "You were in the navy. You killed." she said.

"Yes." Slade nodded, looking at the rear-view mirror to meet her eyes.

She nodded, turning back to her brother, "Things aren't always what they seem and your my brother." she gave him a small smile, "What happened next?"

Oliver nodded, warmth filling his chest. He wanted to hug his sister and never let her go but he had to go on. "Well, a year before there were these two agents who were sent to find out what happened to Yao Fei, they were captured and asked to join for their special skills." he added, "They were masters of fighting with swords, martial arts and marksmanship with any and all types of guns they could get their hands on. One joined; he was pilot. The other did not and was held captive for it. He and Yao Fei later escaped together and had planned to get off the Island; he was an explosives expert."

"Had?" she asked.

Oliver nodded, "That comes a little later." he said, "You remember my scars, the ones of my chest."

She nodded, worry brewing in her eyes.

"The agent did that, he want me to tell them where Yao Fei was hiding but I couldn't do it, I couldn't betray him and had I they would have only killed me." he said.

Tears build in her eyes, "You were tortured?"

Oliver nodded and near jumped out of his skin when Thea jumped at him, wrapping her arms around him, face buried in his chest. Oliver held his sister as close as the seatbelts would allow.

"I'm sorry." Thea whimpered, "You were they in pain and-"

"I know." Oliver said, kissing her head, "This is why I never wanted you to know the truth. I love
"You too much to see you in pain like this." his grip tightened.

"Keep going." she said, between sniffs.

"You sure?" he asked.

She nodded, head moving up and down his broad chest.

Oliver paused, looking at his sister before continuing, "Yao Fei saved me but later on he got caught and I went back to save him, wearing the uniform of the soldier who had found me and..."

She tightened her grip around his ribs.

"What I did not know was that Fryers had found Yao Fei's daughter, Shado and was threatening to kill her if Yao Fei did not obey. So he did not help me when I got captured." he added, "But Yao Fai did save me in the end, he used a trick; strangling me until unconscious in way what made my heart beat so faint that I seemed dead, so that Fryers thought he was loyal. Then when he dumped my body, he slipped a map in to my coat that would lead me to the other agent."

She had twitched at the words 'dumped my body', which was understandable but she stiffened completely when Oliver mentioned the other agent.

"It's alright." he kissed her head again, "The other guy, although we started on bad terms, became my closest friend."

Thea looked up at her brother at his words, "Really?"

He nodded, "He was a little distrusting because of his partner's betrayal but then we found an escape from the Island, we think anyway, there was no way to know what would have happened but I went back to get Yao Fei and he came to save me when I failed. He lost his way off the Island and had to, um..." he paused, when he got no objection off Slade he continued. "He had to kill his partner."

"Wow." Thea said, she could not help the smile that pulled at her lips, even if the event was horrible, Oliver had someone there to protect him.

"He trained me and the two of us lived together for a few months before we saved Shado, Yao Fei's daughter, and then Yao Fei, a while later." he said, "That all happened in the course of one year."

"What?"

Oliver chuckled, "Seems insane, right?"

"Well, yeah." she said.

"The next few years were just as insane but I had friends there for me and you know that other guy?" he asked, a smile pulling at his lips.

"Yeah."

There was a pause and Slade took the hint, he raised a hand, "Ni hao."

"It's Chinese for hello," Oliver explained.

Thea paused, "It was you." she turned to meet Slade's dark eyes in the rearview mirror. She smiled, "Ni hao."
Slade smiled back.

"How do you say thank you?" she asked.

"Xièxiè." he said turning back to the road, "And you don't need to. We're partners, it's what we do."

The smile slipped from her lips. Partners. Partnership. That's what Oliver was afraid of losing, his partnership with Slade on the Island. "How long have you two been together? Ollie?" she turned back to her brother with a smirk, her head tilted in manner that Slade would.

The blonde smiled at her for not mentioning the conversation they had last night and just for listening, he kissed his sister's cheek, "Thank you, for everything."

"Had you told me all this when you first came back, I would not have believed you but I know you've changed and after our little holiday I know who you really are, or at least I'm starting to." Her smiled grew, eyes full of determination, "You had to adapt but your still you and not the party boy you want everyone to believe you are."

Oliver blinked.

"I know my brother," she grinned, "It feels like for the first time I can see who you really are. And as for what you had to do," she frowned, "if I'm honest, I'm really trying not to think about that but I understand." she moved so she was leaning against him, her head on his shoulder.

Oliver rested his head on top of hers, it felt so good to be with her like this again, like that hug on his first day back, it felt wonderful, vital. He could not believe he could have gone without it for so long and then he push her away. Why? Did he get so wrapped up in the list or maybe his own sadness that he just pushed every one away?

"Now, how long?"

"Coming up five years."

"Five-" Thea head shot up, moving her brother's out of the way. She eyed her brother with disbelief, "Five years?"

"Yes," Slade confirmed.

Thea cooed, "You guys are so cute." before returning her head to her brother's shoulder, his head joining hers.

"No explosion," Oliver commented.

"I'm impressed," Slade said. He smiled, "Want some music?" he asked, seeing the two relaxed siblings in the back.

"Sounds good." Oliver said.

Slade switched on the radio, a man with an overly positive voice like that of an American 80s game host started to talk about sports and Slade just had to change it. Then there was pop music, more pop music, a guy talking about religion, more pop music. "Americans." Slade growled to himself.

Stopping on a station Thea recognised, she said, "The next one over is a rock station."

Slade pointed a finger to Thea, eyes still on the radio, "You give me more reasons to like you everyday."
Thea grinned.

A woman was talking about bands that were currently touring before she said she was going to play a song that had been requested for some reason or another, no one was really paying attention. Then the song came on, her last words leaching in to the almost soothing sound of the soft strumming of a guitar, with an electric guitar playing occasional shaper, loader notes. Just as she stopped talking the soft drumming of a bass drum, an rhythmic tap of an cymbal started and the guitar picked up, the tone was still soft.

Oliver closed his eyes and listened as a man started singing. He had always been one of those people who loved music and could often compare the words with his life.

"I've been looking for something sacred,
running away from the light.
Gotta burn all the bridges in my head,
that lead me away from my life.
I question my own existence,
question the meaning of life."

Oliver found that his thoughts went back to his sister. Why had he not been able to just be happy, be with Thea? Do what he was doing right now, had that really been so hard?

"Why don't you carry me?
Why don't you carry me?"

He could care for his sister when he knew she needed him. His friends, his family, Laurel had been right, he had people who cared for him but he just pushed them away and for what? Because he feared that they would hate him if they knew? Well yes, clearly. It would make perfect sense after all that he had done and would keep doing. However in all his time back all he wanted to do was suffer. Why?

The song became soft again and it was then that Oliver realised he had missed the rest of the chorus with all his thinking, he really needed to stop over thinking everything but songs just had that way of making him think about his life.

"It takes horns to hold up my halo,"

He had to be the hood if he wanted to follow his father's last wish.

"and strength to get through the fight."

Even if it meant he had to hide his past, who he really was.

"Now I'm laying my cards on the table,
praying everything will be alright."

Now Oliver was pretty sure those words pretty much summed up his life after the Queen's Gambit went down.

"I question my own existence
question the meaning of life."

Was he supposed to show who he really was? Would it be better somehow? If everyone knew that he was not weak, he was strong, stronger then anyone could of imagined?
"Why don't you carry me?
Why don't you carry me?
I can't move on,
I can't live on.
Carry me.
Why don't you carry me?
I can't save me.
I am crazy without you."

Oliver opened his eyes, looking at any and every part of his boyfriend he could see from behind the seat. He was lost with Slade. He had come back dazed and confused, not knowing how to reshape his life when he was different and there was no body there who knew the real him and he didn't want them too. He was broken hearted, he had been for months and would be for months after. Or so he thought.

"The hardest ones to love,
are the ones that need it most."

Slade had left him, he didn't mean or want to but he did and Oliver was all alone and he did not know what to do. He didn't want to suffer but he could not keep going when such a large part of his life was gone.

"The hardest ones to love,
are the ones that need it most."

He could adapt to pretending, he had trained for it. He could not adapt to Slade no longer being there and knowing that he would never be back.

"The hardest ones to love,
are the ones that need it most."

And now he could not risk losing Slade again, he needed him.

"The hardest ones to love,
are the ones that need it most."

"This is so your song." Thea whispered.

Oliver hummed in agreement.

He knew he was a coward for not just telling Slade that he loved him but he needed him. Oliver could not risk losing Slade, not after all they went through.

As the chorus played once more Slade looked into the read-view mirror and smiled at Oliver when he saw the blonde was looking his way.

Oliver smiled back, "Mind if I stay round yours tonight?"

"No at all." he said, winking at the blonde.

Oliver's smile grew.

"Thea? Do you want me to drive you to work before I go?" Slade asked.

Thea's eyes shoot open at that, "Yes."
Detective Lance fired his Glock 45 at the paper man, hitting him three times, all dead centre in his non-existent heart.

"Not bad," a muffled voice said next to him.

Lance removed his ear protectors as he turned his head to meet the dark eyes of a man in dark blue jeans and a simple white polo shirt. "Think you can do better?" Lance asked, not knowing that the man was Slade, having never met or seen a picture of him.

Slade smirked, "I am handy with a gun."

"Army?"

"Navy." The Aussie said, "Yourself?"

"Detective." he eyed the dark-haired man in interest, he held out a hand, "Quentin Lance."

"William Wintergreen." he said, shaking the hand. He did not want to remember anything about Billy but if Lance happened to ask him anything about his history, he would have to use an identity he knew. He did known Billy after all, well he thought he had.

Lance smirked, "Let's see how good you are?"

"Oh," Slade tilted his head, a grin on his face "you doubt my skills?"

"I think you think your good." Lance challenged.

"Okay." Slade nodded, his grin growing, "You shoot first, give me your best shot," he said, holding a hand out towards the paper men, "and I'll beat it."

Lance nodded, "Your on."

The rules were simple, each had a new roll of paper to fire at and two magazines of six fresh bullets. Slade had to remove some of the bullets from his 45 calibre desert eagle, as it carried more rounds then the Glock.

"Why that gun?" Lance asked as he reached for his ear protectors.

"More ammo, wastes less time, good aim and I always preferred heavier guns." he said, completely honest, he was used to using larger guns like rifles and his large swords of course.

"Good aim?" Lance knitted his brows at that, "I would have thought that the weight of that would really mess with the aim." he commented.

"It's simple. I don't miss." Slade grabbed hold of his own ear protectors.

"Cocky." Lance said, "Will see about that." Lance pulled on his ear protectors before grabbing his gun from the table, slipping in the magazine and pulling down the safety. Round after round; hit mere centimetres from one another, right where the heart would be. He removed the empty magazine, slipping the new one in, all automatic, his eyes never leaving the paper man. Another six shots, these however at the head. He pressed a button on the wall and the paper slid towards them, revealing the massive damaged the paper man had suffered.
"Good." Slade said, eyeing the paper man. He smirked and chuckled lightly, picking up his own weapon and loaded it.

Six rounds, each with lighting speed and efficiency, he changed the magazine, six more rounds. He pressed the button.

Lance watched the man as he shot, he was skilled that was more sure and he really loved a challenge, chuckling like he knew he would win.

Hushed voices sounded around the indoor shooting range and Lance looked around in confusion. They were all looking at the firing area. He looked over and he stilled.

The paper man slid towards them. A cross across his heart, six holes in each line, the line was perfectly straight, each hole looking to be exactly half a inch from each other.

"I told you," Slade said, slipping the ear protects from his head, "I don't miss."

Lance just looked back in shock.

"Fancy a coffee?" Slade remove the empty magazine, "I'd say beer but it's a little too early for that."

Lance blinked for a second, shaking his head at the man, a grin pulling at his lips, "Alright. Your on."

Slade had to admit the more he spoke with this Lance guy, the more he liked him. The man reminded him a lot of his self, like how from the sound of his stories; he never gave up on a case, like Slade never gave up on a mission. He also had a very high view of the law and Slade had to admire him for that. The Detective was like an older version of Slade that had chosen the path of the police force, not that Slade ever regretted his path.

"So how did you get out?" Lance asked.

The two had been talking for near an hour, nearly a second coffee down. Slade had just started telling Lance about the first time he met Yao Fei; in a prison guarded by mercenaries. For obvious reasons he left out key bits of information that any good Detective would have been able to use to make links he should not be making.

"Well," Slade said, taking a quick sip of his coffee, "the prisoner and I made a deal. He knew quite a few good tricks that would surprise you, many of which included faking death." Slade said, flipping his wrists over to reveal two long scars along each, "Done right, you can slow your heart beat enough to fake death. The guard called the two others on stand to remove my body and we struck." he grinned, "With them down, we could walk straight out, well more or less."

Lance nodded, pouting his lips in that 'I find that interesting' pout of his, "Sounds existing."

Slade tilted his head, "Police work getting you down."

Lance grinned, "More drunken idiots to deal with."

"Navy. Kind of known for that. At least you can put them in a cell, I have to look after them." Slade said.

Lance chuckled lightly, "Why did you leave?"

"Mixture of reasons." Slade said, "My partner died, for one."
"Oh, sorry about that." Lance said, he and his partner did not really see eye to eye but he understood that the bond of trust between partners was a hell of a thing to lose.

"It's alright. I met and trained this guy a year later, a kid really but he was one hell of a fighter." Slade smiled, thinking back to when he first Oliver, strolling up to the plane.

"Oh?"

"Yeah, good kid." Slade waved the matter away.

Lance let him, "Can I ask you something?"

"Go for it."

"Your Australian?"

Slade looked down at his body, "Shit, am I?"

Lance's face stayed as it was, serious, "Why would ASIS delete the records of a Australian man, living in Starling city."

"ASIS?" Slade questioned himself, "Oh, right, them. I don't know mate, could be more a number of reasons." he added, "Why are you so interested in, what's his name?"

"Slade Wilson."


"You do?" Lance looked at the dark-haired like if he didn't pay attention for a single second, he would miss what was to be said about Slade.

Slade held up his hands, a worried look on his face, "I got to ask why. If your completely honest with me I'll be completely honest with you."

Lance nodded, understanding, "My daughter has a friend who knows Slade, met him six years ago, which can't be possible because he was not here in Starling City at the time."

Slade raised a brow, "So, what? She asked you to find out more about him?"

Lance nodded.

Slade was about to continue when he realised something. Lance had a daughter, Laurel was a lawyer and the female lawyer at Thea's work had the same eyes as the Detective.

"You okay?" Lance asked, wondering what had William so deep in thought.

"I'm fine." Slade said, leaning back in his chair, "Slade is trained to do a lot of damage, yes but he is no harm to you, to anyone really. He's not wanted or being watched by ASIS, he was an agent for them. As for his friend, that would be Oliver Queen."

"He- Wait, what?" that really took Lance by surprise.

"They met in China, where Slade had been working on a mission at the time. He looked after Oliver until the guy could go home. Queen had to stay longer then what was reported for questioning. After time the two of them built up quite a bond, so after a particular horrible mission, Slade decided to move to this city, to watch out for him once more." Slade said, "He means no one any harm."
Lance just stared at him for a second, "How did you know all of that?"

Slade smirked lightly, a little disappointed that this was not a friendship he would be able to keep but he would have Oliver over everyone else anyway, "Now that bit is really interesting." Slade stood, grabbing a few bills from his back pocket and placing it on the table. He held out a hand for Lance to shake.

Lance took the hand, a little confused.

"Quentin, I am Slade." he said, moving his middle finger to Lance's wrist, just in time to feel his pulse increase. He didn't know that.

Lance stilled, crowed café or not, he had to be on his look out. The man was trained to fight, likely a trained killer and he had knowingly tricked the Detective but for what reason? "What do you want from me?" Lance growled, pulling his hand away sharply.

Slade glared at the older man, "All I want from you is to leave me and those I cared about alone." he put on his best smile, "I don't want to hurt you or those around you and I won't, be it physically, emotionally or socially. Give Oliver, Thea and I the same courtesy."

"You know what he did." Lance said.

"I know." Slade nodded, wanting so badly to say that Sara had been alive, however it was unlikely that she still was, "That was not solely Oliver's fault, it just happened. He lost his father, spent the last five years suffering and he has never forgiven himself for what happened to Sara." Slade grabbed the wooden frame of Lance's chair, cornering the older man, "Leave him alone." he warned.

Two sets of dark brown, borderline black eyes met. Fiery anger burning in both, although other feelings were there too; uncertainty, questionably but the determination to protect burned brightest.

Lance looked away first, there was no way he could beat the man, not physically unless he got a lucky shot anyway.

Slade pulled away as his phone started to chime, "Just leave it alone." he said, slipping the phone from his pocket and reading the text. It was from Thea.

*Mind picking me up? I want to talk to you about something.*

Slade hummed in interest, "On my way sweetheart." he mumbled to himself, a gentle smile crawling on to his face.

"It's Thea." Lance said. Well it could not be Oliver.

Slade had to tell him. "I'm going to CNRI to pick her up."

Lance gave him a odd look, "Why are you telling me this?"

"Because I know you will speed ahead of me to protect Laurel, even if there is no reason to," he said, "I have been completely honest with you Lance, the only thing I lied about was my name but even that I told you in the end." Okay, he had lied about the amount of time he spent with Oliver but the other man did not need to know about that. He turned away to get his bike, "I'll see you there."

Slade exited the building, upon turning a corner he called Thea and after a few rings, she answered.

"Hey."
"Thea, yes I can pick you up but we have a small problem I will need your help in."

"Um, okay?"

"I had a chat with Lance, I'll explain that later but right now he is on his way to see Laurel and he may ask you what you know about me. He already knows who I am but I don't want you getting dragged in to this."

"Wait, how does-"

"Is anyone near by?"

"Um, yes Olli, I'm getting a lift."

Slade smirked, "Good girl, you learn quickly. I promise to tell you everything when we get a minute. I'll be there soon."

"Alright, I'll see you back at home."

"Take care of yourself."

"Why must you underestimate me so?" she sighed dramatically.

Slade chuckled, "I'll see you soon."

"Bye."

Slade ended the call. Oliver had one little kick arse of a sister.

Spotting his daughter, Lance ran up to her, "There you are." he said, panting and gulping.

"You okay?" she asked, putting her hand on her father's shoulder.

Lance took her other hand and directed her to the copying room which was thankfully empty. "Oliver's friend Slade just paid me a visit."

Laurel froze in shock.

"Will talk about that later." he said. "He works for ASIS and apparently met Oliver in China."

"What?" Laurel gasped, watching her father walk back and forth in thought.

"He's on his way here to get Thea." he said, stopping himself from pacing any further.

"What does she know?" Laurel asked.

"No idea." Lance turned to his daughter, "I need you to talk to her. This Wilson guy is very dangerous, he says he means no harm but I have no idea what was true and what was not." He shook his head, "He said that he lied about nothing but I can't be sure."

Laurel nodded, "Right. If we don't have much time then I bet to speak to Thea now." she said, before turning and leaving.

Lance followed.
Slade quickly parked his bike on the curve, he need to get to Thea now.

"Thea," Laurel sighed at the teenager's protective stand, her arms crossed over her chest, "he's a dangerous man. I just want you to understand."

"Slade isn't a danger." Thea said sharply, "He's a real nice guy and Oliver and I happen to like having him around. That's our choice, not yours." she turned away.

"Thea, he lied." Laurel said, unable to see the dark-haired girl's reaction but she knew she must have been confused and shocked after what Laurel said next, "He left the Navy years ago and if he lied about that then he could have lied about a lot more, right to your face."

Thea's fists tightened, "He-

"I can't imagine what it's like to find out someone that you look up to so much could lie to you and he must have had his reasons." she said, "But he still lied, you must want to know the truth."

Thea said nothing.

Slade jogged up the stairs so he would not tire, but he took it two steps at a time. He knew Thea was strong but he also knew how much a Detective could get in to a person's head.

Today had been a complete fuck up. He could have been ignorant but Lance knew too much, he could have blackmailed but he had nothing to use, in the end all that was left was to be honest and give the Detective another story close enough to the truth that he could believe, before the man found out too much. It had gone as planned, he knew the Detective would be a little distrusting seeing as Slade had tricked him in order to meet him on neutral ground and state his case to a listening ordnance. Also the man would not be too pleased if he found out that Slade had used Solntsevskaya Bratva to find places he frequented.

Only time would tell if the man believe it but it was unlikely by the looks of things. Slade should have never let his guard down like that, he got Thea involved. She was untrained. Sure he had thrown Oliver in the deep end many times when he had only just met the guy, but Thea knew everything and she did not knew how to protect her self without revealing that she knew for a fact that nothing was wrong. If she revealed something then the Detective could grab hold of it and everything that she knew would unwind and...

Unless he gave him something strong enough to cover all the mystery all together. Now that would work nicely and it would give Thea a good reason for her secrecy. He was unsure how Oliver would take the news but he had to fix this now or risk everything slowly but surely coming out.

"He took special training and he lived as an agent for years. Why would he give that all up to live here and be friends with Oliver?" Laurel asked, "Why Thea?"

Thea wanted so badly to just yell at the woman, tell her why but she didn't.

"Thea," Lance's soft voice said from behind her, "If he is doing something dangerous and you don't tell us what your hiding, you could risk being dragged into it or be seen as an accomplish."

"He's lying to you and your brother, Thea." Laurel said.

She knew he wasn't.
"He'll drag the two of you in to it and then leave you behind to suffer the consequences."

She knew he would never do that. She wanted to ask them what exactly were these so called consequences. They were just making things up but if she asked she knew she could face becoming trapped.

Slade opened the door and ran to the staff room where he could just see the corner of Lance's jacket.

They had Thea trapped against wall. He walked between them, knocking hard in to Lance's shoulder as he did, although the urge to kick the man in the shin was still strong. Standing at Thea's side, he wrapped an arm around her shoulders, "Hey kid." he said, his voice low and husky, as tender sounding as he could really be.

Thea turned to him, she smiled but it was weak, her eyes filled with mental exhaustion and a shimmer of sadness when she saw his face.

The anger and hate drained from Slade as he looked into those big blue eyes, "Sorry." he said, his arm dropped.

"No, it's fine." she said, smile growing. She hugged the Australian, resting her cheek on his chest

Slade froze, surprised that she had done so but hugged her back anyway.

"I told them nothing," she whispered, barely a hint of sound in her voice. Even Slade was not totally sure if he had heard it, instead choosing to read her lips.

Slade's lips formed a smirk. "What is it with everyone hugging today?" Oliver and himself, Oliver and Thea and now the two of them.

Thea giggled.

"Think that's funny, hn?" he asked, "The first time I gave Oliver a hug, he put him chin on my head."

"Aw," she said, her words hiccupping as she laughed.

Slade looked over to where Lance and Laurel stood, looking stunned; both from what was happening and the fact that Slade was here and he looked a little pissed off.

Slade felt the uncertainty bubbling in his stomach. He knew his plan would work or at least it was very likely to but what of Oliver. Would he be angry? Embarrassed? He much preferred the first.

"I'm afraid I will have to ruin all your hard work, Thea." Slade said.

Thea looked up, meeting his set of dark orbs. She was confused and it showed.

"I have to tell them the truth. Either that all leave them with the idea that I'm some sort danger." he said. He gave her a gentle smile and pulled his phone from his pocket, running him thump over and over the touch-screen until he found it. "Here." he said, holding the phone for one of them to take.

Lance took it but when he saw the picture his breath caught in his throat.

Laurel tilted the phone so she could see, "What is-"

It was the picture that Felicity had taken, the first picture that ever existed with both Slade and Oliver
in it and they were kissing.

"He's my boyfriend." Slade said, "It's why I moved here, why I gave up my job and why I'm hugging his sister."

"We're family." Thea said. She caught on quickly.

Family. The word pulled at Slade's heart.

"Telling Oliver about this should be fun." Thea commented.

"Thank you for reminding me." Slade said, directing Thea out of the room with his arm around her shoulder, grabbing the phone from Lance as he went.

The father and daughter just watched the pair leave, not sure what to do, what to say.

"Well..." Laurel said, letting out a breath of air "Crap."

Lance just about had the brain function to nod in agreement.

"Wow..." Thea said, ducking under the Australian's arm and stepping into his apartment, "So this is you place, hn?" she did not step any further, knowing that would be a little rude. "It's nice."

"Want something to drink?" Slade asked, walking into the kitchen.

"What do you have?"

"Coffee, tea and water."

"Can I have tea?"

"If you must."

Thea resisted the urge to punch the man in a friendly manner, then again if Thea full on walloped him it would still probably be friendly by his standards.

Thea enjoyed hanging out with Slade, the man had really started to fit in with her and her brother's life, Oliver especially. Slade calmed Oliver, made him happy, hell the guy had looked after him for years. Also Thea found that she respected the man a great deal, he was funny, charismatic and could be very friendly or very intimidating, depending on who you were and what you did. Thea had found out as much when she had near upset Oliver on the beach. Slade protected those he cared for, including Thea.

Thea found that she not only looked up to the man but she wanted him to respect her too. A found friendship was building between the two. He may have only been Oliver's boyfriend but he felt like family.

"What did you want to talk to me about anyway?" Slade asked, flicking on the electric kettle.

"Don't you have more important things to worry about?" she smirked, "How are you going to tell Ollie?"

"He said he'd pop round in an hour." Slade said, taking two cups from the cupboard. "Now tell me."

"I said how not when."
"And I asked a question first." he looked her in the eyes, "I'm fluent in Queenese. I know when Oliver's trying to get out of something and your doing the same."

Thea could not help but smile at that. She sighed, her smile weakening, "Do you and Oliver ever think about the things you did? Do you..." she hummed, hoping Slade would continue the sentence.

"Regret it?" he knew that was what she meant when she looked away. "Sometimes I can't stop thinking about the things I've done, sometimes I don't think about them at all but had I not done what I had to, more people would have died. It's a weird concept really, killing people to save people." he strolled over to another cupboard, pulling out a box of teabags.

Thea paused for a second, holding her hands out like she was trying to literally grasp the concept that Slade was okay with this. "Wh-what? That's it."

"Killing **should** never be okay." he continued, "But people still will and there have to be others out there who are will fight and kill to protect. Myself, Detective Lance, Oliver..." he listed.

Thea stilled at her brother's name.

"We saved a lot of lives doing what he did. We destroyed weapons that could have killed thousands." he said, moving to stand in front of her. "When I killed Billy, my partner, I did so to protect Oliver. Billy did horrible things to people, like Oliver and he left me for dead. So killing him was okay? Yes, it was." he said, "But I was his son's godfather. I met him after I joined ASIS and we kept each other alive for years."

Thea watched with wide eyes as Slade moved to the soon to be boiled kettle.

"He was my best friend and I trusted him." he shook his head, "Point is that I was wrong. He always got a little too creative when he killed, passing the point of necessity. He enjoyed the killing and the money, and I was too blind to see." he moved to the fridge, grabbed the milk and returned just in time for the kettle to click off. "Yao Fei, Shado, Lance, Oliver, myself and even Diggle, are different. We do these things to protect people. That is why Lance and I take pride in what we do or in my case did. Otherwise it's just plain murder."

"When I think about it..." Thea said, voice quiet, "The things you and Oliver did should upset me and they do but deep down they don't. Is that wrong?"

Slade moved forward and grabbed her shoulder, she looked up, "You understand what the difference is and you know we were on the right side." he gave her a light smile, "Plus you love your brother and I'm just great."

Thea giggled, her hand rested on his.

As Slade walked away to make their tea, Thea said, "It's just a hard thing to keep to yourself. You know? I mean I can't tell him anyway but how would I if I could?" she said, more to herself than Slade.

"Him?" Slade asked, cocking a brow.

She smiled, "My boyfriend, Roy."

Slade grinned, "Boyfriend? Hm?" pushing a cup of tea to the young billionaire.

Thea took the cup, "Thank you and yes."
"How long?" Slade asked, picking up his own cup and directed Thea to the livingroom with an open arm.

"A few months. The day I started at CNRI in fact." she said, taking a seat on the sofa and Slade sat down beside her, "He mugged me, weird first meeting I know."

Slade shrugged, "First time I met Oliver I held him at knife point with my katana."

Thea looked at him for a second, eyebrows knitted and frowning, "I should have guessed. What's a katana?"

Slade pointed over to the wall just before his bedroom where his pair of katana sat crossed on custom wall stand.

"Oh, wow." Thea stood, wondering over to the swords, "Those look scary."

"I had them made especially in china years back." he said, before taking a sip of his tea.

"You really fight with these things?" Thea asked, turning back to the Aussie.

Slade nodded, "Oliver too." he held his hand in the air, palm down, tilting it side to side, "Kind of. He was always better with poles and throwing knifes." he couldn't exactly say Oliver never got the whole slashing and stabbing down, or mention the bow and arrows for that matter.

"Oliver can throw knifes?" Thea made her way back to Slade's side.

Slade nodded, "Wicked aim. A natural really."

"Go Ollie." Thea laughed.

Talking about her brother's hidden live was so surreal and yet it helped. The more they spoke about it the more oddly comfortable she felt. This was all kinds of messed up and yet she did not feel bad about it.

"Oliver, you really need to make more arrows." Felicity said, sitting herself down on her computer chair.

"How many are there?" Diggle asked.

"Four,"

Oliver frowned at that, "I have a lot more, they're just in my surplus. I really have fallen behind."

"You've been distracted." Felicity held up her hands, "We can't blame you." looking over to Diggle, she saw the man had a grimace on his face, "Well I can't."

Oliver smiled.

"How was your little holiday anyway?" she asked.

"It was good." his smile turned shy, "It was great. Thea took lots of pictures."

Diggle and Felicity could not help but smile.
Slade pulled up to front of the Queen manor. Once the engine was off, Thea slid off the bike and handed her helmet to Slade.

"I want updates." she warned the man as he removed his helmet.

Slade smirked, ruffling up her hair with his hand.

"Hey!"

Slade chuckled, "See ya kid." he said, adding, "Your mum's got work tomorrow night, right?"

"Yeah." she tilted her head in question.

"I was thinking of cooking for Oliver tomorrow, want to tag along?"

She cocked a brow, "You cook?"

"I'm no master but Yao Fei and Oliver couldn't and Shado started to resent the job after a while, so we slipt it." he said.

Thea grinned, "Dinner it is."

Slade turned a corner to find Oliver sitting on the floor, leaning against his door.

"I have not been here that long." Oliver said, pushing himself up, "Where were you?"

"Dropped Thea off." Slade said, moving to unlock the door, "I invited her around to the apartment so we could talk about somethings. Also I'm cooking for you and Thea tomorrow night."

"How did you get roped into that?" Oliver asked, ignoring the more important question.

Slade opened the door, shutting it as he and Oliver walked inside. "I'm pretty sure you really want to know what Thea and I had to talk about."

Oliver nodded. Noticing the two cups on the coffee table he could not help but smile. He walked over and picked them up, moving to the kitchen to put them in the sink to be washed up later.

Slade wrapped his arms around Oliver's waist, kissing the back of the blonde's neck.

Oliver sighed, smile pulling at his lips.

"She wanted to talk about this morning." Slade said, "It went well, by the end we were just chatting about her friends and her boyfriend." he paused, happy when Oliver did not freeze but he did tense.

"Roy. I heard."

"As much as I want to look after her, he sounds alright. We will have to meet him."

Oliver hummed in agreement, relaxing.

Slade sighed, "That was the first two out of three difficult things I have to tell you."

Oliver turned his head at that, bright eyes meeting Slade's dark.

"I met with Lance today. It was going well but it didn't work and then due to his guess work he went to see Laurel and Thea."
"What?" Oliver's eyes grew dark, filled with worry and building with anger. He turned to face Slade.

"She's okay, she held her own. I would never intentionally put her in the line of fire like that, Oliver." Slade said.

The fire in Oliver's eyes dulled, "Was she really okay?"

"She's great." Slade said, "She really liked the outcome, although I'm not sure you will."

"What do you mean?" Oliver knitted his brows at his boyfriend.

"Oliver..." Slade held the younger man's cheek in his hand, "I had to give Laurel and Lance something they would believe and would make sense of you knowing Russian and me not being in the Starling city when we should have met for the first time."

Oliver blinked.

"They think we met when you got off the Island. You came to stay with me while things were being sorted out and," Slade shrugged his shoulders, not really knowing what to say but "I showed them the picture Felicity took. They know we're dating."

"Th-they know?" Oliver stammered. He pointed a finger at Slade, "They know?"

Slade nodded, his hand dropping.

"They know." Oliver said to himself.

Slade just looked at Oliver for a second. The blonde was looking at the floor with a look of disbelief and an occasional wave of knitted brows like what Slade had said was gibberish.

Oliver smiled, "They know."

Now Slade was really confused.

Oliver could not believe it. After looking past the fact that Thea had helped Slade lie and the fact that the two Lances now knew that he and Slade were together. Oliver realised that Slade had told someone. He had told someone that they were together.

With each new person Oliver told, the happier he became, the more weight was lifted from his shoulders. Something about having people know, being able to be close to Slade when others were around, just felt so normal. Oliver would no longer have to hide what he had with Slade to Laurel and Tommy would no longer have to lie. How could Oliver be angry about something like that?

Looking up to met Slade's darks, Oliver felt an odd feeling of shyness come over him, "When we showed Dig and Felicity, and when I told Tommy, I realised that I really liked people knowing we're together." he looked down and took Slade's hands, lacing his fingers with Slade's, their palms pressed together.

Slade blinked, then he smiled and kissed Oliver's cheek. "Good, because I like people knowing too."

Oliver looked up, flashing Slade a grin before kissing him. The blonde was not too surprised when seconds later Slade broke the kiss and hoisted him in to the air, Oliver simply wrapped his legs above Slade's hips. They kissed. Oliver gave in to Slade, allowing the man to invade his mouth. They kissed and lightly bite each other's lips and as Oliver set to work kissing, biting and sucking at Slade's neck. The Aussie carried the younger man to his room.
Oliver bounced as Slade dropped him onto the bed. The blonde smirked up at the dark eyed man and grabbed his shirt, pulling him forward. Slade just managed to catch himself before he landed on the man. He smirked back. He pressed his thigh between Oliver's legs and went for his neck, running his teeth along the quivering skin.

"Fuc-kkk~" Oliver gasped, the gasp becoming a moan as Slade sucked at his neck, trying to make a sizable mark.

Slade unzipped Oliver's jeans and slipped his hand inside, lightly tugging at the clothed hardness, becoming harder under his touch.

"Damn it." Oliver groaned softly, "Touch me."

Slade moved Oliver's jeans and boxers down to his knees and rubbed a thumb over Oliver's head and slit.

Oliver's eyelids fell shut as Slade kissed along his neck, hand on his cock. "Slade." he moaned softly as the older man nipped the shell of his ear.

Slade smiled along Oliver's skin. He leant away to grab a packet of lube from his night stand drawer. He held the packet between his index and middle finger, "Take your clothes off." he ordered.

Opening his eyes, Oliver spotted the lube. He grinned at his boyfriend, removing his shirt.

Slade followed with his own grin.

They removed their shirts, shoes and their jeans. There they were again, naked.

They kissed again and Oliver took the upper hand, pushing Slade down onto his back and straggled the dark-haired man's lap.

Oliver ran his hand down the hard muscles of Slade's chest, he smiled. He leant forward, chest down upon Slade's, his lips meeting the man's. Oliver arched his back as Slade's large hands ran over his behind, leaning into those strong hands. He gasped into the Australian's mouth as the man grabbed his arse.

The real surprise came when Oliver's cheek received a slap.

The blonde moaned hard, braking the kiss.

Slade smirked and gave another.

Oliver's hips jerked. He loved when Slade touched his arse. From light touches to spanking and penetration, Oliver would be turned on immensely and the older man had been able to tell since their first time together.

Oliver's grinded himself into Slade's hip as the man ran his hand along Oliver's rear, moaning softly as Slade ran his finger tips down his crevice. His moans hiccupped as Slade spanked him. Had Oliver not been supporting himself he would have reached down to take care of himself, where Slade would have either let him or intervened, speeding up to the part where they had sex. However Oliver had to admit he was enjoying this.

Slade gave Oliver three sharp slaps to the rear which had the younger man moaning into his neck, his body sprinting to it's climax. Then Slade grabbed his hips and flipped him over, climbing on top.
"Sla-" Oliver was silenced by the Australian's full lips. Oliver fisted a hand in Slade's hair, pulling the man closer.

Ripping the packet open, Slade covered his fingers in the liquid. While at the same time exploring Oliver's mouth, Slade reached down and rubbed his finger tip at Oliver's rim before slipping a lubricated finger inside.

Slade smirked on Oliver's lips as the blonde pushed down on him, moaning as he did so.

Slade slipped another finger inside, followed by another; scissoring his fingers to get Oliver used to the size, the stretching of his rim was making Oliver moan to the point he could no longer keep kissing Slade. Slade was okay with that because there was something he wanted to do for Oliver that required his mouth.

Slade kissed his way down Oliver's body, stopping only to run his tongue along Oliver's nipples and to dip it into his bellybutton. The Australian also ran his tongue down Oliver's cock but he stayed no longer, which made Oliver whine. Slade would have told him to wait, that he had something Oliver would like even more planned but he had a better idea. He grabbed Oliver's thighs, pushing them open and down flat on the bed. He then leant forward and blew a puff of soft warm breath at Oliver's rim.

Oliver moaned, his head rolling side to side. He loved when Slade did this. "Please, Slade." he begged, "Please."

Slade kissed the rim.

"Slade!" Oliver moaned.

Slade teased the rim with his tongue before slipping it inside, stiffening his tongue to make penetration easier.

"Oh, God-~" Oliver gasped as Slade thrust inside of him. His hips jerked as Slade curled his tongue, the tip's teasing bringing with it shivers of sensitivity.

Thrust after thrust Oliver was filled with that indescribably amazing wet heat but it was not enough, he needed to be filled, he needed that special spot to be touched.

Slade pulled back, circling Oliver's rim with his tongue.

"Fuck me already." Oliver groaned, "Slade."

Slade went up Oliver's body and kissed his lips, moving his tongue along the blonde's; allowing him to taste himself, along with the flavour of strawberries. Slade knew Oliver was ready.

Slade held himself at Oliver's entrance and then grabbed hold of the younger man's hips and pushed himself inside.

Slade broke the kiss with a gasp, which was probably for the best as upon entry Oliver threw his head back with his own gasp. Slade worked his way inside with a relatively slow pace, while Oliver whimpered and moaned under him. Slade took one of Oliver's hands in his, their fingers interweaved, while his other hand jerked Oliver gently.

Once all the way in, Slade leant down and kissed Oliver's forehead before his hips started move. His thrusts started slow but quickly spend up, pistoning into Oliver's tight heat, changing angles until he found his mark...
"O-oh, Fuck~" Oliver moaned, grabbing hold of Slade's shoulders and pulling him closer.

Slade groaned at the feeling of the tightness pulsing around him. He had found it.

Thrust after thrust Slade hit that sweet spot with breathtakingly wicked aim, filling Oliver with phenomenal pleasure that had him pushing down to meet Slade's each and every thrust. Until Oliver's body gave in, allowing his release. The squeezes of the red hot tightness pulled the last ounce of control from Slade and had the Aussie losing rhythm and hammering to his climax.

Two lay there, Slade still on top with his member still in Oliver, catching their breath. Slade kissed Oliver's neck, admiring a hickey of his making, then he kissed Oliver's jaw before their eyes met. Dark into light, black into aqua.

Slade smiled, "Hey."

Oliver smiled back, "Hey."

Slade kissed Oliver forehead, the tip of his noise and then his chin. Oliver laughed, pulling Slade forward so their lips met.

Lance sat at his desk, the constant sound of phones ringing and people talking completely blocked out. He placed a hand on his keyboard, his fingers ready to type. He had less information and the name was more common but...

*William Wintergreen*

The name stood in the search bar. He pressed enter.
Thursday

Chapter Summary

Part one of Thursday

Before the Lobotomy by green day
Back in Black by ACDC (guitar solo)
Whiskey in the Jar by Metallica
Take me out by Franz Ferdinand

Unbetaed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Detective Lance, the head of forensics John Everett and his assistant Bradley all sat crowded around the lab computer in John's office. Lance may have had Slade fooled, or at least he hoped he did but that did not mean that he could not be wary of the risks this time round. He was working on the theory that William Wintergreen was Slade's desisted partner. It was a long shot but it was all he had.

Slade, Lance believed, may have just been looking out for Oliver and Thea. He cared about them, Oliver for sure. Lance could still not believe that those two were really together. Lance did believe, no he knew that there was more to their story.

From Oliver's use of a lie detector, Lance knew the younger man had not been alone, that he had been tortured. Well that's what the blonde had said. Unknown to both Quentin and his daughter, Oliver had lied and passed the lie detector test in doing so. Lance had not realised this fact until just a day later when he remembered Laurel had once visited the prison for a school trip. It took his a few hours but he sieved through the tapes until he saw it. There was Oliver, chatting to Tommy as they looked at the empty cells.

Oliver knew how to pass a lie detector. Slade could have taught him, the same way he taught him Russian. Lance had a feeling the blonde was more fluent than he let on to Laurel. Maybe Slade had taught him more. It was possible that they met when Oliver got off the Island, that he had to stay with Slade for a while and the man just happened to be on a mission at the time but Lance did not think so. He was sure that it was all linked. Maybe Slade's mission had something to do with the Island and the people on it.

Slade opened the door to Oliver's club and slipped inside, turning to lock on behind him. Walking over to the bar he spotted Diggle reading a news paper, "Hello again." Slade grinned at Oliver's bodyguard.

Diggle gave the man a polite smile, before realising something. "I thought the door was locked?"

"It was." Slade sat down beside him.

Diggle shook his head at the man. His eyes returned to the paper. "He ever tell you about all the times that he snuck away from me before I knew about what he did in his spare time."
Slade smirked. "Yeah. Slipping out of a moving car must have been a surprise."

"That's one way of putting it. You teach him that?"

"Don't have cars on the Island, mate." he said. "Anything interesting in the news."

"Not really." Diggle said. "Oliver's downstairs, by the way."

"Yeah, making arrows." Slade nodded. "Something he'll need consecration for."

"Ah, I see." Diggle looked back to the Australian. "Have you every been in the news before?" he said, tapping the paper with his finger.

"In a manner of speaking." Slade smirked. "Billy and I made up Team Seven. Had our own personalised masks but no one knew who we really were."

"What happened to the first six?"

Slade shrugged. "Dead mostly."

"What did the masks look like?"

"Line down the middle." Slade marked the line with his finger tip. "Orange on one side, black on the other."

Diggle froze. He knew that mask. He pointed at Slade, "As in Deathstroke. No offence but I thought that Deathstroke was supposed to be a group of mercenaries."

"That was the idea and no it was just the two of us." Slade said, "We were there to handle some of the worse missions. The kinds where we should not expect recusing if we got caught and the amount of people we had to kill was always high but..." he smiled, "The sheer amount of innocent people we saved was unbelievable. Non of that was reported. People tent not to like knowing how close to death they came."

"Wow." Diggle could not believe that Slade was really part of Deathstroke, the only member left in fact, "I always thought that a lot of it was just fear mongering. Like the League of Assassins."

"That's real."

Diggle snorted. Meeting Slade's eyes, he was shocked to find that the Aussie was not joking, "They're not real. Are they?"

Slade nodded. "They keep to themselves. They take in the weak with real potential. They have the freedom to roam but break the rules or try to leave and they'll kill you. I've ran into a few once or twice."

"Christ." Diggle sighed, "You learn something new everyday."

Slade was about to say something when he heard the light movements of someone in the backroom, behind the bar. "Who else is here?" he mumbled.

"Just Tommy." Diggle said, giving the man a odd look.

"Oh." Slade's body relaxed.

"Really went on your guard." Diggle commented.
"Have to." Slade listened out, identifying the sounds of bottles clinking and boxes being dragged across the floor. "I foresee another awkward meeting."

"Well at least Tommy already knows about you and Oliver."

"That's what makes it awkward."

Diggle laughed. "How are things with Lance looking?"

"Too soon to tell but I think thrown him off looking any deeper."

"Here's hoping." Diggle said. "Why don't you try having a double date with Laurel and Tommy? It'll make you look more domestic, friendly."

Slade chuckled. "Domestic? I would have never described myself as domestic but yeah, you have a point there." He nodded, "Not a bad idea."

"Lance will just need time to get used to you being here."

"That's what I'm worried about." More time to research.

The door to the backroom swung open and in came a man with black hair and a black suit with a purple dress shirt. It his hands where a cardboard box full of mutable types of alcohol to stock the fridges behind the bar. "Hey Diggle, is Oliver still-" It was then that he spotted Slade. "Around."

Slade held a hand up in a small wave, "Slade Wilson."

Tommy's eyes were wide, "Oh." he place the box on the bar, "Oh wow. If I'm honest, I did not expect to see you." He said, "Well, um..." he held a hand out to Slade. "Tommy Merlyn."

Slade shook his hand.

Slade's grip was strong. The guy looked... Well very masculine. If this was the type of person Oliver was attracted to, then he really was lying to himself all these years. "Ollie and I have been best buddies since we were five."

"Island buddies for near five years."

Tommy looked over to Diggle with wide eyes.

"I'm beginning to think that the real reason these moments are awkward are because you make them that way." Diggle said.

Slade grinned.

"Okay." Tommy held up his hands. "Who knows about everything?"

"Living in Starling City." He said, "Myself, Oliver, his friend Felicity, Diggle, Thea and you."

"Wait." Diggle said, "Thea knows."

Slade nodded.

"She okay?" Tommy asked.

"Yeah. The two of us went back to mine and spoke about it further over tea."
"I forget your her hero." Diggle grinned.

Slade glanced at the man, "I'm not her hero." he turned to Tommy. "Which reminds me. She does not know what Oliver gets up to at night and their mother knows me, that I thought Oliver Russian and that Oliver is dating someone."

"Right." Tommy nodded. He grinned, "I can't believe you told Laurel and her father."

Diggle eyed the ASIS agent, "You told them about being on the Island with Oliver."

"Not exactly."

Oliver finished off sharpening the arrow before he took a break. He sat down on a crate and sighed, removing the goggles from his head. He admired the twenty or so arrows beside him. They needed to be put away and he needed to make more. He had his surplus just in case but he did not want to rely on that. He had just been so busy as of late, enjoying life too much to get any work done.

He pushed himself off the crate and walked over to where his iPhone sat. He went to look at his cover photo, it was the only picture Oliver had taken yesterday. Thea and Slade were sitting on a beach towel on the sand, side by side and Thea had her arm around Slade's shoulder. Typing in his code, followed by flicking the apps away, he saw his background picture that Thea had taken; with Slade kissing his cheek as the two sat together on a beach towel, Oliver wearing the crop top. The only thing that ruined the picture was the maintenance app in the corner.

Oliver slipped the phone into his pocket, stretching his arms as walking over to the stairs. Slade would probably be here by now and he could really go for some lunch. Reaching the top of the stair, Oliver could make out Diggle and Slade's voice... And Tommy's?

Oliver opened up the door and rounded the corner. "Tommy? What are you doing here?"

"My job." he said, smiling at his friend. "And chatting with your boyfriend."

"I see that." Oliver smiled at his boyfriend. "Want to go grab lunch?"

Slade smiled back. "Yeah. We'll need to go shopping after, I need to grab something for dinner."

"You cook?" Tommy asked.

"Yeah, I'm cooking for Oliver and Thea tonight."

"Very domestic." Diggle commented.

Slade caught his drift, he's need to thank the man later. "Tommy?"

"Yeah?"

"How would you a Laurel like to join us for dinner, clear the air a little?"

Oliver also noticed emphasise on the word, and smiled at his friend.

Tommy paused. "Well, I'd have to ask Laurel but that sounds fine. Come round about seven?"

"Sure. Oliver can text you the address if she agrees."

"Cool." Tommy nodded.
Slade stood from his seat, "See later Dig."

"Bye."

Oliver took Slade's hand in his as the man stood beside him. The two then left, waving to Tommy and Diggle as they did so.

"William, better know at Billy Wintergreen. Once was part of the Royal Australian Air Force and later moved on for more specialised training, not discharged." Bradley said, a huge grin on his face. "He died on an unknown date but his body was returned to Australia at the end of August, 2012."

"Interesting." Lance said. It sounded better than interesting, Oliver would have returned home just a week or so before.

"Good work Brad." John nodded.

"But he is Slade's partner!"

"And how do you know that exactly?" Lance asked, folding his arm and leaning back in his seat.

"Oh ye of little faith." Bradley waved the folder in his grip.

Lance frowned.

"A brave soul returns home after assumed missing for six years." Bradley quoted, "In the middle east...But that was a cover!" He flipped open the folder and took out a piece of paper with a newspaper clipping printed on it. "And here's how I know for a fact that this is the right guy." he gave Lance the paper.

It was a picture of people taking a coffin off a place and standing right next to it, walking away with his hand just leaving the coffin, was Slade Wilson.

"It's Slade." Lance said, shocked.

Bradley's grin grew.

"This was his partner who died and then he..." Lance could not believe it. Slade then met a guy, no more than a kid, who he trained. Oliver Queen was that kid! Lance had no idea how or when but at some point Billy died and Slade met and trained Oliver but why? Why would Oliver not just go home... Unless Slade was on the Island too but how did he get there if that was the truth?

Things just kept getting weirder and weirder.

It was then that Lance remembered something from Slade's credit history. The last place Slade had used his card all those years ago was at an airport in China, Lance could check if the airport was near the Island... or better yet.

Lance turned to Bradley, "Was Billy a pilot?"

Bradley nodded.

Maybe they flew to the Island, maybe Oliver met Billy before he died.

---

Oliver pushed the trolley down the aisle, glancing at the many bottles beers, wines, and spirits on the
shelves. "What are you thinking of making?"

"No clue." Slade replied, grabbing a bottle of red wine from the shelf. "I don't even know if I should get red or white."

Oliver hummed in interest, stopping the trolley beside Slade. "You know that kind of stuff?"

Slade shook his head. "Nope. Which does not help." he said, "Back when we met it was so much easier. Less choice, things just went together."

Oliver grinned. Sneaking a peek up and down the aisle, his grin grew. He walk up to Slade, who was putting the bottle back on the shelf and grabbed his shoulders and kissed him.

Slade hummed happily against the blonde's lips. He smiled as they pulled apart, "What was that for?"

"Because I-" Love you. Oliver stopped himself just in nick of time. "Why not?"

Slade kissed Oliver's cheek. "Red or white."

"Red."

"Red it is." Slade said. He turned and looked at the wines for a second before picking out one, grabbing a few bottles. "Thea okay to drink?"

"As long as does not go home drunk."

"And where will you be going?" Slade asked with a raised brow, a small smirk on his face.

Oliver did not even have to think about it. "I'll stay at yours if it's no bother."

"Never is, love."

Oliver kissed the man again.

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"So he's dating your brother." Roy asked, sitting on the sofa, massaging his girl friend's sock covered foot.

"Yeah." Thea smiled, pushing her thumbs into the arch of Roy's foot. "You okay with it?"

"Wha- Yeah, yeah." He smiled. "It's fine. It's good to hear your brother's happy."

Thea gave him a suspicious look. "But..."

Roy sighed. "I know it stupid but..."

"But..."

He grinned, "It's just that you kept talking about this Slade guy. How cool and funny he was and you kept getting lifts from him. It just makes me feel better to know that he's gay."

Thea's mouth fell open dramatically. "Oh, so you were jealous." she teased.

"Could you blame me?"

"No. He is awesome."
Roy gave her a deadpan look.

Thea smirked devilishly. She ran her thumbs up and down Roy's foot. "He's just such a cool guy, he makes my brother happy and..."

"And..."

Thea smiled. "He treats me like an adult, like a friend and he'd just a lot of fun to be around." she said. "I've never had a friend that I've gotten on with so well, you know?"

Roy nodded. "Wait. Does that mean I have **two** older brothers to deal with now?"

Thea laughed.

There was no way he would be able to find out the name of the plane. Billy may or may not have been the polite but being used by ASIS and being in China would make it impossible to find out the name, where it was and where it went.

Lance sighed, leaning back in his seat. Dead end. He had another idea, that he could listen to the chatter between the planes and the airport but he did not A) know Chinese, B) there was no way in hell they would give it to him and C) being that Slade and Billy would have likely been on a mission they would have had their own line. He was so close, yet so damn far... Unless.

He fished in his draw for his mobile and then hit the internet. Was is possible that some of it could have leached into the normal recording? Like clarifying that they were given permission to fly a certain way or something, there had to be something.

It was a long shot and unlikely to turn up anything but he had found a clip of Billy talking at a charity for the Royal Australian Air Force in New South Wales, if he could just match the voice, regardless of what they were saying, he would know that Billy was there.

He paused for a second in his typing. This was stupid. How was he even suppose to get the recording?

Slade and Oliver walked back to the apartment, fingers of both hands crooked to hold the plastic shopping bags. It was kind of sweet and very domestic. It was a bright and sunny early afternoon, not a cloud in the sky. The walk was a little far but they were used to being on their feet for miles at a time, carrying supplies... Although carrying items in a backpack or by hand was much more comfortable than the thin heavy strips of plastic pulling at their fingers.

"What time does Thea leave work?" Slade asked, leaning against him boyfriend.

"Today... She should be finished by now." Oliver replied, leaning into Slade.

"Alright, I'll give her a call and she can help me cook while you go back to your little hide out."

Oliver gave the older man a weird look. "Why?"

"I know you've been a little ticked off by not being able to make enough this morning." Slade said. "It'll be awhile until we all get together anyway."

Oliver smiled, "Thank you. I really want to get the load finished."

Slade smiled back.
Getting back to the apartment Slade dropped off the shopping, then Oliver and finally went to pick up Thea. Feeling a bit like a taxi.

Opening the door to her boyfriend's apartment, Thea smiled at the Australia before running off.

"You alright sweetheart?" Slade called.

"Fine." She said, popping her head out the kitchen door, "Just grabbing my stuff."

"Okay." That's when Slade spotted what must have been Roy on the sofa. He looked the kid over, giving an unimpressed look. He took note of the waste paper basket by the sofa and glanced inside.

"What are you looking for?" Roy asked.

Nothing but paper and torn envelopes. "A reason to gut you." he said, looking up and meeting Roy's eyes. "And if you ever hurt or make her unhappy, I'll do far worse. That I promise you."

Roy kept a still face but his eyes showed fear.

"Relax kid. Just don't be a dick."

"Isn't that your nickname?" Roy asked.

Slade smirked. He was a strong one.

"No blood on the wall." Thea commented as she came back into the room. "Good to see."

"Bleach." Slade said with a sigh, clicking his fingers. "I knew I forgot something."

Thea just smiled, "Come on, we've got cooking to do." she said. She walked over to Roy and kissed his cheek. "I'll talk to you later." She turned to Slade. "Be nice."

Slade held up his hands in surrender, walking out of the apartment.

Thea followed, giving her boyfriend a smile and a small wave as she left.

Roy smiled and waved back.

"Hello. Yes, I'm Detective Lance from the Starling City Police department, Philadelphia." Lance said into the phone. Trying to hide his frustration after having to call numerous people to finally get through to a person who could help him and speak English. "I'm inquiring about a cold case here in Starling." He hummed in agreement. "Basically we are trying to find a friend of the deceased, who may have worked in maintenance at your airport. I understand that I of course can not listen to the recordings but I would like to know if the records picked anything unusual."

Lance listened for a few seconds before frowning, "Yes. Of course. Thank you anyway. Goodbye." He sighed as he hung up.

So much for that.

"Want me to put some music on?" Thea asked, as she closed the front door behind her.

"My laptop is under the coffee table. There's no music on it but I have Wi-Fi." Slade said, moving to
the kitchen. "Tea?"

"Please. What music do you like?" Thea grabbed the laptop, flipping it open and turning it on.

"Rock. Some new, mostly old. Something with good lyrics." he called, flipping on the kettle.

Thea nodded, lips pouted in thought. The screen flashed on and Thea had an idea. "I've got it!" she laughed, "Ever heard of Green Day?"


"Alright." Thea grinned, "I'm making you a playlist." she said, as she searched and added music.

Hearing the kettle click, Slade said, "Same as last time?"

"Yes please."

Slade made the tea and placed the cups on the side before moving to grab the first load of ingredients. "Tea is ready."

Thea started the playlist. As she walked away, the sound of a simple strumming of a guitar. "What are we making?" she asked, "And which tea is mine?"

"Which ever. We're making lasagne, salad and garlic bread, flowed by plum crumble with custard."

"Dreaming, I was only dreaming
Of another place and time
Where my family's from."

Thea nodded, it did sound good. "What's custard?"

Slade gave her an odd look. "You've never tried custard?"

"I don't think so. What's in it."

"Singing, I can hear them singing
When the rain had washed away
All these scattered dreams."

"Just milk, egg yolk and sugar. It's like a yellow cream that you put on dessert. It's French."

Thea shook her head. "Nope. Never heard of it."

"Dying, everyone's reminded
Hearts are washed in misery
Drenched in gasoline."

"First tea, now custard." Slade knitted his brows. "You've really missed out." He grabbed a plastic bag full of peaches and passed them to Thea. "Start pealing these. We've got some cooking to do."

"Yes chief!" Thea saluted the man, a salute from the Australian military.

Slade was surprised that she had remember, he chuckled. "Yeah, yeah."

"Laughter, there's no more laughter
Songs of yesterday now live in the underground."
The drums started to pick up, as did the guitar and Slade turned, giving the Queen a grin.

"This is going to be fun." she grinned back.

"Agreed."

Oliver smiled as he heard the sound of music behind Slade's door. It was a song he did not
recognised but it was just a guitar solo and it sounded like it was getting quieter like it was about to
end. He knocked and a few seconds later Thea answered.

"Hey, Ollie." She held the door open for him, "We're almost done. Wait. What's the time." she
looked a little panicked, fishing the phone from her pocket.

"We have awhile yet." Slade called.

"Your turn to pick the music." she called back.

"Right." he said, walking into the living room, whipping his hands a kitchen towel.
Thea did not need to take a hint. She walked back into the kitchen.

"Hey." Slade smiled, walking over and kissing his boyfriend.

"Hey." Oliver said as they pulled away.

"Why don't you go take a shower? We've got it taken care of."

"Okay." Oliver nodded, kissing his boyfriend's cheek. "Mind if I steal a shirt?"

"Not at all." Slade slipped into the bathroom, later coming back with black Metallica concert shirt.
It was something that was so clearly Slade's that Oliver just had to smile. Weather or not the man
meant it as a joke Oliver did not mind, but he wanted to wear. So he just took it, turned around and
got to the bathroom.

Slade watched Oliver leave, shocked that the man wanted to wear it but he did like the idea. He
smiled, before turning to the laptop and searching for a sound.

Oliver got to the bathroom, hearing the sound of heavy metal play as he started to remove his shirt.
He wondered for a brief second if the song he had choose was going to be by the band that covered
the shirt Slade had given him. It was likely.

"As I was goin' over the Cork and Kerry mountains
I saw Captain Farrell and his money he was countin'
I first produced my pistol and then produced my rapier
I said stand and deliver or the devil he may take ya."

"I just can't imagine Oliver... With a guy. I... Just can't." Laurel said as she and Tommy reached
Slade's floor.

"I couldn't either but this guy really makes him happy." Tommy starched the back of his neck,
feeling a little uncomfortable.

"I guess." Laurel sighed.
"And he is making us dinner."

"I just can't believe it."

As the two got to the door, they could only just hear the low muffled sound of music playing.

"I know I won't be leaving here.
I know I won't be leaving here.
I know I won't be leaving here.
I know I won't be leaving here with you."

Tommy knocked the door and after a few seconds Oliver answered.

"Hey. Good to see you." He smiled politely, moving back and holding the door open. "Come in."

"Metallica?" Tommy read, questionably.

"He hasn't really been home since Tuesday." Thea said, walking into the room. "Red wine?" she asked.

Tommy and Laurel looked at each other.

"Yeah." The Merlyn said, "Sounds good." Then he turned to Oliver. "Boyfriend shirt, hm?"

Oliver grinned, moving to turn off the music. "Dating a guys does have it's advantages even if I am wearing a tent."

"You've worn a crop top before now." Slade called.

"And I have the photographic evidence to back it up." Thea said.

"I say don't you know?
You say you don't know
I say take me out."

Oliver stopped the song and turned off the laptop.

"Dude. A crop top?" Tommy was stuck between shock and wanting to laugh out loud.

"I did that for you, you dick." Oliver called to his other half.

"And I made for you. So we're even." Slade said, walking into the living room with two wine glass and a bottle of red wine. Thea was behind him with the rest of the glasses.

"Hey, wait." Laurel said, taking note of the number of glasses. "Eighteen." She said, holding a hand out to Thea.

"My apartment." Slade said.

"My blessing." Oliver added.

Thea looked between them, "My liver." she said, placing the glasses on the table.

Slade chuckled, also placing the items on the table, along with the cutlery that was already set out.

"Your going to love the meal we made." Thea smiled brightly, holding up her fist up to Slade.
Slade met it with his own. "Come on kid. Let's get dinner out."

"Right." She marched into the kitchen. Slade following behind.

"Well..." Tommy said, "They seem to get on."

"Thea really likes him. They're like twins." Oliver said, pouring the wine into the glasses.

"Really?" Laurel asked, eyeing the kitchen. Slade was rubbing his head and Thea was bent over holding her belly, her other hand on her mouth. What was she laughing at?

"Yeah." Oliver smiled.

"What was the crop top about?" Tommy inquired.

Oliver groaned. "Please forget you ever heard that." He continued to pour the wine

Tommy could see the developing redness in his face so he let the subject go... For now.

Thea walked into the living room with a plate in each hand, "Tommy, Laurel. This is for you." her shoulders shook with building giggles.

"What?" Oliver asked. He kept the grin from pulling at his lips.

"Still can't find them but Slade has a plan." she could not help but smile. She placed the meals on the table. "We're going to be eating Asia style at the coffee table." she shrugged, "Lack of chairs."

"Should have made Chinese." Oliver mused. "Make it look like it was done on purpose."

"You could have said that before." Slade said, coming into the living room with another meal and a chopping board of garlic bread.

"I did not think of it." Oliver said, taking the items from Slade.

The dark haired pair walked back into the kitchen. Thea's giggles and Slade's eventual chuckled could be heard. Slade was bent over the cupboard and Thea was bent over too, supporting herself with her hand on his shoulder.

Oliver cocked a brow. "What are you talking about?" He called.

Slade straightened himself up. "I was trying to find out your bra size, thinking of getting you some lingerie for Christmas."

Oliver's shoulders shook at that, a smile on his face. "Okay. Hint I like green."

The Aussie frowned. "Oh great, pick the hardest colour to find lingerie in why don't you? Would you settle for a nurse outfit?"

Thea gave the older man a deadpan look.

"Sorry." Slade said to her.

"Would settle for kissing my ass?" Knowing Slade, Oliver switched to Russian, "Don't answer that."

"Ah, you know me well."

Tommy and Laurel turned to each other, both with raised brows. Tommy shrugged, taking a seat on
the cushions provided around the coffee table, sitting along the side of it so Laurel could sit next to him. Which she did.

"I'll be honest." Thea started, as she and Slade made their way to the living room. "I wanted you two to feel comfortable to be yourselves around me and others but this is a little too comfortable."

"Sorry." Oliver said.

The two came back into the living room, each with... a dessert bowl?

"It's a little early." Oliver commented.

"I may have misplaced some of my plates." Slade said.

"So we're resorting to bowls." Thea turned to Slade, "You know," she said with a grin across her lips. "It really says something when you have more wine glasses than plates."

"I brought them today." Slade said, "I just can't figure out where they went."

Tommy just happened to look in Oliver's direction to see the smile pulling at his lips. Oliver felt his eyes on him and looked over. The blonde winked. The brunette grinned.

"You still had more wine glass than plates." Thea pointed out, moving to take a seat at the head of the table.

"I got them today too." Slade growled, reaching over to ruffle her hair.

Thea ducked down into her seat, giggling.

Slade took a seat along the unoccupied side of the table and Oliver sat next to him. Tommy was in front of Slade, Laurel was in front of Oliver and Thea was in-between the two of them.

"Had we eaten Chinese." Thea said, "Would they say something before eating a meal?" she asked.

"Yeah. More of something to respect your elders. It's more of a Koran and possibly Japanese thing, to do it every time." Slade said. He turned to Oliver. "Did you have a phrase before eating?"

Oliver just looked at Slade for a second before nodding. "Yeah," he said. "你花了很長的時間來趕雞。所以不要指望我會說謝謝."

Slade chuckled.

"What does that mean?" Tommy asked.

"You took a long time to catch chicken. So don't expect me to say thank you."

"Your Mandarin is improving by the way." Slade commented. "You need to work on your tones more, however." It had to sound like the blonde was still learning.

"How many languages can you speak, exactly." Laurel asked.

Slade looked over to Thea. "See if you can guess them all."

Thea nodded. "Your on."
"Ni hao."

"Mandarin!"

Slade smiled, "Good memory." he commented before continuing. "привет"

"Russian."

Slade nodded. She had remember that too. Now, however was when things would get tricky. "דיבוב"

"Pakistan?"

"Isreal." he said. "سلام"

"Iran?"


"You speak French?" Thea asked. "Where did you learn that?"

"School."

"You can speak all those languages?" Laurel had to admit that she was impressed.

"Read and write, also." Slade said, nonchalantly. "I know parts of other languages but not as fluently."

"Let it be know that my brother has good taste in men." Thea raised her glass.

Slade lent over and clicked it with his.

"Great because his ego wasn't big enough." Oliver mumbled.

Slade flipped Oliver the middle finger, the hand of which was still holding the wine glass, before taking a sip of his wine.

Oliver laughed.

Laurel blinked. Oliver looked so happy. As did Thea. Oliver gay for this guy? How? Why?

"So what is a spy? What do they do?" Tommy asked, passing Slade his plate to put on the pile he was making.

"Well, spies are... Visible." Slade said, "They're out in the public pretending to be people they're not. Like an undercover cop. Where as the things I've done as an agent, whether known or not, will never be known as done by me."

"So you can live a normal life after?" Laurel asked.

Slade shrugged. "As normal as my life can be, although personally I would prefer to date Oliver."

Oliver eyed the older man.

Slade saw the look and wiggled his eyebrows at him. "Your... Different."

Oliver nodded, lips press together. "Your special too... Special needs but still."
Slade grinned at that. "Just joking love." He placed his hand on Oliver's, from under the table. He switched to Russian. "Your perfect. All I could have asked for in life and more." He smiled. "If my heart was a beach, then you walked across it and left your footprints in the sand." he quoted.

Oliver blinked.

Slade kissed the blonde's cheek, "But translate any of that and I'll smother you with a pillow." he said, before standing and taking the plates and bowls to the kitchen.

Oliver just laughed and shook his head.

Thea stood and walked to the kitchen as well. After a few seconds the group heard her say; "So, we're down two bowls?"

"Have a nap." Oliver called.

Slade came into the living room. "What?"

"It'll make you feel better." Oliver smirked.

Slade squinted his eyes at his other half. He went into his bedroom and not long after he called, "I knew I didn't leave them at the store."

Oliver's shoulders started to shake with laughter.

"Your the dick." Slade said as he came into the living room with a packet of three plates.

"I thought you would have figured it out." he said holding up his hands, but his grin did nothing to help his case. "I didn't think you would give up and use bowls."

Slade gave him a deadpan look before going back into the kitchen. The small spark in his dark eyes said that he was amused.

Thea brought in Laurel, Tommy and Oliver's dessert. Followed by Slade, who placed a plate of dessert in front of Thea and himself.

Thea looked at it. "Wait, so when I need a plate I get a bowl and when I need a bowl I get a plate?"

"Blame your brother." Slade said, pointing at the blonde with his spoon.

Oliver smiled. Tonight was really going well.

Chapter End Notes

Just in case it was not clear. Slade was looking for used condoms in the waste paper basket.

The line about the sand heart is from a Persian song, that my boyfriend dedicated to me once. It meant a lot to me so when I remembered it I could not help but add it.
Chapter Notes

I forgot this was season one (which was a year back) and therefore the game at not come out yet. So let's just say it came out a year earlier for argument's sake. And I know this chapter is a little short, it was suppose to be part of the last chapter but then I got a little busy so I just published what I had so far. Also Anatoli Knyazev was the one who gave Slade the Vodka and Oliver, as seen in Arrow.

Oh, and in the last chapter. No the writer totally did not forget about the hickey on Oliver's neck... No sir.

"Vodka?" Tommy asked as Slade lay out the shot glasses.

"Russian vodka." Slade clarified.

"From our old friend?" Oliver asked, taking the bottle and examining the label.

"From the only man, other than myself who likes to kiss you." Slade said, filling the glasses.

"Hm?" Tommy turned to his friend with wide eyes.

"What?" Thea glared at her brother, a look of betrayal in her eyes.

Oliver leered at his other half, his eyes squinting further when the old man smirked. "He was a friend. He treated me like family and when I had to leave he said goodbye and then kissed both of my cheeks." he said, pointing out, "Like they do in France."

"We were not in France." Slade commented, passing Oliver a glass.

Oliver ignored him. "Slade's the only guy I have ever kissed on the month." he assured his sister.

She nodded. "Better be."

Slade passed the youngest Queen as glass before clinking it with his own.

Oliver rolled his eyes, "Conspiring against me." he mumbled. He lifted his glass.

"Dear God." Tommy gasped dramatically, "Will Oliver Queen really drink again?"

Laurel raised a brow before nodding, "I have yet to see you drink since you've been back."

"Hey. I've drunk a few times with Slade and in New Jersey-"

"Have you drank anything when I haven't been there?" Slade asked lifting his own glass.

Oliver paused for a second before grinning. "Yes. I had a shot on my first night back."

"Shot. Singular." Tommy pointed out.
Oliver batted away the matter with his hand and lifted his glass in the air.

The rest of the group did the same, clinking their glasses. Slade and Oliver said their cheers in Russian before downing the shots. Oliver's lip quivered but otherwise he was fine, where as Slade did not even blink. The rest of the group look at them before they downed their own with much less finesse...

"Oh God." Thea held her neck, it felt like it was burning.

Laurel leant forward to rub her watering eyes but quickly sat back up before the weight of her head dragged her down to the ground.

"How can you drink that?" Tommy asked breathlessly between coughs.

"Better than the three of you apparently." Slade said, filling his and Oliver's glasses again.

Oliver took the glass. "Thank you."

The two spoke in Russian once more before downing the shots.

"I think a break from the drinking may be in order." Oliver said, eyeing his friends and sister.

"Agreed." Slade said. "How about you grab a round of water and I'll get the Xbox out?"

Oliver nodded.

"Slade." Thea said, swallowing. "If you have Grand Theft Auto, you are officially the coolest person in the world."

Slade walked over to the flat screen TV, sat on top of a cupboard. He pulled open one of the draws, pulled out a game and held it over his shoulder for Thea to see.

"Yes!" Thea laughed.

Lance had just walked out the door, cool night air blowing on to his face, the promise of an all night diner the only thing that kept his tired legs moving as he fished the car keys from his pocket. At that very moment his mobile rang.

The Detective hummed in interest at the unfamiliar number and answered the phone. In no longer than twenty seconds he had turned around and was heading back to his desk.

"Yes. He was working there at the time. I wish I could give you a name but we have no idea ourselves." He hated lying but it's not like he was looking for something to take to court.

"There was a small but rather unusual disturbance that was picked up a year after the date you have given me." The man said, his Chinese accent was almost completely undetectable with his good English. "I don't know if the man you are after would still be working in maintenance at the time but I thought it was worth asking..."

"It is a possibility." Lance said, walking over to his desk and sitting down on his chair.

"I have edited the recording; both of other chatter and to hopefully hear it clearer but I had no such luck with the latter. Whether it is at all possible is unclear but you will be far more likely than I to decipher what the sound is. I have sent you the email already."
Lance nodded, "Thank you Zhao."

"Call me if you find out anything Detective Lance. Goodbye."

"Goodbye." Lance hung up the phone and turned to power up his PC.

If there was a chance, then here it was.

"I'm swimming in a cannel. Why are they still after me?" Thea complained, eyeing the police that strolled down the road, eyes on the mass car thief and murderer.

Tommy curled an arm around his belly from all his laughing, "Oh God."

Laurel smiled, "Hide under the bridge! Under the bridge!"

"On it." Thea said. She was not going to die again.

Tommy, Laurel and Oliver sat on the sofa, with Thea in front of the coffee table, sitting on a pillow.

"You lot are drinking me out of house and home." Slade said, placing yet another bottle of red wine on the table. He sat down on the floor, in front of the arm rest and grinned at the screen. "You're done for kid."

"Am not." Thea said, and second later got shot in the head. "Damn it."

"Was it this game that if you swam out to sea you could get eaten by a shark?" Laurel asked.

"Yeah, it's this one." Tommy nodded.

"I kinda want to see that." Thea said, getting up and passing Tommy the remote, before returning to her pillow.

"Thea." Oliver called, holding out his hand, a glass of wine in his grasp.

"Thank you." Thea smiled, taking the glass and leaning her back against the coffee table.

"Right." Tommy said as the game restarted. "Where is the sea?"

"Keep going up that road." Laurel recommended, taking her own glass from the blonde. "Thanks."

Oliver turned to give Slade his, to see the man on his phone. He was writing a text, his face expressionless. Oliver just placed the glass on the end of the table and let the matter be, for now.

"Here sharky, sharky, sharky." Sang Tommy. "Eat me already."

"Go up for air! Or you'll drown again." Laurel said, waving an arm at the screen.

"You're a very loud drunk." Thea commented.

"As is Oliver." Laurel said.

"Ollie's more talkative than loud." Tommy pointed out.

"It gets worse?" Slade looked over at Tommy with a fake stunned expression.
Oliver gave the Aussie a deadpan look.

Tommy laughed which turned into a yelp when Laurel grabbed hold of his bicep and pointed at the screen.

"I just saw it!"

"Me too!" Thea grinned.

Detective Lance had seen the techs do this enough times to get the general idea of editing a recording. Cut out the background noise, lower some sounds, heighten others to make something more define... The problem was that he did not know what the sound he wanted to make clearer sounded like. It was all just a jumbled up mess of static.

So he played around with it, doing this, that and the other and if he got no results he went back and started over. The defining moment finally came when he accidentally heightened the wrong piece. It was just a slip of the hand and he could just click back and no harm would have been done but for the sake of what if, Lance listened to it. And it happened.

Lance turned up the volume and played the recording again, pushing the ear phones down on to his ear to hear that little bit more. It sounded like words. It was too surrounded in static to really tell who it was but it most defiantly was a voice.

Oliver smiled at the group as he was walking to the bathroom. Somewhere along the line Laurel had thought that it would be funny if she swam after a yacht, which had turned tail and went away as soon as the people on-board spotted her. She was a mere but constant few feet away and it had the group giggling.

"Why won't you slow down?" Laurel asked.

"You're a black man swimming towards them with a knife in you hand." Slade pointed out.

"If I was white they would be offering me sandwiches by now." Laurel grumbled.

Slade threw his head back with a laugh.

Oliver held on to the door frame as he made his way into the bathroom. He had not realised how much he had drank till he stood up. He was worried that if people needed The Hood tonight, that he would be compromised, completely useless. If there is a God, then Oliver Queen is asking if tonight could be a quiet one.

Oliver took care of his business, had a drink from the tap and then he spotted that he had missed a text from Felicity, telling him to have fun and that she wanted to talk to him later.

"Oliver?" Felicity said in surprise when she answered. "How did the dinner party go?"

"Still at it. What's wrong?"

"We can take care of it later, it's-"

"Felicity."

She sighed, "Alright, alright. Diggle got a little upset earlier."
Oliver blinked. He seemed fine before. "What happened."

"I was running up some leads on Floyd Lawton but they turned up to be nothing and he yelled," she sighed, "got a little upset and went home. I went over, we watched some TV, so all's good for now. Just wanted you to know."

"Alright." Oliver said, "We'll spar a bit tomorrow, get any remaining anger out. Thank you for telling me."

"What are friends for."

Oliver smiled.

Ending the conversation, Oliver slipped back into the living room to find Laurel being chased by police, in a van. "Being chased yet again." He commented. He went to sit on the sofa but instead sat in-between Slade's open legs, leaning his back against the Australian's chest. "So, what did I miss?"

Slade wrapped his arms around Oliver, resting his chin on the blonde's shoulder. "She got on the boat, beached it. Tried to get a 'selfie' with a man on the beach, got punched by him, beat him to the floor and took the picture. Cops showed up, she nicked a van and here we are."

"How long was I in there?" Oliver asked, shivering when he felt Slade smiling against his neck.

Slade hummed in interest, his voice sounding like a low purr.

Oliver arched his back at the sound and vibrations on his skin.

Slade looked over to make sure the others were distracted. Thea had took control of the remote once more, the cops were gone and she was attempting to steal a bus. "I think," Slade said in Russian, his voice low. "I think that when you're drunk, you get aroused."

Oliver gulped, his cheeks began to redden.

Slade lifted a hand and ran his fingertip over the red mark on Oliver's neck, which was hidden by a black dress shirt, the younger man had also borrowed from his boyfriend.

Slade bit down a gasp, "Bastard."

Oliver smirked, grinding his behind against Slade's hardening package.

Slade grabbed hold Oliver's hips and pushed him off, relieving some off the friction. "Tease."

"Perv."

"Who is sitting in whose lap?"

Oliver moved to stand and was sharply pulled back down. His smirk grew immensely. "So you're a clingy drunk, hm?" he said, half hoping that someone would hear.

Slade returned his arms to circle Oliver's waist, his chin back on the blonde's shoulder. "I will get you back for that."

"I expect nothing less."
Laurel quickly looked back to the TV, heart thumping hard in her chest.

Lance cleared the voice, heightening the words which had been near completely over come with static and when he played it he recognised the voice. Gruff, deep and quite clearly Australian. It was Slade.

Lance could not believe it. He paused the recording and set it back to the beginning, removing the earphones and bumping the volume up to its max, before clicking play.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday. This is Wedgetail three two five. Pilot and passenger down." There was a pause. "I repeat. Pilot and passenger down on the Island of Lian Yu. Request immediate rescue."

He was right. Slade had been on Lian Yu at the exact time Oliver would have been there. He pressed play again, a wide smile across his lips.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday. This is Wedgetail three two five. Pilot and passenger down."

It was then that Lance remembered something about Slade's history. He opened up a browser window. He was sure that it had been included in his training.

"I repeat. Pilot and passenger down on the Island of Lian Yu. Request immediate rescue."

Even if ASIS knew he was looking again, it did not matter. They would have no idea what he had found out, he himself could barely believe it... And there it was. Slade had learned how to fly a plane. It should have pilots down, not pilot.

Slade was not the passenger. Oliver was.

The night had gone well. Tommy and Laurel got a taxi back to her place and Felicity had been kind enough to drop Thea back home instead of her having to get a taxi alone. As they waited, they gorged on water to lessen the headaches in the morning and the moment Oliver got a text from his sister saying she was home, he was out like a light with Slade curled up beside him, his head resting on the younger man's chest, just over his heart, letting the steady beat lull him to sleep.

That morning the twosome planned to head down to the club to meet up with Diggle and Felicity. Oliver had a shower first as Slade got the two of them some fresh clothes to slip into. Slade then went to have his shower while Oliver took care of the washing up from last night, which only seemed fair as Slade had made the meal.

Oliver smiled to himself. Last night had really been great. Tommy and Laurel seemed to really get on well with Slade and the alcohol really did help things move a lot quicker than Oliver could have ever expected. He was just placing a plate in the drying rack when he heard a knock at the door.

Oliver looked over at the door curiously. He grabbed a kitchen cloth and dried his hands before walking over and glancing through the peephole. He could not believe his eyes. He pulled back the chain, turned the key, which was kept in the keyhole to stop it from being picked and threw open the door.
Friday

Chapter Notes

Based on the episode Home Invasion.

I would like to point out that I started writing the sparing scene before I saw episode 14 of season two.

Chapters will now be spilt into smaller parts.

CLANG CLANG CLANG

Oliver blocked all of Diggle's strikes with his own set of metal poles, he stuck back, only to be blocked himself. As a slight pause arrived in the fighting Oliver called, "Switch." The African American immediately span round and assumed a block position against the Australian with his own set of poles.

The blonde walked over to his desk and took a seat. This had been the third time Slade and Oliver had gone back and forth sparring with Diggle, the bodyguard had yet to take a break so Oliver was sure that one last go at the ASIS agent would finish him off. After a few second of watching the two fight, Oliver stood once more to get the three of them a water bottle each from the fridge. It was not like he was tired, he got brakes as Slade fought after all.

Making his way to the small makeshift kitchen area, he spotted Felicity looking at a cup like it was the big red button rigged up to a nuclear bomb. "Felicity? What's wrong?"

"Making tea." Felicity said. "I don't know how." Before Oliver could even open his mouth Felicity continued, in a panicked manner, "I mean I know how, even if I don't make it that often. I've only ever made it for Slade and my mom, and they both had very different views on what they liked in their tea. Plus she was Canadian and he's Australian. So, different views from different cultures. It's geese vs. black swans."

Oliver knitted his brows. "What?"

"It's the state symbol of Western Australia. It's on the flag and the coat of arms. And Canadian-Canada has geese. Not like the Australian's have swans, black or white, maybe just back but-"

"Take a breath." Oliver said, placing a stern hand on her shoulder.

"Okay, okay." she said between breaths, "I'm breathing."

"Good." Oliver turned to the box of tea on the side. "Tea bags and boiled water. No milk or sugar."

"What about honey?" Felicity said, turning to grab the newly boiler kettle.

Oliver shook his head. "Defiantly not."

She gave her friend a questioning look.
"Let's just say that Slade tends to ruin things for others and leave it at that." Oliver said, opening up the fridge.

"Oh?"

Oliver ignored her, suddenly feeling uncomfortable. She didn't need to know the details.

She shrugged her shoulders, picked up the cup of tea and returned to her desk, placing it next to the man who was observing the flight.

Seeing the cup from the corner of his eye, Yao Fei turned and bowed lightly at the blonde woman, "Thank you." he said, before picking it up. His black hair had been cut short for convenience, so it was now just a few inches long. He had also shaved off his facial hair, leaving behind a growing moustache and a stubble covered chin. He was wearing a black suit, including a black tie which looked down right weird on a man that had lived years out in the woods but he seemed to like it.

"You're welcome." Felicity said, "I hope you like it."

Yao Fei gave her a polite smile before his eyes returned to the fight.

The strikes became slower, so Slade just kept blocking. The other man was breathing heavily, taking even more short lived brakes. It would not be long...

CLANG CLANG

Diggle struck out and completely missed. He lifted his poles up and a wave of dizziness over took him. He felt himself falling back and he was far to worn to catch himself.

"Hand on, big guy." Slade rushed forward and hooked his arms under Diggle's, dropping his holes in the process. He pulled the man up to stand, holding his weight up. "You held out longer than I expected."

"Good to know." Diggle grunted between pants.

Slade smirked, directing the man over to sit on a crate. Oliver pulled up on the other side, offering them each a bottle of water. The men took the bottles, Diggle unscrewing his immediately, gulping down the liquid.

Diggle sighed, starting to feel relaxed for the first time since last night. He looked Oliver in the eyes. "We have to end this guy before he makes anymore widows out of wives."

"We will." Oliver said.

Slade sat down next to Diggle and clapped the man on the back. "It's what we do best"

Oliver gave the man a sadden look. "Diggle, we'll stop him. I promised you I'd help take him down and I keep my promises but he's on another continent."

"Not anymore." Felicity called.

The three men walked up to see what Felicity had found, Diggle lean forward on the table, supporting his weight on it. Yao Fei stood and walked over to the kitchen. Felicity watched the man go, a little confused but he would still be able to hear from where he stood.

"Hm, I thought it would be helpful to track A.R.G.U.S' manhunt for Floyd Lawton aka Deadshot. So I decrypted their communication logs. Which means, I just hacked a federal agency. Kind of
makes me a cyber-terrorist, which is bad because I really don't see myself fitting in well at Guantanamo Bay."

"Don't worry, Felicity. They don't send blondes there." Oliver assured.

"I dye it, actually." she looked up at the blonde, pointing out, "I keep your secret."

"Hey," Diggle said, drawing attention back to the matter at hand, "What did you find?"

Felicity nodded, "Deadshot is scheduled to meet with a potential new client here in Starling City except the contract is bogus. You're friend Lila is setting a trap for him. Lawton took the bait."

"Great. I'll talk to Lyla, see if I suss out any details." Diggle said, pushing himself up.

"I don't know." Slade said, "He knows you're here Dig, that's a risk. Plus if Felicity could find this out," He turned to the women, holding up his hand, "no offense, then Floyd could have found out himself."

"I agree." Yao Fei said walking over to the group, hot water bottle in hand. "I would not rush the matter. From what I know Lawton is smart and trained."

"We're going to have to plan this out." Slade said, "Also," he turned to Diggle, "no dropping the ASIS bomb without asking me first. You may find my skills will be a lot more useful than my status."

Diggle nodded. "Okay."

Yao Fei held out the hot water to the fellow army man. "Place this on your arms before the muscles start to cramp." his accent thick but his words were clearer then they had been all those years ago. His English had improved greatly.

Diggle took it, "Thanks."

"Hey, Slade?" Felicity asked, "Are you still working for ASIS or..."

Slade shook his head, "No. If I needed their help I imagine I could get it but this is something they would defiantly want." he said, "The only difference is that they would prefer that he went to prison so they could question him but he's been trained, to the same level myself and my ex-partner Wintergreen were, if he wants to get out of somewhere, he will."

"Wintergreen? The guy who died in the plane crash?" Diggle asked.

"That's not entirely true. Billy did survive but he joined forces with Fyers and then died when he took a sword to the head."

"Oh, sorry." Diggle said.

"I'm not." Slade shrugged, "I got my own back."

Diggle and Felicity froze, looking over to the Australian in shock.

"Right." Slade said, pulling on his black tank top and grey dress shirt. "We're going to head over to see Thea, she's really going to want to met you." Slade told the Chinese man.

"She knows?"
"Everything but the archery."

"I'll see you there." Oliver said, "I've got to go see Laurel."

"What for?" Slade asked.

Oliver pulled a contraceptive pill blister, which was missing three pills already.

Slade raised a brow. "Do I ask?"

Oliver snorted, shoving the man in the shoulder. "She left it at yours when we were having dinner last night. I found it next to the toilet."

"Ah, okay." Slade said, "We'll see you there." He kissed Oliver's cheek before taking his leave.

Yao Fei followed patting Oliver's shoulder as he passed.

Oliver smiled. Once they were out of hearing range, he turned to his two friends. "I'm sorry for not telling you, we had planned to tell you later."

"Slade takes betrayal pretty hard." Diggle observed, brow raised.

Oliver placed his hand on one of the scars he had got from Billy. "Slade and I both have these scars. That is what he left behind."

Diggle blinked and Felicity eyed the scars with a sad look.

"Slade didn't want to kill him, he even tried one last time to see if this was who Wintergreen really was." Oliver said, "He didn't do it for me but I can tell you that when Slade cares for a person, he will do anything and everything to protect them." he looked Diggle in the eyes, "Trust us on this one. We will get Lawton."

Oliver walked in to CNRI just in time to see Lance leave, a troubled look on his face. Laurel was comforting a young boy wearing a police jacket and Tommy was standing next to them, looking worried. Spotting Oliver, he walked over to him.

"Hey."

"Hey. What happened?" Oliver asked.

"His name's Taylor. His parents were killed last night." Tommy said, "Laurel was helping them with a lawsuit against Edward Rasmus, he cheated them out of their life savings."

"God." Oliver gasped, "Was he there?"

Tommy nodded. "Yeah. I'm worried Ollie, Laurel wants us to look after him for the night but I'm worried about the guy coming back for him, you know?"

"Maybe the three of you should stay with us." Oliver said, "You'll have me, Slade, Diggle and my old friend Yao Fei. He just got here but he used to be in the Chinese military."

"Yeah, I remember you telling me about him." Tommy said. He pointed at Oliver, "That would work."

"What would work?" Laurel asked, walking up to the two men, her hand on the boy's shoulder.
"We'd have to check with my mom but I think the three of you should come stay with us for the time being." Oliver said. "We have the space and I think it would be safer. Slade will be there and Diggle."

Laurel thought for a second. "I guess that would make sense."

Oliver nodded. "I'll get on the phone to her now and we can head over."

"Is your mother there at the moment?" Laurel asked.

"No but Thea, Slade and Yao Fei are."

"Yao Fei?"

"He's an old friend of Slade's. Real nice guy. I met him and his daughter Shado in China. She's actually a lawyer too."

Laurel nodded. "Okay."

Thea smiled when she answered the door. "Slade." she held her arms out for a hug, squeezing the man in her grip when he gave her one. As they pulled apart she noticed the man in a suit. "Whose your friend?"

"Yao Fei." he said tipping his head in a bow.

"Oh, wow. So you're Yao Fei." She bowed back and then held out her hand. "I'm Thea, Ollie's sister."

"It's a pleasure to finally meet you." Yao Fei said, shaking the hand.

Thea held open the door to let them in. "Is Shado here too?"

Yao Fei shook his head. "She is still in Hong Kong, at work. Although she should not be much longer."

"Cool." Thea smiled, "Roy's here too by the way." she said to Slade.

"What's wrong?" Slade asked.

"Is it that obvious?" Thea sighed, "I don't know if it's his obsession with this hood guy or what but he's been going out at night and getting into fights." She crossed her arms across her chest, "And I don't know what to say to him."

"Sounds like he needs to spar." Slade said.

Yao Fei hummed in agreement.

"Spar?"

"Practice fighting." Slade said, "No danger. Get rid of any stress and it'll make him a better fighter."

"You think it would make him stop?"

Slade nodded. "If I'm wrong, then next time he goes off, I'll drag his arse back."

Thea nodded, "That sounds good."
"Maybe I should be the one teaching him." Yao Fei said.

Slade knitted his brows at the other man.

"I am a teacher. You are a drill sergeant."

"Commander but yes you do have a point." He said before turning to Thea. "Yao Fei was a general in the Chinese military, a good teacher and judge of character."

Thea pressed her lips together. "Okay but I'm not the one you will have to convince."

Slade nodded, eyes determined. He looked over to Yao Fei, "Why don't you grab some clothes from the rental and I'll go talk to Roy?"

Yao Fei nodded.

"I take it this is your friend's car?" Moira asked as she got out of the car.

"Yao Fei's rental, yes." Oliver said, stepping out of the car.

Lance pulled up on the drive. The detective, Tommy, Laurel and Taylor got out.

"It's pretty big, isn't it?" Laurel said to the young boy.

He nodded. He barely talked, he mainly pointed at thing, nodded and shook his head but Laurel was good with him.

"Hey mom why don't you show them around, I'll be there, in a sec." Oliver said. He turned and looked over to meet Lance's eyes.

Moira smiled and moved to unlock and hold the door open for the group. Lance stayed behind. Oliver walked over to him.

"Truce?" Oliver suggested.

Lance gave him an unimpressed look.

"Look," Oliver said, "I know you hate me and it made you hate him but he's no danger. I mean he worked for the government of Australia, how bad could he be?"

"What happened to Billy Wintergreen?"

"How did..." Oliver shook his head, a smirk on his lips. "He died."

"How?"

"I can't say."

"Can't or won't."

"Won't."

Lance was took back by the blonde's words and the almost dark look in his eyes.

"Slade is my partner. I'm not going to just run my mouth." Oliver said, "Did Laurel or Tommy happen to tell you where they were last night?"
"No." Lance admitted.

"Slade's apartment. He and Thea worked together to make dinner for us. We ate, drank and played Xbox. Slade was kind and entertaining, even after you invaded his privacy and tried to turn Thea against him, when she looks up to him like a brother." Oliver said, lip twitching in anger. He waved at the older man. "Ask Laurel." He stomped off, not realising the way he had spoken to the detective until he reached the door but he was just so angry.

Oliver looked over to his mother who was talking to the group in the dinning room. He headed over to the kitchen, where he could just hear the sound of Slade and Thea talking.

"Roy has a nice arse, I'll give you that."

"You can't say that!"

"Okay, your brother has a nice arse."

Thea laughed hard.

Oliver rounded the corner to see Slade and Thea laying on the deck chairs in front of the pool. Slade was grinning widely and Thea was rolled on to her side, her hand on his shoulder. Oliver leant against the door, watching them for a bit. Yao Fei was out in the garden, shirtless in a pair of long black shorts, looking more like the man he had met five years ago. He had his arms lifted in a defensive stand and Roy stood in front of him, throwing what looked to be reactively fast but unskilled punches, which were blocked with ease by the older man.

"What about detective Lance?"

Slade grimaced. "I don't know. I haven't looked."

Thea started to laugh again. She spotted her brother. "Hey Ollie." she said between giggles, rolling on to her own chair.

"That was a very disturbing conversation you were having." Oliver said.

"Indeed it was." Slade said, giving his other half a smile.

Oliver could not help but smile back, shaking his head at the man. Hearing the group moving behind him, Oliver stepped out of the way which put him standing at pool, a little too close for comfort. He sat down on the leg spare of Thea's deck chair, she folded her legs to give him room.

Moira took Laurel, Tommy and Taylor out the back door, saying; "This is Thea, my daughter. My son Oliver, who you have already met and Slade, a friend of the family and he was not long ago a navy commander."

Slade waved a hand in greeting. He smiled at Moira, it was a rather nice thing to say.

"Oh, hello." Thea smiled, also waving, although a little confused.

Moira held an arm out to the garden. "And this... I'm not entirely sure what's going on over there."

"That's Yao Fei." Thea said, "Old friend of Slade and Ollie's."

"Oh, yes. Oliver did say." Moira nodded, still looking a little confused.

"He's teaching Roy a little self-defence." Slade explained, "Thea and I were just commentating."
Thea's shoulders started to shake uncontrollably, her hand clamped over her mouth.

"Don't ask." Oliver said at the odd look the three adults were giving them.

"So," Slade motioned a hand to Taylor, "he a member of the family or..."

"He'll be staying here for a while." Moira said.

Slade and Thea both gave the woman a single raised brow, which Oliver thought was cute but their expressions of slightly baffled yet still cocky would change soon.
"You alright?" Oliver asked as Slade grabbed his jacket from the coat hanger.

"Fine." Slade said, tapping his pockets to make sure he had everything.

"Alright." Oliver had a good idea of what had put the man on edge so he left him to it. "Dig's text me, he's going to see Lila now. I'll stay here with Yao Fei. Can you help Diggle and Felicity with Deadshot?"

Slade gave the blonde a light smile. "Yeah, sure. I'll see you later." He said, walking over and pecking Oliver's lips before taking his leave.

"This is just so sad." Thea said, looking over to Taylor who was sitting on the sofa watching TV with Laurel and Tommy. "Not much we can really do though."

"Yeah." Roy said, shifting uncomfortably on the spot.

"Come on." Thea said, taking his hand and leading him back outside to the seats she and Slade had sat on before. "How did your lesson go?" she asked, taking a seat.

"Find." Roy said, sitting down and rubbing at his bicep. "Arms are killing me. That Fei guy didn't even break a sweat. Can I borrow your phone for a sec? I want to look up something."

"Yeah sure." Thea stood to pull the iPhone from her skinny jeans, passing it to her boyfriend before sitting back down. "What are you looking up?"

"He had this tattoo of a dragon on his back, said it was passed down or something."

"Dragon tattoo?" Thea said, "As probably one of the most tattooed image ever, I wish you luck with that."

"Thanks." Roy groaned.

"My pleasure." she smirked.

"What you two up to?" Oliver asked from the door, leering at Roy for a few seconds before his glaze flickered back to Thea.

"Nothing you and Slade don't do alone." Thea said.

Oliver shrugged, "Good point but we can't get pregnant."

"Heterophobe."

Oliver grinned.

"Where is Slade anyway?" Thea asked, "You two are usually joined at the hip."

"He's going to meet up with Diggle. The two are really starting to get on." he said, "Where's Yao Fei?"

"Mom's setting him up in a spare room. She's going to let him stay here till he gets a place."
Oliver smiled, shaking his head. Yao Fei had been like a father to him; teaching him archery, Chinese and how to fight. The man treated him like family, as did Shado. It was kind of strange having a father in the house again. Not that anyone could replace his father, even for his faults. Nor that Walter did not try but Yao Fei was... Well Yao Fei. He kept everyone calm when they all were going crazy.

Slade and Shado were great teachers in their own way but Yao Fei -looking back- had been too soft with him. Instead of forcing Ollie further, he guided. He never gave up on Oliver, just watched with patient eyes, as if the simplest thing was not taking him hours to learn. Each time Oliver voiced that he would not succeed, Yao Fei just shook his head and said "no". He looked at Oliver as he looked Shado when she had learnt to shot. The smallest of small smiles, but the pride shone brightly in his black eyes.

In some ways Yao Fei was like the father Oliver always wanted but Ollie loved his father too to admit such a thing. He followed the list in memory of his father and wore the hood to respect Yao Fei. He fought with archery for it was a gift that was passed to him. It was not all he knew, he could shoot gun, throw knives and make bombs but he was an archer through and through.

"What?" Thea asked.

"It's nothing." Ollie said, "Yao Fei's just kind of been like a father to me. No one could replace dad but it was good having him around."

Thea smiled. "Slade's family now. Yao Fei is his and your family, which makes him mine and when Shado gets here, she will be part of it to."

Oliver smiled. "That's sweet of you to say Thea. Does this include Roy?" he asked, motioning to the younger blonde.

"Yes." Thea nodded.

"There's always a catch." Oliver sighed, moving back into the house.

"You bitch." Thea called to her brother.

"Alright." Slade said, leaning against the desk Felicity sat at, the computer screens running through numerous programs. It was amazing that she could always find something to do.

"Lawton is set to meet his new employer and the assignment tonight at eight pm. Only his new employer," Diggle paused from where he had been circling the two, he pointed at one of the computer screens. "will be an A.R.G.U.S agent. Lyla will then swoop in, with her team and arrest him." he said, his eyes staring down at the iPad which held the picture of Lawton. The man who had killed his brother.

"Straight forward but wrong." Slade said.

Diggle looked up to the Australian.

"Don't get me wrong the plan is just what you want. A sniper, like an archer is a long distance fighter. Corner and surround him and that's it but if he knows that this is a set up. It'll quickly become a blood bath." Slade said, "First shot goes out, someone dies. After the second shot, people start to realise they are in danger. It takes another point five of a second for them to react but by then three people have already bite the floor. If the people happen to be pretty much right next to something they can hide behind, I would expect one or two more dead and that'd only if."
"What do you suggest?" Diggle asked.

"In the navy I learned to shoot, in ASIS I learned to snipe." Slade said, "Using that I can make the rabbit run just where I want him to go." He picked up one of Oliver's arrows, "Whereby he stumbled upon a hunter." he tapped the steel arrow on the metal table, "And perished." He added. "Unless you want them to arrest him? After all if he just goes there, there would be no need."

Diggle paused for a second before saying; "In that case I hope he's as predictable as you think he is."

"Don't think. Know." Slade smirked, looking into the man's dark eyes, feeling the same hate and rage the man did. As Lawton did end Slade's brother in arms. "Have you heard from Oliver?"

"Yeah." Diggle said, "It's horrible."

"He thinks Edward Rasmus ordered the hit." Felicity said, "I'm working on getting into his corporate accounts, phone records and everything and anything else I can find that could link him to the killer but no luck." she added "Yet!"

"Didn't doubt you for a second." Slade said.

"Better not."

Slade laughed, his gruff voice making it sound a bit menacing.

"Ah, there you are Roy." Moira said, stepping out on to the patio. "I was wondering if you would like to stay for dinner tonight."

"Um..." Roy was surprised by the gesture, he had planned to go out tonight but he could not exactly pass up the offer. He should be able to swipe a police radio another time. "Yeah sure. Thank you."

"It's no problem." She turned to Thea, "Mr Yao is all set. Such a nice man. Will Slade be back for dinner?"

"I think so. Ollie said he meeting up with Diggle."

Moira hummed in interest. "I was unaware that the two were close."

"Same."

"Are you still looking for that tattoo." Thea asked, placing the cans of soft drink on the table before dropping down on to the sofa. "Why don't you just ask him?"

"I tried, no luck." Roy said, eyeing the lab top screen. "To have a tattoo that represented your family, I mean how cool is that?"

Thea leaned over his shoulder. Along with internet windows asking about the tattoo he had ones that said things like 'Chinese mark of an archer' and 'Chinese archer tattoo'.

"Yao Fei is an archer?" She rested her chin on his shoulder.

"No but I was thinking. Families pass down samurai swords, so maybe they teach their kids how to use them and the same could be said for archers." he opened up a window, "Look. It says here that archery used to be considered as passed from father to son. The Hood could have learn archery in China, he could have a tattoo just like that but of something else and-"
Thea clamped a hand over his mouth. "First. It's called a katana. Slade told me. Second. If you put in as much effort into finding this hood guy and going out and getting your ass kicked, in to your work, you'd be running the place by now."

"Funny." Roy said, voice muffled.

"Why do you want to find this guy so bad anyway?" Thea asked, pulling her hand away. She tilted her head until her cheek lay flat on his shoulder. "He's just a guy with a bow."

"That's just it."

"Hm?" Thea looked up to her boyfriend.

"He's just a guy. One guy." Roy said, pulling up a picture of the hood taken by an outside secretary camera. It was one of the clearest pictures ever taken of him. He was in mid jump between a fire escape of one building and the roof of another, five stories up with about seven or so feet between his jump. "And yet, after getting beat down and cornered twenty, thirty to one. This normal guy gets up and makes the people destroying this city stop."

"By killing them." Thea pointed out, shutting the laptop.

"Not always and the ones he does... Well they did deserve it." Thea sighed, "Yeah. I know." she said, "Slade said killing should never be alright but it still happens and innocent people need to be protected so even the good have to kill."

"I want to meet him." Roy said, "Ask him why and how."

"How?" Thea lifted her head.

"Where did he learn to fight, his archery." he grinned. "I want to be able to..."

"To?"

"Protect the innocent." Roy said, looking in to her bright blue eyes. "I don't want to hurt or kill people but I want to help the people of this city. I need to."

Thea looked away in thought, a frown across her lips.

"Thea?" Roy's grin fell.

"I imagine." Thea started, "If you took some more lessons from Yao Fei and then after maybe some from Slade. You could do that." She looked up to him, smiling. "I just want you to be safe." She kissed him, slipping her long arms around his neck. She pulled back, laying a peck on his lips before saying; "Let's find him."

"Slade?" Roy pointed over his shoulder, to the front room, "He's out with Diggle still, isn't he?"

"No." Thea shook her head with laugh, long brown hair waving back and forth. "The hood. Let's find him."

"I don't want you getting hurt." Roy cupped her cheek.

"I don't want that to happen to you either and I'm not going to sit around worrying." She lowered her brows and poked a finger into his chest. "So how about I learn how to fight too. In this city, it's probably something I should know how to do by now."
"Are you sure?"

"Yeah. I want to learn how to fight."

"You'll get hurt."

"And I'll heal."

"You're going to have to learn how to fight and defend yourself."

"And how to pay attention to your surroundings." A deep Australian voice added.

The two jumped, looking over to the Slade who was walking in to the living room. He stood just before the sofa they sat on, his arms crossed, one eyebrow raised with a rather unimpressed look.

"Not everyone is a super spy ninja... person!" Thea exclaimed, waving her hand to emphasis a point.

"Why do you want to learn anyway?" The Aussie asked, sitting down on the loveseat so he was facing the couple. Arms still crossed, eyebrow still up.

"It's sounds interesting and I have one older brother. Don't you start." she warned, equalling Slade's look with one of her own, complete with eyebrow and crossed arms.

Slade just straight back at her.

Thea opened her eyes further, as if to say 'Come on. I can take ya.'

"Staring contest?" Oliver questioned, appearing behind the sofa.

Roy and Thea jumped yet again. "Damn it Ollie." she turned to her brother, "What is it with you two being ninjas?"

"He's the one with the katana." Oliver said, pointing the Australian.

"When I first met you, you snuck around like a giraffe on roller-skates." Slade said, "Where's Yao Fei?"

"Upstairs, on Skype with Shado." Oliver said, "It was good seeing her again."

"Yeah." Slade smiled.

"Hey Ollie. How come you didn't tell me Yao Fei was coming to stay in Starling?" Thea asked.

"I didn't know. I just found him at the door this morning."

Thea turned to Slade.

"I wanted it to be a surprise. It was not suppose to be for another week, he text me last night to say he could get here sooner."

Thea nodded. "You staying for dinner?"

"No can do. Have some work to attend to. Spy slash ninjas just can't retire, it seems." Slade said, "But I can stick around for an hour."

"Use protection." Thea said, without a hint of embarrassment.
"Too late." Slade simply said, smirking when he saw Oliver slap himself in the face. "I should be telling you that."

"Pregnancy, blah, blah, blah. Oliver already went over this once today."

"Alright." Slade stood and make his way over to his other half. "Coffee, tea?" he asked, directing the blonde into the kitchen.

"Only if we can make it Irish."

Once the couple were out of earshot, Roy turned to his girlfriend, the tips of his ears and his cheeks burning red. "So..."

"Normal is over rated." Thea said, "Plus we are trying to look for the vigilante."

"Good point."

"So." Oliver sat, sitting down at the breakfast far, "Aside from embarrassing the hell out of me. What else have you been up to?"

Slade walked over to the kettle, filling and setting it on the AGA to boil. "We're going to take Deadshot down tonight."

"Tonight?" Oliver blinked, "When?"

"Eight." Slade said getting out a few cups, "Coffee or tea?"

"Tea, please." Oliver said, "Yao Fei and I can protect Taylor, it's just kind of a pain that everything is happening tonight."

"Diggie is also sending some guys over. They should be here in a bit. Felicity filled you in on this guy's background, I gather?"

"Yeah and I have not doubt he'll make his move either tonight or tomorrow night." Oliver said, "I've turned the security lights on and the windows are locked. Only way in without being noticed is through the front door. Yao Fei and I will be taking turns between Taylor and the front."

Slade walked over to his boyfriend and cupped his cheek, "You always were a natural." he kissed him.

"So you've said before." Oliver said as they parted. He wrapped an arm around Slade's neck, pulling close him close. "Be safe tonight." he said into Slade's neck.

"Promise." Slade assured, kissing the blonde's cheek.

It crossed Oliver's mind to drop the L-bomb but it was a little too end of the worldly. Instead he pulled back slightly, miming the words, "I love you Slade." It would not be the first time Slade did not hear the words. "I love you."

"Nothing is going to happen to me." Slade rested his chin on Oliver's head, running a hand through the blonde hair. "The same better go for you."

Oliver smiled. "I'll be safe."

"Alright." Slade pulled back, looking into those bright aqua eyes he loved so, "I'll go inform Yao Fei
about tonight. You make the tea, he'll probably want one too."

"Alright." Oliver pecked the man's lips.

Slade smiled before the two parted.

Coming back from Yao Fei -and getting to say goodnight to Shado- Slade found himself walking past the bedroom Taylor would be staying in. He was about to walk right past the open door when the boy's words froze his movement in place.

"I miss my mom and dad."

Slade sighed. It was hard losing your family, Slade knew that, he had gone through it, he would have gone with them had he waited three more days.

"When I was your age, my mom tucked me into bed that night before going out. Then the next thing I knew, there was a police officer at my door." Tommy said. Slade remembered Oliver telling him about the Merlyn's mother. He heard the man take in a breath, likely pained by the memory he was describing. "He said that she was gone and that I would never see her again but you know what? He was wrong."

Slade raised a brow at that, really hoping that the next sentence from the young billionaire did not contain the word 'morgue' in it.

"You saw her again?"

Tommy hummed positively. "Every time I closed my eyes I can see her. Every time I go to bed, I see her in my dreams."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Try. Close your eyes."

There was a pause.

"I see them."

Slade smiled.

"Whenever you are sad or scared, just remember that they will always be there."

Slade's smile fell. He shook his head and walked past the room.

Just as the dark eyed man had gone around the corner, he heard Tommy call out to him. Slade turned around to face the younger man. "Hello."

"Hey. We all set for tonight." Tommy asked.

"Oliver's got it covered. The kid will be fine."

Tommy nodded. "Hey, um. Where you listening before?"

"Sorry."

"No, it's fine." Tommy smiled, "It's really hard for the little guy. You know?"
"Yeah." Slade nodded, "I know.

"Who did you lose?" Tommy asked, "I don't mean to annoy you or anything but you left pretty quickly after Taylor got here."

"All of them." Slade said, "At the same age but not the same way."

Tommy nodded, frowning. That was until he realised that Slade had said 'all' not 'both'. "All of them?" at the slightly annoyed look on Slade's face, Tommy looked away. "All. Wow. Sorry dude."

"It's fine. Does he have any family?"

"A grandmother. She'll be here in the morning." Tommy said, "Poor kid's been through a lot."

Slade hummed in agreement.

"I mean he's going to have nightmares for years."

"He's parents loved him, that'll keep him going."

"Yeah, it did it for me." Tommy said, "You?"

"Not so much." Slade said honestly.

"Survivor's guilt?" As soon as the words left his mouth, Tommy desperately wished he could take them back.

Slade smirked. "It was justified."

"I don't think they would have preferred that you died." Tommy said.

"Funny." Slade chuckled, "It was the last thing my father wished for me. The others agreed." and with that he turned and left, leaving a very shocked Tommy in his wake.

"I found it!" Roy said as his girlfriend came back into the living room from where she had been saying goodbye to Slade.

"The tattoo?" Thea took a seat on the sofa.

"Yeah." He pointed to the screen where Chinese text stood. He clicked the translate option on the top of the screen. "There was this picture of it and it looked exactly like the tattoo. Same colour and everything."

The text changed to English and Roy traced it with his eyes. "It says here that there are multiple tattoos to represent each craft."

"Craft?"

Roy pointed to the side of the screen where many different times of fighting tool based arts were listed. One of which was archery.

"Look." She pointed at the screen, "Archery."

Roy clicked on it straight away and started to read. After a few seconds he spotted something that made him freeze in place. "Thea. The symbol of the archer is the earth dragon. Yao Fei is an archer."
He could be the vigilante!

"That's not possible." Thea said, "He just got here. The hood has been here for months."

Roy clicked on a JPEG he spotted with 'the earth dragon of archers' written under it in brackets, which revealed the picture that had lead him to the site, a picture of said dragon. "See." he pointed at it, "That's the tattoo Yao Fei has. He's an archer. He may even know who the hood is." He turned back to his other half. Her mouth was hung open in shock and she was shaking as if she was cold. "Thea."

Thea sat there, dread tugging at her heart, her body felt cold. Oliver's words rang through her head.

"Yao Fei's just kind of been like a father to me."

As did Slade's.

"He was always better with poles and throwing knives. Wicked aim. A natural really."

Along with the image of that tattoo, the exact same red dragon, on her brother's back.

"Ollie has that tattoo." she said, which just made the shock and horror seem all the more real.
This story has been going do a year now!

We're nearing the end now but don't be sad. The lovely mz_Valkyrie and I will be writing a story together. Can't say what it is about but it's brilliant if I do say so myself. It will not start till after the end of Arrow Season two. :D

Yao Fei sighed silently from where he leant against the wall leading to the living room where Oliver's sister and her other half sat. She was panicking and he was trying to assure her but the hints of laughter in his voice said that he was anything but saddened by the news.

Yao Fei pulled his mobile from his pocket and dialled Oliver number, he could just hear Oliver's confused greeting from the other room. "Living room. Your sister found the meaning of our tattoo." he hung up.

No longer than ten seconds later Oliver ran up to him with a worried look. "She know who I am then?"

Yao Fei nodded, arms crossing over his chest.

Oliver ran a hand through his hair. "Guess there's nothing I can say that she would not have already guessed." he said to himself. He exhaled a breath and stepped into the living room. The Chinese archer following along behind him without a word.

"Thea."

Thea looked over to her brother. "You're the hood." She said, not a hint of question or doubt in her voice.

"Yes." Ollie said, taking a seat on the two seat sofa with Yao Fei.

"Were you ever going to tell me?" she asked. Her face was a blush of pink but tears had yet to appear. Next to her Roy looked at the older blonde like he was Christ reincarnated.

"I didn't want to lose you." Ollie said, "Telling you about what really happened on the Island was hard enough. Thea I've killed people, both on and off the Island."

"Why?" Thea said, shaking her head at her brother. "I get before that you had no choice but why these people?"

"I never set out to kill them, just-"


Oliver opened his mouth to speak but quickly shut it. The truth was so much worse than any lie.

"And don't you lie to me." she growled, white teeth on show. "I've accepted that you're killed, that
you're different. That you can't even tell your boyfriend that you love him. I get all that and I stand by you. Don't I deserve to know? Don't you lie to me, not again."

Oliver looked at his sister and she stared right back. He shook his head. "Thea. Please understand."

She slapped his tights and stood, walking out the room.

"Thea wait." Oliver said, running after her.

"Lies." Yao Fei said, turning to Roy. "Have a reason for their existence."

Roy looked at the wide eyes, lips parted. "What happened on that Island?"

Yao Fei just blinked, his expression as still as ever. "I suggest you don't move from your seat."

Roy moved to stand up. He had to talk to Thea. She was sad and scared, she needed him. But he was stopped when the Chinese man moved silently and quickly across the space between them push him back onto the sofa.

"I suggest you don't move your seat." he said, before moving back to his own sofa, watching Roy as if he was both important and obsolete.

"Do you know what this reminds me of?" she asked. "That night when Slade came to town." she said, eyes on the wall in front of her. "You were so worried about telling me you were gay and looking back, I knew you never thought you would see him again and that you were heart broken. And you couldn't tell me because there was no way I would understand." she closed her eyes, taking in a breath and letting it out. "But you told me and I was fine with it. Slade came back," she smiled, opening her eyes "and you two are together and so in love I could explode from cuteness. Then you told me and Ollie I can tell you hand on heart that I have never felt so close to you."

Oliver let go of her arm.

Thea faced her sibling. "I know you were lying about your dream."

"How?"

Her smile grew. "You were just so upset and you started to push him away. I think you did tell him you loved him while he was asleep but what happened before or after was worse than you were letting on and it happened on the Island."

Oliver nodded and sighed. "Slade got stabbed and he nearly died."

"Oh, jees." Thea's expression fell.

"Yeah. I stayed up all night, telling him stories and I realised that I loved him and I told him." Oliver remembered how Slade looked lying there, at the time he thought the man was dying. "I was, am in love with Slade and I was going to lose him. I can't take that again Thea."

"Don't be so stupid."

Oliver looked back to his sister.

"What about taking the risk about starting things with Slade, getting back together with him, telling
me about the Island? They were all risks Ollie." she shook her head at him. "What if he's just as worried as you are? Until one of you says it, you'll just keep worrying when you could be saying it to each other everyday." she said, "The same goes for this. You can tell me and I can deal and understand or you can run and hide, and drag this out and you'll still have to tell me in the end."

Oliver rubbed his eyes with his hand, pinching the bridge of his nose with his thumb and index finger. "Thea."

"What happened on the Island?" she pushed.

"It wasn't on the Island."

"What?"

"Can we go sit down?" Oliver asked, "I can text Yao Fei to inform Roy. We were lucky Diggle's men weren't nearby."

Thea nodded. "Okay. Does Diggle know?"

"Yes, about the Island too." he said, walking with his sister to his room.

"Tommy, Laurel?"

"Tommy knows both, Laurel knows nothing."

"I get why you wouldn't tell her." Thea said, "But it must be hard for Tommy to hide it."

"Yeah. I hate doing that to him." Oliver sighed, pulling the phone from his pocket and texting his old mentor.

Yao Fei pulled the mobile from his suit pocket. He looked over the message and put the phone away. Roy watched the man. His movement were slow, his expression calm, like nothing about this was affecting him.

"You care for Oliver's sister?" he asked.

"Un, well yeah- Yes I do."

"Would you take care of her and her children if she were to become pregnant? Would you support her and the children?"

"What?" Roy eyed the man with an understandably uncomfortable look on his face. He would have asked the man what his deal was but then he thought about it. This guy was probably trying to judge what kind of person he was, whether it was for Thea or for his knowledge about Oliver being the hood, he was not sure. "Yes."

"Why?"

Roy held up his hand, trying to conjure an answer. "I care for her."

"Any other reason."

"Un... It's the right thing to do?" he continued, "It is the right thing to do."
Yao Fei watched him for a few second and the blonde had honestly never felt so nervous in his life. He was pretty sure this was the closest he had ever got to talking to a girl's parents. The fact that he loved Thea, just made things all the more nerve racking. Oliver just glared at him or made side joke, whereas Slade -surprisingly- stood with Roy on equal ground, testing him to see his worth but otherwise just treating him like another guy but they both had that air of protectiveness around them and Roy knew that if he messed up that they were both the kinds to come after him for it.

Yao Fei nodded. "Six years ago I was a general in the army..."

"When the boat went down I swam from it. I was dragged into a lifeboat." Oliver said from his half of the bed, his sister sitting beside him.

"Wait." Thea held up a hand. "People survived?"

"They died a few days later, before we ever made it to shore," he said, aqua eyes on his calloused hands. "But it's who they were and how they died that was the important thing."

"Who were they?" She asked, starting to feel really worried. "Was one of them Sara?"

Ollie shook his head.

Thea's bright eyes flew wide. "Dad?"

He nodded. "We were on the boat for days," Oliver said, knowing there was no turning back. "He told me that he had... Failed this city."

Thea's hand went to her mouth, she could feel the tears building along her eyelashes.

"He wanted me to fix things, right his wrongs and truth be told I wanted to fix our home, make it all better." he looked up to his sister, reaching a hand to his face and wiping away his own sadness before he could go any further. "Later I found this list of name. There were all crocks and murderers, all business people who use their money to protect themselves from getting put away. I don't know why he had it or what it was even for but if you look into each name you will find a history, on show or buried."

Thea nodded, tears pouring down her cheeks. "How did he die?"

Oliver closed his eyes, remember the bang of each gun shot, the hole in his father's temple, the look of sadness in his eyes that slowly dulled as if his body was starting to realise he was gone. His clouded eyes, cold skin stained with thick dark red, dried blood. "He knew that the way we were going, with the supplies we had, that we would never make it. Not all three of us." he took a breath, sounding broken. He cracked his eyes open and his vision was wobbled by tears, he blinked and the warm liquid rolled from his eyes, leaving trails of cool in their wake. "He shot the man."

Thea's hiccups, the hand on her lips shaking. Her eyes fell closed. She knew what her brother was going to say next.

"And then he shot himself."

"Oh Ollie." Thea crawled over to her brother and hugged him.

"I'm sorry." Oliver said into his sister's neck.

"It's not your fault." Thea tightened her grip and whispered; "It's not your fault."
Diggle leant against the pillar, hidden in darkness. Agents were scattered everywhere looking like workers and people just passing through, while Lyla sat at a table with a laptop and gun strapped to the bottom of the table. He had spoken to her again and she had found out why he was so interested in Lawton, his ex-wife had ordered him not to come but it would be too late to remove him now. In order for Slade's plan to work Diggle had to be there. If Lawton came through the front door then that was "fine and dandy" as Slade had put it, as he would not be able to see Diggle. Floyd would get caught and so on. However if he was up in another building looking at Diggle through a sniper rifle, Diggle's presence would only make Lawton further believe that it was a trap and he had the upper hand. He would never expect the attack.

Slade had estimated that five buildings had possible vantage points that Lawton would use, those five were cut down to two as only two buildings had empty floors which he would have the best shot from. Cameras and explosives were set up in each building, in every room of the floor that had the perfect place to shoot from, and the floors above and below just in case.

Felicity was under Verdant watching through the cameras with her many computer screens, along with the cameras around the buildings to make sure that they got a head start on things. Slade sat a few floors above Diggle with a laptop showing the views from cameras on the rigged floors and a cheap throw away phone with all the numbers of the mobiles attached to the explosives, acting as triggers. On the off chance that Lawton choice to stay in the building Lyla's trap was set, which Slade said he might just be cocky enough to do. The Australian had set up cameras in the building and hidden explosives.

Diggle smiled as he listened with his ear piece, as Felicity asked Slade about the irony of him sniping a sniper.

"Cough if everyone is set, Dig." Slade told the army man.

Diggle coughed into his hand.

"Good. Now if you could sing a little song, that would be rather entertaining."

Diggle rolled his eyes.

"We have a while yet so chill out mate."

"Hey, um." Felicity cut in. "Hate to correct this team twice today but..."

Diggle straightened up.

"Dig, chill out. I can hear you panicking from here. Where is he?"

"In your building. He's going in now."

"Freakin' knew it. Damn prick."

"What's wrong?" Felicity asked which Diggle was very thankful for as he had to keep his cover of just waiting there.

"I can't exactly shoot him up from up here and I have to take the damn laptop with me. I'll get set and start making my way down. Keep an eye on him."

"Right."
"When the bombs start going off, turn off the cameras belonging to the building. I don't want them to see me."

"So," Thea said, taking a seat next to her boyfriend on the sofa. Having cleaned herself up after her and Oliver's emotional moment. "how does it feel knowing about the Island?"

"It's... Different."

Thea smiled weakly.

Roy took her hand in his, giving it a squeeze. "You okay?"

She nodded. "Yeah. It's just a lot to take in... I'll tell you later." She was still sensitive about her father. The redness around and in the whites of her eyes was a clear sigh of that.

Roy lifted her hand to his lips, pressing a soft kiss on the back of her hand. Oliver watched the act with a smile, before sitting on the arm chair.

Yao Fei stood and gripped Oliver's shoulder. "I will take watch over Taylor."

"I'll send these two up in a bit." Oliver said.

Yao Fei nodded. "You could teach him. Like Slade and I taught you."

He said in Mandarin, smiling gently, before removing his hand and leaving.

Oliver was really surprised with Yao Fei, the man had clearly meant it, he even seemed proud for Oliver at the idea.

"I, ah..." Roy started, catching Oliver attention. "I want to thank you. You saved my life."

"Shengcún."

"What does that mean?" Roy asked.

"Survive. It was the first lesson Yao Fei ever taught me." Ollie said, "And you're welcome."

Roy nodded, although still a little confused. "Do you think this guy will really come here?" The younger blonde questioned.

"It's possible. I expect you to keep Thea safe."

"That goes without saying."

Oliver smiled lightly. "Good. Now you two head upstairs. Yao Fei and I will be taking turns being down here and being upstairs."

"We can't just leave you here." Thea exclaimed.

Oliver held up a hand. "Slade will tell you that when I was untrained I increased the group's risk of being harmed, especially when it was just me and him. I'll need to stop this guy. I can't do that if I have to watch you two as well. Diggle's men are around and Yao Fei is only a yell away."

"Where is Slade anyway?" Thea asked. She was not very happy with her brother's decision but he was right and there were people around after all.
"Ah," Oliver rubbed the back of his neck. "well he's take care of something."

Thea crossed her arms and cocked a brow. "Some vigilante business?"

Oliver shrugged. "Yeah. He's after this assassin who killed a brother of his friend."

"Oh." Thea said, "Is he going as the hood?"

"No." Oliver dragged out the 'o'. "He's not an archer. He's more swords, guns and explosives."

Thea shook her head before resting it on her palm. "This is going to take a while to get used to."

Diggle watched as a stranger came through the door. Lyla likely thought that this was Lawton seeing as she was eyeing the man, assuring her men to stand down.

"Here we go." Slade said.

Now was the time, with Floyd lining up.

A large bang sounded. The flash of fire from a blast. People everywhere hit the ground. Diggle covered Lyla, keeping the appearance of confused victim. Waiting for Slade's command to move.

Lawton cried out as he felt the heat of the small explosion on his arms.

The bomb had gone off a few feet away from Floyd. It was loud, blindingly bright and came with a flash of fire that threatened to burn him but only succeeded to burn his sleeve.

"Fuck." He spat, leaping away from the fire that had simmered almost as fast as it appeared. He clutched his arm, feeling red hot heat under his glove. He reached back to get his rifle before spiriting away.

Bright explosives raced next to him, heat biting at his heels, light making him disoriented, causing him to wobbly, almost running into an explosive had he not noticed the oddly placed paper bin, and jumped back to get away from it. The light burned his eyes, a ringing in his ears that he had not noticed in his panic, increased, very near causing him to faint.

He ran down the stairway. The only path he could take that was not exploding in front of him.

"Go."

Diggle jumped up from the sound of the Australian growling in his ear, glancing down at Lyla to make sure she was okay before he left. A naturel reaction he had yet to grow out of. He bolted to the stairway door, running up the stairs, taking two steps at a time.

John grabbed the corner post, swimming himself around it using centrifugal force before galloping up the stairs once more.

He halted when he came face to face with a rather dazed Floyd Lawton, clenching his head with one hand, the other had a large loaded gun pointed right at his John's head.

"You have friends in high places." Floyd said, top lip twitching to show his white teeth. "Think hiring him was a good idea, hm? Your pretty lucky that cocksucker hates me." he smiled, which looked more like a sadistic smirk. "You're out of luck." He pulled down the top of his shirt, showing
the man his tattooed collarbone. "Your brother. And look, there's a space right next to him."

Diggle's fists tightened, causing them to click. His hands shook with rage.

Floyd snickered, pulling a second gun from it's holster, pointing it at Diggle and slowly pulled back the safety, watching Diggle's eyes and enjoying the flash of panic. "Where is he anyway?"

The two men heard the sudden thumping of boots and saw the flash of black but Floyd only had the time to turn his head slightly when a katana blade went thought his back, slicing through his ribcage and heart, and coming out the other end.

Floyd coughed blood which flooded down his chin. Searing pain wrecked his body, causing him to shake and spasm uncontrollably. He felt the think hot blood drench his shirt, he gasped for air that suddenly felt think, think like the blood draining in pulses from his body. His green eyes looked into the dark spaces made in the metal orange and black mask, dark brown eyes staring into his. He was dead long before Slade spoke.

"Bye Floyd." Slade said, voice muffled by the mask. He pulled the katana out, letting the body drop. He lent down and whipped the blade off on Lawton's shirt before slipping it back in to it's holster. "Tell them exactly what you saw." Slade said as he stood back up. "Mask and all but I did not speak and no clues to who I might be. Stick to the script."

Diggle nodded. He was panting, looking at Slade in shock and fear.

"Ear piece." Slade demanded.

Diggle stiffened but removed the item from his ear and threw it to the Aussie.

Slade caught it with ease. "See ya round mate." he said, strolling upstairs.

"Death by poker." Lance commented, eyeing the corpus. "That's a new one." He looked up to Yao Fei.

"It was the only weapon I had on hand." Yao Fei said.

"He could have killed me had you not been here." Oliver said, playing the role of thankful victim.

Lance nodded. "Okay." He shut his note pad.

Slade slipped through the door, watching as a covered body on a stretcher went by. "What happened here?" he asked, stepping over to Oliver and resting a hand on his shoulder. "You okay?"

"Yeah, I'm alright." Oliver nodded, swallowing the lump in his throat. He really wanted to laugh when Slade gave him a deadpan look, his back to the detective.

"And Thea?" Slade asked.

"She's upstairs with Roy. He got everyone in hiding when it happened."

"It seems the attacker came back." Lance said, "Your friend had the matter taken care off."

"Sounds a bit ominous." Slade commented, turning to the detective.

"Where were you?" Lance asked, eyebrows down in annoyance.
"A friend of mine, Felicity Smoak. I met her at Verdant. The security cameras had cut down and the security system hacked. We had to reboot everything." Slade explained. He glanced around the room. "Where's Diggle?"

Oliver raised a brow but played along. "Haven't seen him. Must be busy with something."

"Okay. We'll need to check a few things but other wise you are free to go." Lance said.

"Thank you." Oliver said.

Lance turned and left, ordering the officers to get the lab techs.

Moira stepped over to the group. "I can't believe this has happened."

"Taylor is safe now." Oliver said.

"I don't think he feels that way." Moira frowned.

"Slade and I will stay down here tonight and with Yao Fei staying, he could not get any safer." Oliver suggested.

Moira nodded. "I guess that will help. Laurel and Tommy are trying to settle him down now."

"Kid's had it tough." Slade said.

"So Diggle will be okay?" Oliver asked, setting a blanket down on the sofa.

"It's believable that the DeathStroke 'team' and Deadshot could hate each other." Slade said, "Could be the real people or people using it as a disguise but the katana will likely point to the first if they have any brains in their heads. Either way, it will be clear that he had no part in this."

"Thank you for being there with him." Oliver said, sitting down on the sofa.

"It's fine." Slade sat next to him, setting an alarm on his phone for the morning, so that the family did not walk in on them sleeping together.

Oliver slipped his arms around Slade, kissing the back of his neck. Slade chuckled, placing his phone on the coffee table before turning and kissing his boyfriend.

The two lay on the sofa together, which only just accepted Oliver's height. Slade on his back while the blonde lay across the Aussie's cheat, head tucked under the man's prickly chin.

Slade was always couscous, always had to be certain. Only Oliver could distract him from doing something so simple as clicking save when setting his alarm clock.
Saturday

Chapter Notes

Nearing the end. ;(  

But, remember that mz_Valkyrie and I will be writing a story together pretty soon :3

Slade had awoke to the muffled sounds of voices. As he became more aware, the voices became clearer. They were whisperers, both male and female. Slade could quite clearly identify two of them as Tommy and Moira but then he froze when he realised something. The voices were close, very close. Several feet away close... And Oliver was on top of him, asleep. His head tucked under his chin.

"I can not believe they are dating." Moira said.

Crap.

Slade knew he might as well get this over with. "It's rude to stare." Slade said. He opened his eyes. There stood Moira, Tommy, Raisa, Roy, Yao Fei and Thea. The last of which look very apologetic. Moira and Raisa looked surprised and the rest looked just plain uncomfortable.

Slade looked down to Oliver, who was completely asleep on his chest. His eyelashes were fluttering gently, his expression still and blissful. The Australian was unsure what his reaction to waking up, seeing all the people who played such a big part of his life before the Island, knowing him as a ladies man, asleep on his boyfriend's chest.

Slade sighed, head falling back. He reached a hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose.

"Sorry. I could not get here quick enough." Thea said.

"It's fine." Slade said, eyes still closed. They opened however when he realised something. He wrapped an arm around Oliver and cradled the back of his head with his hand, holding the blonde to his chest as he propped himself up so he was sitting. The younger man only grunted lightly. The Aussie then reached over and grabbed his phone, snorting when he saw that he had never saved the time adjustments. "Didn't set my alarm." he said.

Moira looked at her son in astonishment. He looked so peaceful, his body and face so utterly relaxed, whereas before, in the rare moments she had seen him asleep he had either been having nightmares or if by chance he was not under siege from horrific dreams, he looked tense and she knew from experience that touching him was not a good idea.

"Does he always sleep so peacefully?" Moira asked.

"He sleeps like a log."

"Hey, Wha-" Laurel cut short what she was about to say when she was what everyone was looking at.
"No please, join the party." Slade said. "It's not nearly awkward enough."

"At least everybody knows now." Thea said, "Expect Walter but he'll be fine with it."

Moira frowned.

Slade hummed in agreement. He had yet to meet Walter, he can been kidnapped before Slade had arrived in Starling and there were still no leads as to where he was being held. "Okay, let's get this over with." he shook Oliver's shoulder lighter. "Up ya get." he said, shaking harder.

Oliver just curled further into Slade.

"Not helping kid."

"Oliver, get up." Yao Fei said sternly.

Oliver's eyes flew open. For a second he thought that he was back on the Island but then he saw he was somewhere much worse. "охуеть" he said to himself. He turned to Raisa who had a hand on her mouth from his language. "Sorry."

The blonde looked at all the people watching him, he looked down to Slade, before his eyes returned to the group. This was really uncomfortable. He dearly wished the earth could just suck him out of existence right now. "I'm going to repress this now." he said, placing his chin on Slade's chest and closing his eyes.

Slade chuckled and Oliver leered at him for it.

Ollie sighed. He swung his legs off the sofa and stood up from his boyfriend's lap. "Mom. This is my boyfriend Slade."

"I can see that." She crossed her arms, looking more amused than annoyed but still annoyed.

"Well, I suddenly want coffee." Oliver said, "Nothing to do with this very uncomfortable situation." he grabbed hold of Slade's hand, attempting to drag him up with him.

Slade smirked and pulled Oliver back. "Pretty sure we have coffee here."

"Shut up." Oliver grumbled. He knew Slade would not just him go but he had to try. "I take it, you'll want to talk about this?" He asked his mother.

Moira nodded.

"Great." Oliver groaned.

Quentin Lance drummed his fingers on his desk as he eyed the disk in a simple see through plastic case, which sat on his keyboard. It was the enhanced recording of Slade's voice. The one that said he was on Lain Yu, the same time as Oliver. The detective did not know what to do with it. It could not be used as evidence, he would be far more likely to get in trouble for using it and...

He shook his head. This was stupid that he felt like this but he knew the real reasons. As much as he always said that a person did not need to go outside the law to get justice... He was dead wrong. The Hood was doing something amazing. Of course he had found out Oliver was The Hood. Looking back, he must have been deaf, dumb and blind. He had denied it, looked past the facts staring him right in the face but he knew deep down the reason for that was not because he was just being paranoid, believing it had to be Oliver for what he had done to Sara but because he did not want the
man to be locked away. To suffer.

He did not know if he could ever look past the fact that Sara would have not been there had it not been for the blonde but he was not the same kid from all those years ago. Not even close. The scars, the healing broken bones, the fighter that hid beneath a hood, who faced armies of men with guns and did not even flinch. Doing things not many could and no one else would.

His eyelids fell shut.

Officer Lance stepped inside the police station. He noticed a blonde seven-year old sitting on one of the many plastic chairs leant against the wall in the waiting area, his legs pulled right up to his chest. Lance went straight to him.

"Ollie?" he asked, having only met the boy once. He knelt down next to the young child. "What's wrong? What are you doing here?"

Oliver brightened up when he saw the older man but he still looked pretty upset. His eyes were bloodshot and the bright lights were reflecting the tear stains on his cheeks. "I got lost."

Lance said down on the floor, his legs crossed. "You did a good thing coming here. The police protect everyone until they're family can be found."

Ollie frowned and looked away, biting at the rough skin along the edge of his nails.

Lance brows lowered. The kid need not seem very pleased with that sentence. Maybe his family life was not as many would have believed. He decided to take a different approach. "I was about to go get some lunch. Would you like to come with me?"

Oliver nodded, still not looking at the man.

Lance was awoken from his memories by the sounds of chatter as a group of people in suits came into the building, flashing badges to talk with his boss, which read A.R.G.U.S.? Must have been some sort of government funded group. As long as it was not some secret organization like ASIS. He could go without knowing about more of them in his life.

Quentin looked back down to the disk. He remember how he had called Moira Queen to tell her that her son Oliver had got lost and gone to the police station. She had said he had been with his father at his company. Lance said nothing about how distressed the boy had been and when Moira mentioned she was busy, Lance wasted no time in offering to look after him for an hour or two. Lunch had went well and Lance had spoiled Oliver with ice-cream from this little diner he knew and the boy had loved it. As they had sat there and Oliver drew cat whiskers on Lance's face with chocolate ice-cream, Quentin was reminded of how much he wished he had a son. Even when he loved his daughters dearly.

Lance had shown the boy his badge and pined it to his shirt, and apparently as Oliver got to be a police officer, Lance should get to be a cat. The child had giggled as Lance sat there, his whiskers melting ever so slightly down his cheeks. The officer ticked him for that.

Not everything was sweet however. When Lance spoke once again about how as a police officer, Oliver would have to protect everyone from everything. Live solely to do so. Oliver had asked if that included fags. Lance gave his biggest smile, even if inside he was stuck between wanting to hug the kid and running to Queen Consolidated and ramming his fist into Robert Queen's face.
He asked the boy if he knew that the word was a very bad way of describing a gay person, to find that he did in fact know. He went no further, knowing Robert could try to shove the hate further down his throat or possibly hurt him had he not already. He just told the boy that the police protected everyone, and he proceeded watched out for sighs for years after.

He did not like Oliver dating Laurel simply for the fact that it involved sex and someone having sex with one of his children was just to painful to think about. He did like Oliver however and after a few mouths he gave the young man his blessing which just like that morning as the police station, had made the blonde frown. It was only now, six years later, that he believed he knew the reason. Oliver was gay and likely hid it because of what his father would do. After all, Slade was clearly not feminine but Oliver was with him which pretty much proved Lance's theory.

Oliver had took a lot from Quentin. Insults and hate, that the man had never wanted to give him and truth be told Lance hated to do it but Oliver did deserve it. Only when Slade came into it, did Oliver stand up and fight back. Ollie felt ashamed of what happened to Sara and rightly he should but he cared for Slade and wanted to protect him. The very idea that Oliver was fighting back had shocked Lance to silence, let alone fighting for someone who was by no means thin skinned.

Deep down Lance wanted The Hood to be free to fight those who ran this city, poisoning it till it was nothing but a place of hate and ruling over the weak. Another part of him just wanted Oliver to be happy. It felt like he was betraying Sara, betraying the law he was born to protect but what was the point in hating Oliver if he wanted to suffer for what he had done? What was the point in protecting law when those who it should affect could slip right past it?

He sighed again, brown eyes on the disk.

Moira and Oliver sat in the living room, the younger sitting in the pile of blankets he and Slade had been sleeping in no more than an hour before. The grandfather clock ticked in the background, the only sound in the room.

"Were you ever going to tell me about Slade?"

Oliver nodded. "Eventually."

Moira sighed. "I don't understand why you felt like you had to hide such a thing from me and yet you told everyone else."

Oliver looked up at her words. He was not sure how exactly she knew that, probably from the looks on everyone's faces when they saw the couple sleeping together.

"All this time that you have been happy, you have been with Slade?" Moira asked. The look on her face said she expected a straight answer.

Oliver nodded.

"Were you always gay?"

Credit where credit was due, Moira had figured it out.

"How did-

"A mother always knows." She tried to keep her smile, even as her lip started to wobble. "I'm sorry you had to hide it." she stood from the arm chair and sat next to her son, hugging him and pulling his head down to rest of her shoulder. "My beautiful boy. I love you so much."
"I love you too mom." Oliver said, wrapping his arms around the woman.

Lyla Michaels stood in the police station, advising the officers about a team called Deathstroke. The team was made up of an unknown amount of men that worked as mercenaries in almost every known country. Killing and kidnapping with a mixture of weapons, including: swords -or katana as they were rightfully called-, throwing knives, guns and bombs. Apparently last night as A.R.G.U.S was set to take down a paid assassin, Deathstroke had intervened. The remains of several cameras and spent explosive devices said that they were professionals. Only the statement from an eye-witness had placed a masked member there, killing the assassin right in front of him.

"So what do you know about them?" Lance asked.

"Number unknown." Lyla said, "So far all they are known to be male and accents seem to be a verity from British to Irish, South African, French, Russian, Middle Eastern, Chinese and American. They have been found to call each other by several different names. Although there has never been any finger prints or DNA evidence found. No hair, eye or skin colour ever seen. So for all we know the accents and names could have been faked. There is no way of knowing how many of them there are or there reasons for what they do."

Lyla stepped over to the whiteboard. "With an unknown number of members, each with fighting skills which alone make them extremely dangerous. If you see one, you are not to confront them."

Lance watched as Lyla began to pin pictures of men armed to the teeth on the board, all wearing the same bi-coloured masks morphed into a partly angry expression.

"The outfits they wear are pretty much the same. The only difference we found is that the masks are now metal. The colours are the same."

"A Deathstroke member killed someone right in front of your witness." Lucas Hilton commented, "Still seems pretty risky."

Lance nodded in agreement. His old partner had a point.

Lyla lifted a finger. "That is what makes Deathstroke so unique. Why they will hunt a particular person down, other than that they will not kill unless there is no other choice. They will break limbs and knock people out. They will never badly hurt witnesses, and," she placed a picture up of the best image that was ever taken of a member of the group, clutching a small child to his chest as he ran from a building. "They won't set off large explosives when there are bystanders and as you can see from this picture. They are more than willing to throw away a perfectly good plan to save a human life."

Frank Pike looked at the woman in disbelief. "So they're mercenaries with morals?" The Lieutenant snorted.

Lance said nothing. Knowing that he was already firmly in Frank's "I despise" category. He slapped the plastic case that housed the disk on his hand, wondering what these Deathstroke guys wanted.

"Mr Wilson." Moira called Slade as he and Yao Fei were exiting the front door. "May I have a word?" she asked, standing under the door frame.

Slade turned to Yao Fei and nodded, before turning back to his boyfriend's mother. "Of course." he stepped back over to her.
"Mr Wilson. I love my children more than anything in this world." She said, "And you must understand that I wish to know that your reasons for being with my son are just."

"I understand." Slade said, trying to make his coarse deep voice as soft as he could. "Although if you remember I already spoke of my feelings for your son."

"Oh?" she raised her chin, looking down on him, seeming sceptical.

"When you asked if his girlfriend loved him."

Moira blinked. Slade had said yes. He loved Oliver. Then she remember how saddened he had looked when Moira had asked if Oliver loved her back. She assumed it was because Slade had feelings for her son -which was true- but the real reason was that Aussie did not know.

"I see." She said. "Are his feelings still unknown?"

"Yes."

She nodded. "If you truly love my son, then you will always put his feelings first."

Moira looked out to where Yao Fei, Oliver and Thea leant against the car, chatting. Slade followed her glaze. Laurel, Tommy and Taylor had already left, giving Roy a ride along the way.

"He may be strong on the outside but he is still fragile." She placed a hand on the man's broad shoulders, waiting till he turned back before she continued. "And if you ever hurt him in anyway, I will burn every assent you have to the ground." her emerald eyes burned brightly. Her children were all she had, she lived for there lives to be perfect.

Slade stared back in determination. "If I were ever to cause him any pain, I will willingly accept all you have to throw at me."

Moira removed her hand, her eyes falling closed. When they opened she was calm again, her whole demeanour relaxed. Slade was amazed how she could change so rapidly from looking like she was going to pull a gasoline can from under her deep blue dress and set him alight at any second, to a calm prim and proper lady who was eyeing him. And yet some how still coming out on top and looking down at Slade as if he were the weaker man... No wonder she was a good business woman.

"You have my blessing." Moira said. A smirk pulling at her lips before she turned and left, throwing the door shut behind her.

"A fiery woman." Slade commented to the wooden doors.

Slade turned and made his way over to the group, where they stood watching him.

"What happened?" Oliver asked, slipping a hand into Slade's.

"I got your mother's blessing."

"Looked more like you got a door slammed in to your face to me." Thea pointed out.

"That too." Slade said. He turned to Oliver, "You have a lot of over protective family members. Yao Fei is still out in front but..."

"What did you do?" Thea asked the Chinese man.

Oliver laughed. "Third year. Slade and I were having an argument and Yao Fei threaten to shoot him
with an arrow."

Yao Fei smiled.

Thea turned to Slade with a painted on glare. "What did you do?"

"Why must you automatically assume it was my fault." Slade said, crossing his arms. "No loyalty."

"Never trust a man who always lies in life and loves to do so." Yao Fei said.

"Without lies, humanity would perish of despair and boredom." Slade quoted.

Oliver laughed.

The blonde's attention was taken when his phone buzzed in his pocket. Short sharp buzzes, it was a text. He pulled it out and looked at the screen.

"Who is it?" Slade asked. Curious by the muzzled look on Ollie's face.

"It's Diggle."

John Diggle stepped out of police station A.R.G.U.S. had commandeered for there own uses. He was dog tired and he could still smell the copper life essence that had spilled from Lawton as if he were a dysfunctioning fountain, mixed it with the stink of the burning from the bombs Slade had created.

From the moment he had met Slade, Diggle had been wary of him. The first time it was stereotypical. Slade was tanned, John had assumed he was middle eastern and the way he stalked around just reminded the man too much of his time in Afghanistan. The first proper meeting Slade had come out of no where, looking at Diggle's weapon without an ounce of worry. As if he knew that he would have John down for the count before he even had time to blink, which the soldier now knew to be true. Like Oliver, Slade Wilson was not a man to be trifled with.

Felicity stood in front of the station, getting a few odd looks from people passing by in her colourful outfit. She wore a baby pink mini dress with a set of creams heels and crop top jacket, her favourite brown leather bag in her grasp.

She smiled brightly and ran towards to the man with shot tapping strides. She threw her arms around his shoulders, hugging him tightly.

Diggle smiled.

"It's good to see you out. I missed you," She said pulling away. "Not that you would have been hurt but you should not have been caught in the first place. It was a bad plan, even if it worked. Still a bad plan." She took a breath. "And I'm rambling. I always ramble when I'm nervous. When I'm with Oliver I keep making it accidentally sexual which has not happened since I found out he was gay but that really would have been more useful before, and-"

"Felicity."

"Hm?"

"I missed you too." he hugged her.

"You give good hugs." Felicity said into his chest.
He grinned.

Diggle pulled back. "We better head to the club. Slade and Oliver are heading over now."

"Right." Felicity nodded, stepping over to her car with John.

"Felicity." Diggle said, "I hope you understand I don't regret what happened with Lawton."

"I understand." She said, "He caused you and lots of others a great deal of pain."

"He wanted to kill me too."

Felicity took his hand in hers. "I understand."

"You're an amazing woman, you know that?"

"Just tell me everyday."

Diggle laughed. "Deal."

"Good to have you back Dig." Oliver said to the older man as he made his way down the metal staircase.

"Good to be back." Diggle said. He looked over to where Slade leant against the table. "The plain went well."

"It went as good as could be expected under the circumstances." Slade said, "You gave them the report just as I asked?"

"Every last word."

Slade nodded. "Good. They'll stick around for a while but then they'll be off again." he moved over to where Oliver had set up the four shot glasses, filling them with the same Russian Vodka Slade and Oliver had drank with friends and family at their little dinner party.

Oliver make his way over, holding a glass each to Diggle and Felicity as they joined.

"What shall we drink to?" Oliver asked the group.

"Ending the pain." Felicity said.

"It was what vodka was made for." Oliver lifted his glass.

There glasses met, clinking as they did so. Then the drinks were taken.

"Oh wow." Felicity said, voice worn by what must have been gasoline. She cringed and covered her mouth with her hand. "Bad time to mention I'm not a big drinker." She placed the glass down, fanning her face as tears threatened to pull at her eyes.

Oliver rested a hand on her back, trying to be soothing.

Diggle stood tall, his rapid blinking the only source that he was affected by the drink. "I can't believe it's all over." he shook his head. "Just can't help but think of Andy. If this is what he would have wanted."

"There's no going back now mate." Slade said, "He killed your brother, we killed him. The cycle is
"Yeah." Diggle said, "You're right. It just bringing back feelings of what if the bullet could have just hit its target. I know that's a horrible thing to say but -"

"Wait." Slade held up a hand. "Its target?"

"Lawton was aiming for a man Andy was protecting."

"Were they running? Did he take a second shot?"

"No." John said, wondering what Slade was getting at. The looks Felicity and Oliver were giving the Aussie showed that they were thinking the same thing.

"Diggle." Slade placed his glass down on the metal table. "Deadshot does not miss. He never has." he looked Diggle in the eyes frowning. "If he hit your brother, he meant to."

"What..." Diggle felt the angry he had thought gone, build inside of him. "Why?"

"I don't know but I will find out all I can."

"He meant to kill Andy." Diggle said, feeling numb.

"Yeah." Slade said, taking a breath before continuing. "And this is a bad time to bring this up but..." He unzipped his leather jacket pocket and pulled out the worn photo. "I would have to tell you all eventually."
In chapter nine, I said that Slade had the Cross of Valour. You will finally find out why.

Also, I will be dropping Daisies, Tulips and Roses. Due to lack of interest from both myself and my readers. Plus that way I can work on Starling’s wolf more. If anyone likes this whole idea and wants it for themselves, they can take it.

Slade sat at the end of the bar, a cold beer in one hand, the photo in his other. He tipped back his head, taking a gulp. He sighed, tapping the edge of the photo on the wooden surface. He looked over the bar to the glass shelves holding bottles of alcohol and a variety of glasses. The glass behind reflected his face and the small cut on his bottom lip, turning the area around it a darker red and purple. He smirked. He should have guessed that Diggle would not have taken the news well. He was surprised to find the man was fluent in Arabic, insults anyway.

Telling the group had started badly and got worse from there. Felicity had been shocked, Diggle angry and Oliver looked just betrayed. Slade knew he should have told Oliver the moment Diggle brought up Deadshot but he knew it would be hard, he was a coward for just ignoring the matter. Although Slade was pretty such the fact that he still had a picture was the real problem.

He lifted said picture. It was from his days back in ASIS; to the left was Billy, towering over the other men in the picture in all his Deathstroke gear, minus the mask. His short blonde hair was ruffed up, his blue eyes showed he was irritated by the scene next to him. His square jaw was covered in stubble and his thin lips pressed together. His hand was on Slade's lower back.

Slade stood in the middle, also in his gear and staring to grimace at the sudden attack to his face by his neighbour. Arms thrown over his friends shoulders so they were all pressed together.

To the right was Floyd Lawton in all black. His arms were wrapped around Slade's waist, his eyes shut and his lips to Slade's clean cut cheek.

Slade snorted. He was such a little shit sometimes.

The picture had been taken as the three were about set off on another mission. Deadshot was in no means a part of team seven. He was an aid, providing back-up from afar. One night in Iraq, when both the Australian and American had been away from sex for a long time... There was no penetration but it was still sex. Floyd had found it entertaining to tease Slade about it in public. At one point he had touched Slade's arse. The Aussie was not happy and pointed out the fact that had they had gone further, Floyd would have been the one to bottom. In retaliation, Floyd had messed up the picture.

Life went on and that night was pretty much forgotten about, just used as an occasional joke between Floyd and Slade to annoy each other or drive Billy up the wall but nothing more and they never had sex again. The day Floyd betrayed ASIS however, he had left the photo under Slade's pillow in his hotel room. Slade had found it a few days and had kept it to keep the flame of hate burning for him.

The reason he had not found it at first was because on they way back after Floyd's betrayal, Lawton
had stuck around instead of running. He snipped them, shooting Billy in the leg and Slade in the arse with his famed curare laced bullets. Just to say he could hold them on the edge of death.

Along with holding Slade's hate for Floyd, it held his hate for Billy. Who also betrayed him.

Slade's hand closed over the picture, scrunching it up, his fist shaking with anger.

"So, you're in a bad mood I see?"

Slade looked up to see Detective Lance standing a few feet away.

He shoved the ball of paper in to his pocket. "Buy you a drink?" Slade offered.

Lance gave the man an odd look.

"Already have a boyfriend mate. Plus, you're not my type." he raised his hand to the bartender who came over. "Another." He said, raising his beer. "And my friend..." He looked over to Lance.

Lance shrugged. "Same." Before sitting down next to Slade. As the seats were close together he left the one right next to Slade free, placing his coat on it.

"What brings you were?" Slade asks.

"Work. You?"

"Past work." Slade said, "A guy I used to know."

Lance picked up his beer as it was placed in front of him. "What did he do?"

"He died." Slade slipped his drink.

Lance's expression softened. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be." Slade grinned. "Last time I saw him, he shot me."

Lance blinked, not really knowing how to reply to that. "What happened to your lip?"

"I got punched."

"I see that."

Slade's grin grew, showing his white teeth. "So what about you? Unless drinking alone is all the rage?"

"Weird case. Can't discuss." he drank his drink.

"Oh?"

Lance gave him deadpan expression, before a thought crossed his mind. "Have you heard of A.R.G.U.A?"

Slade nodded. "Here about what happened Lawton, I take it?"

Lance blinked. "How do you know that?"

"ASIS. We know a lot." Slade said, "They'll be here about Deathstroke. It's their job to take care of those with unique abilities."
“They don’t know who you are?”

Slade shook his head. “And I would like to keep it that way. Only the highest ranking members of A.R.G.U.A. know what ASIS really do…” he shrugged. “To a point. None of which are in Starling.”

“And Deathstroke?”

“No idea but I can tell you that the man they killed was an assassin.”

Lance nodded, pouting his large lips in thought. “They never told us that.”

“People tend to put in less effort to save a person or find their killer when the person is killer.”

Lance snorted. “Yeah. I guess you’re right. Where’s your Chinese friend?”

“Back at mine. Setting up flights to bring his daughter Shado here for a visit.”

“That’s nice.”

Slade sat there for a few seconds, trying to think of something else to talk about. “So…”

Lance grinned. “Why did you leave the navy for ASIS?”

“Better pay.”

Lance hummed in agreement.

“And I got to do much better things. Save more people.” Slade smirked. “Plus I got injured before I left and so it gave me a lot of time to think about it.”

“Did you get a purple heart?”

“We have our own version of that and no, not that time.”

Lance blinked “You already have one.”

“A few.”

Lance smirked. “Any other medals?”

“For bravery.”

“How many?”

“A few.”

Lance chuckled. “What did you get for your last time?”

“The Cross of Valour.” He would have also got a Defence Long Service for his fifth-teen years in the navy but he had lied about his age to get in at six-teen. His lieutenant command had found out many years later and hid the records of his first two years.

“The Cross of Valour?” Lance was surprised. He knew the name, it was given in many countries to a person who showed the utter most bravery.

“A bomb went off, another was unexploded.” Slade explained. “My cousin Wade was knocked out
by the blast, as was another man. I carried them away and went back to disarm the bomb."

"That is brave." Lance said. He had to admit that this man had nerves of steel, it would make sense that he worked for the government.

Quentin wondered why no one came to save Slade and his partner if they knew where they were. Was the territory dangerous? Did ASIS just assume their death if they did not come back.

"I guess."

Lance blinked. "You guess?"

Slade shrugged. "I've done a lot more in ASIS but part of being there is not showing off to the world what you have done. Just sitting back and enjoying the fact that people are safe and living their lives."

Lance was surprised. Slade did not really seemed bothered about the idea of praise. The detective could not help thinking the man would make a great cop.

"Anyway, back to the point of why I left." Slade took a swig from his beer before he continued. "It was not until I got back and I saw Wade awake and a really horrified look on his face, that I realised that Adrenaline really does make you feel nothing."

"Bomb fragment?"

"No. More like a sword."

Lance's eyes went wide. "What?"

"It was a wall piece. It was not really that long but long enough that it went all the way through my body and out the other end." he held a hand to the scar just under his ribs. "All that was sticking out was the handle."

Lance just looked at the man. Eyes unblinking. "Fuck."

"Indeed."

Lance shook his head, trying to wrap his mind around the idea. "You were lucky to have lived. That it did not hit an organ."

"That was due to my body protector. It held the sword in place. I've worn one ever since."

Lance smiled. "That's impressive."

"The reason I left was because the navy wanted to know how the sword got in me. Wade was known to fuck about a lot, which he was at the time and when the bomb hit..."

"They made you leave for not telling them?"

"No but it was heavily hinted that it would happen." Slade said, "Then a guy from ASIS showed up." he remembered the day he first met Floyd, he had thought back then that the man was a nut job. "We trained and I was accepted for a team in ASIS. Not long after I got a partner."

"Billy Wintergreen."

Slade raised a brow at the man. "You really are a detective." he nodded. "Yeah Wintergreen."
"You don't seem happy about thinking of him."

"Honesty for honesty?" Slade proposed.

Lance eyed the man. "What do you want to know?"

"If you will ever leave me and Oliver alone."

Lance looked down to his beer. "I've been wondering about that all day."

"And you still can't decide." Slade crossed his arms "Mate, you look like an okay bloke so I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt. All I ask is that you do the same for me."

"Okay." the detective said. The Aussie was right. Lance thought about telling him about the fact that he knew that he and Billy had been on the Island, the same time Oliver was. That could have been dangerous if Slade decided that Lance could not be trusted with this information but the man wanted to know why Slade and Billy had been there? Why did no one come? Why did Slade not like him? Was it just a shied or did Slade really hate him? How did Billy die? What happened on that Island?

Lance was so confused about everything and he still had no idea what he wanted to do with what he had found, and it was not entirely due to his limited options. Did he want to?

"Did you learn to shoot like that in ASIS?" Quentin asked, figuring it was a better subject.

"The first guy I met in ASIS was an expert on guns." Slade said, "He was my past work."

Lance quickly realised what that meant. The man was dead.

"How about we talk about your past?" Slade picked up his beer. "Mine is just depressing, apparently."

"Hey Ollie-" Thea's voice caught in her throat when she saw her brother sitting in bed, wearing baggy clothes and watching TV. It was not like him and the thing that got her was that he just looked so down. "What's up?"

"I just want to be alone right now speedy." Oliver said, eyes on the TV.

"You look super depressed." Thea said, walking over to her brother. "What happened?"

Oliver sighed. "An ex of Slade's came into town."

"Aw Ollie." She climbed on to the bed, hugging her brother. "He would never cheat on you."

"I would deserve it though. For all women I was with when I was dating Laurel."

Thea smiled, pulling away. "No you don't but I know what will make you feel better." she got off the bed. "Don't you go anywhere." she warned, pointing at him before running off.

After five minutes Thea returned with a DVD, a tub of ice-cream, three spoons and their mother.

"What's going on?" Oliver questioned. A little worried.

"Girls night in." Thea said, "... With Ollie." she hopped on the bed, passing her brother the ice-cream before getting under the covers, resting her back against the headboard.
"We can give good advise." Moira said, popping the DVD in. "Or we can just watch the film." she grabbed the DVD remote for the where it sat next to the TV and climbed in to bed, next to her son. Oliver pulled his arms into himself, feeling a little uncomfortable. "This is weird."

The two women laughed.

"Oliver." Moira started. "Exs will come up sometimes and its understandable that you feel jealous. You really like him."

Oliver looked down his arms which were pulled to his chest. The tub of ice-cream sitting between his covered legs, making his tights cold. "It's not just that."

"Hm?" Thea hummed.

Oliver took a deep breath and let it out. "He had a picture of him. He still has the picture."

"Dick." Thea hissed.

Moira glared at her.

"Sorry..."

"My past relationships never meant anything." Oliver ran a hand through his hair. "I know that's a bad thing to say but I was gay. They never could be anything else. It was unfair to the both of us. But Slade has slept with men, I've just never thought about it until now."

Either of the two women could think of a way to make things lighter. Slade had a picture of an ex, they could just be friends but they could understand Oliver's discomfort.

"Oliver. You are the one he cares about." Moira said to her son. She knew that Slade loved Oliver but that was his to say. She would not ruin her son's first 'I love you'.

"It could just be because they were working together all the time but-"

"Wait." Thea held up a hand. "They worked together?"

"Yeah. They did."

"Did you ever think that maybe that was when it happened, as a stress thing. That he kept the picture because he missed him as a friend? That this could have all been a one time thing?"

Oliver looked up to his sister. "It's possible." After all, Ollie had a photo of Laurel for another three years after he started with Slade and he knew would have kept it till this day had it not been caught up in the wind and carried off. That was not about love, it was about regret, a focus to make things right with Laurel and Lance one day.

"Did you see the picture?" Moira asked.

Oliver turned to his mother. "Um... Yeah. It was of Slade, Billy and this guy kissing Slade's cheek."

"Billy?" Thea's eyes. "The Billy that sold Slade out and left him for dead? That Billy?"

"What?" Moira looked at the two siblings in confusion. "Who's Billy."

"Billy was Slade's partner in the navy, who when they got caught joined the other side while Slade
would not.” Oliver said. It was in that moment that he realised something. "This guy did the same thing." he looked at the women around him, dumbfounded. "He got paid off to take out a man they were taking in for questioning."

Both of Slade's close friends had betrayed him.

"Wait a minute." Moira said, "This man is a killer Oliver. You could have been hurt."

"It's okay mom." Oliver rested a arm around his mother's shoulders. "He's gone. He was caught." He was dead.

"I draw back what I said about Slade." Thea said, "Poor guy. Both his friends left him behind for money. That photo is probably all he had to remember who they were."

Oliver hummed in agreement. Both of Slade's friends tried to kill him.

Moira felt a pang of sadness for Slade.

Oliver took two spoons from where they lay next to his leg. He held out one to each women. "I think ice-cream may be a good idea."

Moira took her spoon. "He's had a difficult time and he will have baggage. If this is someone who you really want, you will have to learn to accept that it exists."

Thea frowned. If only she knew about the Island, what Slade had Oliver had faced. The fight Oliver had decided to take. This was their life, full of violence and pain but with love and knowledge in that what Oliver did helped people... Although she had to wonder if Slade was doing the same or helping her brother. He had no job after all.

Oliver nodded. They had both had it hard, Slade had understandably worse but it was how they understood each other so well. They were both broken but still working. "Yeah. I guess I just though I knew everything thing about him."

Thea poked her brother with her spoon. "You have a lifetime to find everything out. So talk to him and go back to being the cutest couple in the world."

"Were you feeling a little heartbroken?" Oliver smirked.

"Very!"

Oliver laughed.

"Right. I'm calling it. You are a light weight." Slade said to Lance when he almost poured beer down his face.

The two had moved to booth to continue their drinking. The bar had quite a few people in it but most of them stuck to their group, chatting. Lance was just finishing off his third beer but even before that he was showing signs that he was tipsy.

"Shut up." Lance pointed the neck of his beer at the Aussie. "I have not drunk in a while."

Slade raised a brow at that. "How long is a while?"

"Six months." Lance said, no longer meeting Slade's dark eyes.
"You were getting clean. You were a drinker then?"

"Yeah..."

Slade held up a hand. "Hey, if anyone will get it, I will. Stoner for ten years."

Lance looked up at that. "In the navy and ASIS?"

"Just the first. It was not a wise idea and I only just got away without anyone knowing." Slade said, "Yourself?"

"After I lost Sara." Lance said. He sighed. "There was this serial killer who killed girls who were her age and blonde. I took such an interest in the case that he taunted me personally. It was like I just kept losing her over and over."

Slade frowned. In that second he was going to tell the man that Sara was alive but he had no idea if that was still true and doing that, telling him, would lead to a lot of explaining into how he knew that. That and Oliver was part of this. He would not say a thing with ut the man's agreement.

"What happened?" Slade asked.

"He was caught. Put away." Lance drank the last of his beer in one big gulp. He sighed as the depressant ran through his system, chilling him out. "I knew Oliver. He was a good kid. I had no problem with him dating Laurel but he was gay, wasn't he? This whole time?"

Slade kept a still face, exhaling a breath.

Lance shook his head. "Whether he was gay or just wasn't ready to be in a serious relationship, I don't care. He should not have used my girls like that." He said, "And whether it was his fault for bringing her, Sara's for being there, or some freak store. She is gone and for all this time blaming him, hating him, made things so much better... Until it didn't."

Slade watched the man. He looked so broken, eyes worn, wrinkles clawing at his skin as he frowned. Like it was the most common expression he made.

"Want another beer?" Lance asked.

"I'll get them." Slade said, getting up from the table. Hearing a mumbled 'Thanks' as he left.

"Its official. You're drunk." Slade said, after having to dump Lance onto the sofa.

"Nooooo." Lance said, eyes closed, a smile on his face. He looked calm, happy almost. An expression which looked so out of place for the man.

The man was well and truly sloshed. Slade had to support him on his shoulder, to a cab and up the elevator to the man's apartment which Lance thankfully gave up the location to. Fumbling for the right key with one hand while he was supporting the detective, had not been an easy task. The fact that he was a little out of it himself did not help things. It was times like these that Slade was thankful for his daily push up sessions and a bit of action now and again with Oliver's salmon ladder.

"Yessss." Slade hissed. "You are. I'm just happy I decided to have beer instead of whiskey, else you would be comatose."

"Straight or mixed?"
"Straight." Slade snorted, stepping into what he assumed to be Lance's bedroom, to get a blanket to cover the man.

Lance laughed. "That's ironic."

Slade came back into the room and threw a duvet at the man's head. "And that was a shit joke." he said, grinning. "Pretty quick though. I'll give you that."

Lance smirked, pulling the duvet down to cover his body. "You're an okay guy, you know that?"

"Yeah." Slade sat down on the arm of the sofa, by Quentin's feet. "You're not so bad yourself."

Lance chuckled. "Just cut out this wallowing in self-pity."

"What?" Slade looked over to the man. "What do you mean wallowing?"

"All night." Lance said, "All night there has been something on your mind. Get over it."

"How the hell... You lulled me into a false sense of security." Slade leered at the man.

"My job." Lance said, shifting to get himself comfortable. His eyes fell shut.

Slade shook his head. "What says 'I'm sorry for lying to you about a guy who I only slept with once and did not mention because I did not want you to be upset' then?"

Lance cracked open an eye. "While you were with Oliver?"

"No. I would never do that."

Lance shrugged, eyes falling shut. "Flowers. Always flowers."

"At this time at night?"

Lance's eyebrows lower, starting to get annoyed that he was not being left to go to sleep. "Go to a park."

"Fine." Slade said, standing. "But I'm blaming you for the theft." he dropped the man's keys on the table before heading over to the front door.

One good thing about a city? Caps were always around.

Slade was not going another hour without Oliver knowing he was sorry. He got a cab to a park but did not find anything good. On his way wondering the streets of Starling, trying to think of a place to find nice flowers, he stumbled upon a flyer for a college campus, a very green college campus. High risk maybe but he liked the challenge. He sorted though the many rows of bushes around the front building and picked fully blooming roses of lilac, red and yellow. Mixed together in a large bunch. He was no good at flower arranging but it was the thought that counts.

He got one last cab near where Oliver lived, knowing his significant other was not ready for people to know. Although until this week, he was not sure Oliver would ever be but as time went on, it seemed more and more possible. Even if he still did not know what had upset the blonde in New Jersey.

Slade walked all the way to the Queen manor, the flowers wrapped in several sheets of old newspaper the last cab driver had given him. He typed in the code to the gate, walked up the drive and
stood at the front door.

For awhile Slade just stood there, thinking how pathetic this was but he loved Oliver more than anything in the this world. Oliver was his world, his obsession. His friend, his brother, the love of his life.

He knelt down and placed the flowers on the door step, stroking his fingers along the petals, the dizziness of alcohol long since a faint memory in the cool night air.

He stood and left.
Moira and Oliver were sitting in the kitchen, each with a cup of coffee. They were the only ones awake in the house at such an early hour. Their chatter was happy, warm smiles on their faces, laughter in their voices. The night together had been good for the family.

"Good morning," Moira said, looking over Oliver's shoulder. "Flowers?"

Oliver turned to see Raisa stepping into the kitchen, holding a large, crisp white porcelain vase, with grooves which made the vase look as if it was made of a twisted blanket. The vase was filled to the brim with fully blooming lilac and red and yellow roses.

"I found them outside," Raisa explained, "wrapped in newspaper."

"That's weird," Oliver commented.

"Was there a note?" Moira asked.

"No."

Moira looked over to her son, smiling. "Well we do know one man who may seek forgiveness."

Ollie blinked. He stood from the stool that sat against the breakfast bar. He placed a hand on one of the red bundles of petals.

"He seems like a gentleman. Was it the Australian?"

"He's..." Oliver smiled, "my boyfriend."

Raise smiled at the two family members. She placed the vase on the bar. It was heavy after all. "I saw the two of you sitting together outside a few days ago. He seemed nice."

Oliver looked at her in shock. "You knew?"

"I hoped."

Oliver's smile grew and he took a large breath. "Let's see if it was him, I guess." He took his phone from where he had left it on his seat and typed a quick message, asking if Slade had left him something in front on the manor.

"I have never seen you so happy about being with a person," Moira said, remembering how playful the two had been at dinner a few days ago. "Not even before the Island. He's good for you."

Oliver felt his heart warm, his bright, colourful eyes looking at the roses, a blissful smile on his face.

"He's a good man."
Oliver could not help it, he laughed. Eyes shut, mouth wide open, leaning against the wall to catch his breath.

"Sorry," he said between breaks in his dwindling chuckles. "It's nothing. He's just such a rough around the edges kind of guy, you know?" Slade was no good man. He was a killer. They both were. They were broken by life and rebuilt by a need to survive.

Had Oliver never seen his father die on the lifeboat, had he never had to run and hide, holding his aching body together as the cuts Billy Wintergreen had given him, burned his skin, had he never suffered, they would have never worked. Oliver would have never understood the person Slade was, the way he would flinch at a sudden noise; that he always had to carry a weapon and if he could he would not stay in an area or situation that restricted him for long. The way that he had to check all the locks at night only made Oliver feel safer and the way his expression would go dull showed that they both had flashes of memories. They were made warriors by their experiences which in turn allowed them to understand each other, like no one else would. No one normal.

Maybe if Moira had said kind or sweet, she would have understood her son's laughter but good?

She frowned.

Oliver stiffened as he felt his phone buzz in his hand. He lifted it to find one word from Slade and so he read it.

"Yes."

Slade lay on his leather sofa, arm thrown over his eyes, the TV on in the background. Since his message from Oliver, Slade had spent the morning working out -which is why he was wearing a tank top and sweat pants-, catching up on TV, and being bored shitless with it.

Slade stood when someone knocked on his door. He turned off the TV and made his way over, stretching his arms forward, one hand grabbing hold of and pushing out the other, making him grunt as his joint clicked. He stopped at the door, moving away the chain and opening it.

"Diggle?" Slade questioned. He wanted to ask why the man was here but something else caught his attention. "Who punched you?" he grinned.

John lifted his fingertips to the light bruising around one of his eyes. "Oliver."

Slade held open the door to let the man in. "Should have told you that the kid has a mean punch," he chuckled.

"I deserved this," Diggle said, shutting the door. "Sorry for lashing out at you. It's just… after finding out that someone meant to have Andy killed..."

"Yeah, mate, I get it. Although I expected to get a smack from Oliver, not you," Slade said, returning to sit on the sofa. "Not harbouring any feelings for me, are we?"

"Well clearly," Diggle rolled his eyes.

Slade smirked.

It was then that Slade's phone chimed for the second time today. He picked it up to see that there was a message from Oliver.
Would you like to go out for lunch? My treat.

"I expect you will soon be getting a text from Oliver, asking for a ride," Slade said, typing back.

"So this thing with Deadshot-

"Happened once and years later the fucker sold Wintergreen and I out," the Aussie explained with a firm tone. "Do you really think I would have killed him had I had any sort of feelings towards him?"

"Fair enough," Diggle said. He smiled when his phone buzzed.

"Nice place," Slade commented with a smirk as he stepped over to Oliver. "Seems familiar."

It was the Italian restaurant Slade had taken them to on their first night back together. The same conifers around the door, brickwork walls, dark wooden window frames with a view of the cream walls and the painting of a sunset at a dock.

"I'll get to the reason of that in a sec," Oliver said, walking over to the older man. "That photo..."

Slade nodded. "I should have told you about that."

"They were your friends," Oliver said, taking a step closer so they were mere inches apart. "They betrayed you and you killed them. That picture was all you had left of them."

Slade's eyes fell shut as he snorted lightly. The brat could still read him.

"That shouldn't have happened," Oliver took one of Slade's tanned hands, causing the brown eyes to reveal themselves once more. "And I understand why you kept the picture. I kept the photo of Laurel because I needed to one day make up what happened to Sara, to her, and her father. I kept it as a reminder."

"It happened once. He meant nothing to me."

Oliver smiled ever so slightly, feeling relieved. "Good." He frowned. "I'm sorry that Dig hit you."

"Thank you for defending my honour."

Oliver laughed.

"Come on," Ollie said, pointing his head to the door. "Let's head inside."

Slade followed along. As they reached the door, he glanced down to their hands, fingers still tangled together. He looked up at Oliver, who was looking at him with a smile.

"After that night, we should never have stopped being out in the open."

Slade's dark brown eyes flew open wide. Slowly but surely a smile bloomed across his lips.

Oliver turned in the open doorway, lifted a hand to cup Slade's cheek and kissed him for all the people in the street and in the restaurant to see.

Oliver had called ahead so simply saying his name had the couple being directed to nice table at a window.

The place was pretty empty as it was early but quite a few people -customers and staff alike- in the
restaurant recognised Oliver and would not have given him a second glance had they not seen that he was holding the hand of a man. Hushed whispers filled the room but the men paid them no mind. In fact they were smirking at each other.

"Remember the last time we were here?" Slade asked as they sat down.

"Don't remind me." Oliver's shoulders shook as he tried to keep the laughter down. "I was very happy to be drunk."

The waitress who had directed them -and thankfully was not the one they had mentally scarred-looked intrigued but did not ask. She simply waited for them to get comfortable so she could take their drink orders and give them some menus.

After a lunch of simply mind blowing pasta, Oliver ordered red wine in memory of their first date. Slade smirked at Oliver as he tried to look knowing and suave on which one would be the perfect bottle from the wine list.

"You're making me an alcoholic," Oliver pointed out as the waitress filled their glasses. "I only seem to drink when you're around."

"In Italy, they drink wine every day," Slade pointed out. He thanked the woman as she went to fill his glass.

"You're Australian," Ollie pointed out. "We have something similar, except it's done out in the street with a paper bag over the bottle."

Slade laughed; voice low and rumbling.

"Baba." Shado smiled brightly and gracefully made her way over to her father in a fast stride, her suitcase rolling along behind her.

Yao Fei met his daughter, pulling her to his chest. "It is so good to see you," he said into her black hair.

"I've missed you, baba." Shado's hand left the handle of her bag, leaving it to stand there in favour of wrapping her arms around her father.

Yao Fei pulled back, admiring Shado's beauty and strength which she hid so well. "Welcome to Starling City."

Shado glanced around the airport, looking at all the different types of people, some running, some strolling, some happy, some tired and frustrated.

"How is Xiǎodì?" Shado asked as she took back hold of her suitcase and the twosome started to walk out of the building.

"Good. He plans to start teaching a boy named Roy."

Shado looked over to her father. "Archery?"

"I am still unsure. He and Oliver's sister are aware of the Island and that he follows the list."

"Does she know about her father?"

Yao Fei nodded.
"I wish we could bring his body here but there is no way to hide his method of death," Shado frowned.

"Oliver is waiting for the right time to talk to her about that. He thinks it might be better to have the body cremated so he can be brought to Starling," Yao Fei said, looking ahead. "Although he will need to talk to Thea about it first."

"Ummm," Shado turned to the man as they exited the building. "Do you know her?"

Yao Fei looked over to where Felicity stood, holding her hand high and waving wildly. "That is Felicity, a friend of Oliver's and a computer expert."

"She seems... hyper," Shado looked back to her, smiling politely and waved back.

Yao Fei hummed. It was a dull and singular tone that portrayed more agreement than annoyance.

Shado was surprised that her father liked the blonde woman.

Thea sat with Laurel at the older woman's desk as they went through files. She had come in on a Sunday for a few hours as Laurel had court in a few hours and Thea was rather good at poking holes in an explanation. She was pretty savvy when it came to the law. The world was lucky that she seemed to be on the side of following the law, rather than using her knowledge to work around it.

"So did you get him to cut his hair?" Thea asked eyeing a picture of the man Laurel was fighting for. He had long, partly dreaded hair and beard, and was wearing a worn shirt and a trench coat.

"This isn't a beauty show."

"Yeah, but you're trying to convince people he's reliable. He doesn't exactly look it."

Laurel smiled. "Appearance is vital. How you look and your party look and how they say things can be worth much more than what you actually say," she said, "and yes. His hair has been cut and he shaved this morning."

"Did he use hedge shears?"

"Stop it," Laurel warned with a put upon leer.

Thea laughed, leaning back in her seat and clapping her hands together.

Laurel shook her head, a smile pulling at her lips.

"Found it."

"We really need a better filing system."

"We need a bigger building, more resources, more people. We need a lot of things," Laurel said, "It's the best we can do given what we have."

"But we still do it."

"Exactly."

Thea smiled, passing Laurel the file. "Want to hear something cute?"

"Hm?"
"This morning or last night, I guess, Slade left Ollie roses on our doorstep," Thea said, "huge bunch."

"That's sweat," Laurel smiled. "I wouldn't have thought Slade was that kind of guy."

Thea snorted. "Those two are just full of surprises," she commented, turning back to the sheets of paper in front of her.

Laurel wanted to ask but the conflicted look of Thea's face said it was unlikely that she would get a straight answer. "Well, I've got everything, so how about we go have a cup of coffee?"

Thea hummed. That did sound good. "Okay."

Roy stepped into his living room, turning on the TV to a news station before he went over to the kitchen to put his bag full of shopping away.

He was absentmindedly listening and he did pause for a second when he heard Oliver Queen's name being spoken but he very nearly dropped the milk when he heard the news anchor say 'Australian man'.

Roy bolted into the living room, to see a picture of Slade and Oliver leaving a building hand in hand.

"As you can see from this picture, the two were leaving the Italian Restaurant where they had eaten lunch and drank a whole bottle red wine. Eye witnesses say that they saw the two kissing as well," the news man turned to his partner. "I would have never expected a story like this, considering Oliver's Queen's female encounters in the past."

Laurel glanced to the TV bolted to the wall and froze.

"Wha..." Thea gave Laurel an odd look after she almost walked into the woman. "What's the hold up?"

The youngest Queen looked around the room to see that other people were looking at the TV. She looked up to see the picture of Oliver and Slade.

"No way," Thea eased herself down into a chair.

"Many people remember Oliver Queen as a party boy," the African American anchor said, "and after his return from being assumed dead for five years, but only stuck on an Island called Lian Yu, Mr Queen brought with him much fascination. He has publicly rejected his father's company and been questioned about being The Vigilante but Oliver Queen does not cease to amaze the people of Starling City."

Thea jogged back to Laurel's office to grab her mobile. She just had to text her brother.

"From our early reports, we have found that the man is one Slade Wilson, a forty year old commander in the Australian Navy. It is unclear what his current source of income is at this moment."

Lance watched the news report with wide eyes. He would have been shocked had he not already known but he did not expect the two of them to come out. His flower suggestion must have been good... wait, where would Slade buy flowers at that time of night?
"Moira Queen must know of this," the reporter added, "which suggests he may be doing this to spite. We can clearly see that neither of the men are even trying to hide this and this Slade guy is nowhere near the kind of person you would expect Oliver Queen to be with. He's matured and very masculine, which does beg the question of Oliver's sexuality."

Lance scowled. He felt like he was watching a chat show. He stood, deciding to see if his officers had made any ground with that evidence he had given them.

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"I got a text from Thea," Oliver said, glancing at it and smiling.

The two men were walking through the park, hands joined together.

"What does it say?"

"Ahhhh. Have you seen the news? Ahhhh. Why didn't you tell me you two were coming out?" he read, typing back a quick reply of 'sorry'.

Slade chuckled. "You had me surprised too." He stopped, slipping an arm around Oliver's waist and pulling him close.

Oliver rested his cheek on Slade's shoulder, wrapping his arms around the Aussie's broad chest. He looked up into those dark eyes and smiled.

Slade kissed his forehead. "Want to go a step further?"

"What do you have in mind?"

"The pictures of us, especially the ones in New Jersey, we should put them online."

Oliver's smile grew. "Yeah, I'd like that. Thea knows how that stuff works. I'll ask her."

Slade let him write and send the message but the moment the younger man was done, his eyes went dark. He leant forward and kissed Oliver's neck and nipped at his ear lobe.

Ollie grunted softly, and grabbed hold of Slade's shoulders. "We're being public but not that public."

"Well it's a good thing my place is just down the road, isn't it?" Slade's hands grabbed Oliver's hips and pulled them together. This caused them both to gasp.

Oliver smirked. "It is." He slung an arm around Slade's neck and pulled him into an open mouthed kiss.

He really hoped they did make it back to his place because he did not want the public to see them having sex in a park, a place deemed for being an area of natural beauty... although thinking about it, they had technically had sex more times outside than in.
"How long till they find out where I live?" Slade asked, unlocking the door to his apartment.

"In Starling? We'll have to be quick."

Slade smirked, pocketing the key. "Nah," He turned around, leant down, grabbed hold of Oliver's thighs and lifting him up in the air.

Oliver wrapped his legs around the older man's waist, his arms around his neck. He laughed, both from joy and from how much this reminded him of their first time together. He kissed the man with a passion, working his tongue into Slade's mouth as the Aussie stepped back into the room, kneeling slightly so Ollie did not hit his head off the door frame. Slade kicked the door shut with the heel of his boot, tightening his grip on Oliver's hips as he felt the blonde's arousal press his belly.

As a former ASIS agent, Slade had been trained to always know his environment. One ability in particular was to go around his area in compete and utter darkness, this was done by going over and over how many strides it took to get from one room to the other, to the windows and to where his weaponry was hiding, along with what furniture he had to avoid. It was one of the many things he had taught Oliver and was unsurprised that the younger man had done so for the whole of the Queen Manor. Using this, Slade quite easily made it to his bedroom, eyes still closed, tongue moving with Oliver's.

Slade dropped onto the bed with Oliver. His hand slipping up the other's shirt, he ran his fingertips up the toned chest, stopped to rub the edge of his nail along Ollie's nipple.

Oliver moaned sharply into Slade's mouth, hips bucking, arms and legs pulling the man closer to him.

Their bodies were pressed together with just enough room for Slade's hand to trace the man he knew so well, dragging his nails in just the right places to have Oliver practically dry humping him.

The moment was interrupted when Oliver's butt vibrated.

"Damn phone," Oliver said as he broke the kiss. He sat up and laughed when he saw the message. "Tommy want to throw us a coming out party."

Slade shrugged. "Might as well," he said, moving to kiss Oliver's neck.

Oliver moaned softly at the feel of Slade's stubble dragging along his neck. He both turned his head to the side, both to give the man space to work with and to attempt to write a message. "Do," he spaced out as Slade gently bit down. "Do you want to go to my club tonight?"

Slade moved a hand down, grasping hold of Oliver's package. Causing the man to gasp and grabbed his broad shoulders, dropping the phone onto the bed in the process. The touch was weakened by the barrier of denim but Slade was merciless, pushing down harder to get a reaction.

"Slade, come on," Oliver pushed at his shoulders.

The Australian chuckled. "Alright," he said, pulling back but his hand still kneading Oliver who had become fully hard at the treatment. "Turn off your phone after that," he grabbed hold. He loved the Oliver seemed to be mentally debating pushing Slade away or throwing caution to the wind and pulling him close.
Oliver gave a hummed protest as Slade pulled away, watching as the man left the room with a smirk. Ollie was a little baffled by where he was going but turned back to his message from Tommy.

Yeah sure. We can have it at verdant. Don't go over the top. Please.

Oliver sent the message and switched off his phone, placing it on the night stand. He waited for Slade to return and watched as the room was darkened, hearing the sound of the blinds being rolled down. It must have been weird for Slade to be suddenly so know but the man did not let it show.

"Door's locked, phone unplugged, mobile off," Slade said as he stepped back into the room, closing the door behind himself. "And I brought you something," he pulled his arm from behind his back to show the younger man a jar of bronze honey.

Oliver smiled, underneath that, he felt his stomach tie in knots at the sexual act Slade was likely going to perform. It really was just like their first time.

Slade climbed back onto the bed, hovering over Oliver. He removed the lid from the jar and placed the items on the nightstand, not taking his eyes from Ollie's bright orbs.

Their lips joined again, this time the kiss was softer, just a press of lips. Slade then moved to Oliver's neck, then down his chest, after every button he released, leaving a line of light kisses in his wake. Slade moved his fingertips along Oliver's spine, making him arch his back, soft moans escaping his mouth. Oliver gasped as Slade dipped the tip of his tongue in his bellybutton. Slade pushed his knuckles up the curve of Ollie's spine, causing the blonde to fold his back even further, pushing his body up to meet Slade's teasing.

"Slade. Come on," Oliver gasp, his hands gripping Slade's wiry hair. "Get in me."

Slade felt a shiver of pleasurable pain crawl up his spine. A smirk pulled at his lips. Oliver knew just the right words to get to him. He moved back, unbucketing Oliver's belt and unzipping his jeans. He leant over Oliver and dipped his fingers in the honey, before reaching a hand under all the layers of fabric and cupped the younger man.

Ollie's loud moan was muffled by Slade's full lips.

Slade jerked Oliver with a rough hand and a thick lubricant that made the friction just the peak of perfection between pain and pleasure for Oliver.

Slade kissed a spot on Oliver's neck, the one along the side of his neck which always made him gasp. Ollie shuddered and moaned as Slade bit down. Marking his skin as his fingers rolled. Years of being together had shown Slade all the ways he could have the man wither beneath him. He was always inquisitive, always searching for more he could give him, more he could make him feel.

Oliver had never knew this sort of caring. Slade's obsession to blow his mind. To have him cry out in pure ecstasy. For Oliver to want it again and again, and yet his body was so wore, so sensitive to the experiences that he could not. Truth be told, had Oliver not been gay, had they met in Starling when he was nothing but a playboy, a petulant child. And if Slade still had this need to pleasure him beyond belief. Man or not, older or not, having to bottom or not. Oliver firmly believes that Slade would have been enough for him. He was exciting, he had a wild streak, he was dangerous, and that just made everything that bit sweeter. That dark look in his eyes that said he would have Oliver. No arguing. And yet...

Slade moved back to kissing Oliver's lips. The kiss still so soft and sweet, even as Oliver pleaded against his lips.
Slade emotionally cared for Oliver too. Before they kissed, before they ever had anal sex for the first time. Slade would not let anything happen to Oliver. Keeping Oliver alive almost seemed like his soul purpose in life. Even on their first winter, as he stumbled to the snow-covered ground, blood still dripping quickly from the stab wound in his gut, he had to get Oliver somewhere safe. He had to keep smiling to stop Ollie from worrying. He was so selfless, only thinking of Oliver, and that warmed the blonde's heart.

Slade kissed Oliver's forehead, clutching his blonde head of hair to his shoulder - elbow supporting his weight - He allowed Oliver to moan, trashing his hips up to meet Slade as the Aussie worked him to his climax.

There was one thing Oliver did not know about Slade. Slade was selfish. He could have left Oliver to his new life, to find love, to find someone who could give him everything he deserved. But he just could not do it. It hurt to never see Oliver again. It hurt to turn his back on the younger man. To not look up pictures of him, to not read about him. He wanted Oliver, wanted to give him everything he had even when in the end, it would never be enough. Oliver was not a bad person. Slade was and he would break him. He would hurt him and they would both fall apart. For Oliver's sake and for his own, he should have never looked back... but he did.

"Slade!" Oliver clung to his boyfriend, short nails holding on like a bird would its meal.

As the warm thick liquid splashed onto Slade's hand and up Oliver's blonde snail trail, it occurred to Ollie that this now left him without underwear. He could either get changed later or he could stick with Slade for the rest of the day and borrow a pair of boxers. He did not have to think about the matter for long, the answer was obvious. Although he would also likely need to change from his jeans, that could be an issue.

Oliver panted through his mouth, trying to regain the oxygen his body suddenly seemed completely bare of. Slade curled an arm around his head, pulling him to his chest, kissing the top of his head. There was a brief brush of Slade's hardness, Oliver would have been offended had it not been present. He pressed into it, causing Slade to take a sharp breath.

Oliver smirked. He swallowed, which did nothing for his dry mouth, before he spoke up. "You ruined my clothes."

"You can wear mine."

"Ah, I forget how much wearing tents is in this year."

Slade grinned, eyes shut and just enjoying having Oliver close to him. His mind was both fighting the urge to fall asleep and the need to roll Oliver over and fuck him senseless.

"I could use a belt but the waist would bunch. Plus I have longer legs, so they would be wide and short," Ollie said, still panting softly. "Like parachute shorts."

Slade hummed to say that he was paying attention, although the hum was soft. Barely audible.

The Australian felt Oliver shift beside him but just kept listening to his ramblings.

"A pair of parachute shorts, socks, dress shoes and one of your vests or concert shirts, and I'll look homeless."

"Thanks," Slade grunted.

"Slade, keep your eyes close," Oliver said, voice low. Slade could practically hear the toothy smile.
"Okay. Why?" Slade asked, eyes still closed. He smiled when he heard his zipper being pulling down.

Oliver pushed Slade's hips flat to the bed, pulling the sides of the zip open. Ollie pulled his other half's jeans down to his thighs, before pulling out his tanned length. He kissed the tip before sliding his tongue out and licking the head, making Slade's hips buck. Oliver moved Slade's cock up, dragging his tongue along the underside.

Slade took another sudden breath when he felt something drizzling on his manhood. He quickly realised that Oliver had got hold of the honey.

Oliver took the head of Slade's cock into his mouth, teasing it with his tongue and working Slade further in. The tease of honey, Slade and his pre-cum was a brilliant mixture of sweet and savoury which Oliver was thoroughly enjoying taking every inch of. His gag relax was something that had taken many attempts of having Slade in his mouth, to master but now he could take Slade completely with ease as long as he went at his own pace. He still pulled back now and again just to make sure he did not over do his throat but it gave him time to lap at Slade's honey covered cock.

Slade's pleasure sounds consisted of groans when he enjoyed something, grunts when the pleasure was short and sharp, a nice surprise and low almost hiss when Oliver introduce pain with bites and hair pulling. The man just did not moan. Ollie was a little worried about that at first but long before he learn all of Slade's sounds, he used Slade's actions as indications.

As Slade grabbed his hair, Oliver knew that he did not want the younger man pulling back. He wanted him to take it all. The grip and Slade's wants just urged him on, his own developing arousal helping to take the rest of the man in. Oliver bobbed his head, feeling Slade's grip tighten and loosen on his hair with the movement of his head. As the Aussie swore in Māori with gasp, Ollie knew the man was close. It was the only time other than being in pain, that Slade spoke the language of his childhood. So he slipped a hand into the man's boxers and massaged his balls.

Oliver would feel Slade pulse in his mouth, spilling the thick saltiness down his throat. Ollie waited till Slade let out a breath, body seemingly melting, before he pulled back and swallowed.

Slade's eyelids fell shut once more, having kept them open to watch Oliver swallow him down. A sight too good to miss. "Christ," he said between breaths, his hand reaching up to run though his hair.

Oliver smiled, resting his body down beside the other man, holding his hips back so he did not constrict his erection, which felt very uncomfortable in jeans.

After laying there for a minute, Slade glanced down to Oliver, meeting those bright eyes, which looked dark green in the low light. They always seemed to change colour; from a deep green, to aqua, to a crystal blue in bright lights. The colours almost seemed to portray his many shades of innocence. Taking down people on the list to avenge his father, a trained killer and yet he was still so sweet, still looking at Slade the same way he always did. With caring and need, at a level that had grown over time.

Slade smiled down to his boyfriend, linking their lips in a soft kiss. It would have stayed that way had Slade not slid his thigh between Oliver's, pressing against his hardness.

Oliver pulled back with a gasp, breaching into a moan.

Slade pushed Oliver down onto his back and pulled down his jeans and boxers, stopping at his knees to remove his shoes and socks. Oliver removed his dress shirt, which still lay open, hanging from his
shoulders. In seconds, Oliver was lying there, utterly naked with a raging hard on.

Slade leant over the blonde, kissing him. Oliver gave way under him, allowing his tongue in, letting Slade taste himself and the honey.

Slade pulled back, moving his mouth to Oliver's ear, nipping at his earlobe. "Roll over," his whispered.

Oliver did so. He knew that Slade was well aware at how the Aussie's dominance sent shivers of pleasure up his spine. Having Slade keep on his clothes on, holding him down with his large body, just enough to press on his erection and cause Oliver to involuntarily give the bed a dry hump with a whine. It felt so good to submit to the other man.

Slade kissed down Oliver's back, following the path of his spine. Ollie moaned softly as Slade kissed along the curve of his lower back.

Slade put his index, middle and ring finger into the jar, before moving it back to the night stand, else it would be knocked over. He pressed a fingertip to Oliver's entrance, blanketing Oliver with his broad chest and kissing between his shoulders as he pushed inside.

Oliver dragged a moan as Slade pushed all the way in with one go, his thick finger pushing him open. Ollie moved his hips back, wanted more, wanting it all.

Slade thrust his finger in with a study rhythm, working the young billionaire open to accept a second finger, then a third. By which point Oliver was shivering with pleasure and anticipation, moans wrecking his body as Slade prodded that sweet spot.

"Slade. Please," He whined, barely hanging on. "Please."

Slade chuckled. He pulled out his fingers, taking hold of the Ollie's hips and lifting them up. Framing his opening with his lips, Slade kissed Oliver, licking the sweet honey from his lips as he pulled away.

Oliver whined softly, tilting his butt as far up as it would go, his back aching slightly.

Slade flicked the tip of his tongue over the entrance, smirking as Oliver quivered. The Aussie eased his stiffened tongue inside. He gave a muffled hum as his boyfriend gave sharp "ah ah" moans as Slade trust hard inside of him, nails dragged along his arse cheek. The vibrations make Oliver moan even loader. The blonde grabbed one of Slade's pillows, holding it his arms and using it to hide his cries, which were becoming pretty vocal.

Slade worked Oliver with his tongue, safe in the knowledge that without touching Ollie's prostate or cock, he could go on as long as he pleased. With the added bonus that Oliver had already came once today, which further lowered the chances of him cuming prematurely.

Oliver turned his head, resting his cheek on the pillow. "Oh God," he moaned as Slade pulled back before diving further. "D-don't stop. Don't ever stop. Slade~" he mewed.

Slade kept going, opening Oliver as much as his tongue would allow, palming Oliver's arse cheeks.

"Oh Slade," Oliver moaned. "I love you."

That made Slade stop.

Oliver was so lost in a world of pleasure that he very nearly demanded why his other half had
stopped. He could not believe it. He had told Slade that he loved him... While the man had his damn
tongue up his arse. Oliver covered his eyes with his hand, feeling his cheeks burn and a hollow ache
in his stomach, the fear of what he would said. What Slade would do. If he did not feel the same, it
would just kill Oliver.

Slade pulled out, sitting on his knees and looking down to the blonde.

Oliver just kept thinking about what a fool he was. A complete and total idiot. Even if he could tell
Slade he loved him, why couldn't he have done it after, even before. Not like this. He could not look
the man in the face. He was already leaving himself bare before Slade, both physically and
emotionally.

"Do you mean that?" Slade asked. Heart hammering in his chest, which he could clearly hear as if he
was having a panic attack.

Oliver swallowed. This was all so wrong. It was not supposed to happen like this. It was not
supposed to happen at all. He nodded.

Slade grabbed Oliver's shoulder, pushing him on to his back. Dark eyes meeting green.

"Oliver," Slade said firmly. He cupped the younger man's jaw and kissed him. He smiled as he
pulled back. "I love you too."

Oliver sucked in a breath, not believing his ears.

"I love you," Slade repeated. "I have for a long time."

"When?" Oliver had to ask. He was still in a daze, his voice on autopilot.

"Our first year, that day you fell out a tree and hit your ankle off a rock. I had to carry you on my
back for the rest of the day."

Oliver remembered that day. Looking back he recalled how happy Slade had been, for seemingly no
reason. And not once did his complaining about having to carry the blonde, hold any malice. It was
also near mouths before Oliver realised he loved Slade.

Oliver smiled, feeling the emotions welling in his chest. "I love you."

"I love you too." Slade grinned before lying his lips to Oliver's.

The kiss was passionate, tongues dancing along side each other. Slade only moving away to pull his
shirt over his head, throwing it across the room.

"Fuck me," Oliver gasped, before Slade's lips descended upon his again.

The Australian lined himself up, gently pushing his cock into the tightness, grunting at the restriction
on his sensitive skin. Oliver threw his head back with a moan. He spread his legs further. He
wrapped his arms around Slade's large shoulders, directing him closer.

When Slade was fully inside, he kissed Oliver again. "I love you," He said as he pulled back. He
moved his lips to Oliver's collar bone, kissing along it, then up the column of his neck. He trust his
hips. Tearing a moan from Oliver's lips. "I love you, I love you, I love you," he chanted with each
trust.

Oliver kissed him, smiling as he moved away to take a breath. "I love you so much," he said, pulling
the Aussie back into a kiss.

Slade pulled Oliver up into his lap. Slamming the blonde's hips down onto his cock, where they quickly rode to orgasm.

Oliver moaned hard, squeezing his arms around Slade's neck tightly as he spilled on to their chests. Oliver clamped down on Slade, causing the Australian's fingers to dig into Ollie's hips hard enough to bruise. A few hard trusts in that warm pressure -still pulling moans from Oliver as he did so- and Slade released his seed. Oliver groaned at the feel of the thick warm wetness filling him.

Slade held Oliver's quaking body to his chest, as he threaten to fall apart without his wide arms holding him close.

Slade lowered them to the bed. As they worked to catch their breath, Slade toed off his boots and socks with some difficulty, before removing his jeans and boxers. He lay back next to Oliver, wanting to feel his body close to his own. Oliver laughed softly at Slade's struggles, resting his hand on the man's pec as he settled. Both of them still panting softly.

"Fuck," Slade said, "This week was insane."

"Yeah," Oliver agreed, crawling onto Slade's chest. He wrapped his arms around the older man's ribs.

Slade hugged his lover, resting his chin on the blonde's head, and smiled.

Oliver sighed. "I just wish I had not finally said I loved you, when you had your tongue up my ass."

Slade laughed loudly, shaking Oliver. "I'm just happy to hear it."

"I wanted to tell you in New Jersey." Oliver said, "But I was really worried about you not feeling the same way."

"That's why you went all funny?" Slade asked, petting the blonde hair.

"Yeah. I should have told you then. I wanted the event to be special," He sat up, sitting on Slade's tights. "This is but-"

"Yeah. I get it," Slade said, "I know something that might make you feel better."

"Oh?" Oliver smiled. "I am pretty right now, don't get me wrong. Knowing that you love me," he kissed Slade, lingering there for a few seconds before pulling back.

"In the draw," Slade said, pointing to the nightstand. "There's a pen. I know how much you like to draw on me."

Oliver's smile grew. He moved over to the draw, where they was in fact a pen with nice thick black ink, perfect for drawing on human skin.

"So," Slade said as Oliver lay next to him. "What are you going to draw for me?"

"I always thought you would suit a tribal arm piece," Oliver said, starting his design on Slade's bicep.

Slade chuckled, watching the love of his life work.
Slade removed the covers from his clothed chest with a frustrated sigh, as he awoke for the third time. He shivered at the cold winter air from the early morning. He grasped his stab wound, holding the pain away so he could sit up. Next to him, Oliver lay asleep. Poor kid did not look like he had slept a wink when the Aussie had come too. He had hugged Slade close, he did not cry but Slade could tell from the redness of his eyes that he had. That was two days ago and Oliver had yet to leave his side.

Yao Fei and Shado left the two, letting them heal after almost being split apart. They took up the hunting and wood collecting duties, they had plenty of water with all the snow on the ground.

Slade stroked his knuckle along Oliver's cheek. He wanted to let the kid sleep but he had gone long enough without telling Oliver, he should have told him when they started what they had, should done so before, so the blonde knew what he was getting into. Now, Slade loved him, and never wanted to tell the man, but he had to. He had to tell him now, while they were still alone.

"Oliver," Slade shook his shoulder, holding down his smile when the kid woke up instantly. "I have to talk to you."

Oliver was pretty happy when he woke, snuggling further into Slade's warmth. Slade looked worried however, and his words did not make Oliver feel any better. "Hm?"

"I don't think we should do this anymore."

Oliver's heart sunk at the man's words, assuming the worst. "This?"

Slade waved a hand from himself to the younger man. "I'm sorry."

"Wait- what?" Oliver sat up. "Why?"

Slade closed his eyes for a moment, clearing his mind of how wrong this felt. "When we leave this Island. I'm going home, back to ASIS. Back to doing my job."

"Work is not a home, Slade," Oliver said before, smiling. "Plus, I can go to Australia with you."

Oh, how Slade wanted that more than anything. "You have a family, a mother and a sister who need you. You need to solve this list too, you swore to your father."

Oliver frowned.

"Being with ASIS means that I save lives everyday, hundred and thousands. I can't give that up."
Oliver knew what Slade had to do was for all the right reasons, but that did not mean that his body did not feel frozen from the inside out, from hearing it. "There has to be something... I..." He never felt so trapped. "No, just no," he moved from the bed, grabbing his coat and throwing it on, pulling on his boots -which would later cause the tears to finally fall, when remembered he had got them from Slade- not even bothering to tie them as he left the tent.

Slade lay back into bed with an expression void of all emotion. He rested his head where Oliver had slept, breathing in his scent.

Oliver did wander around for a long time. He had argued with himself. Trying to think of some way to make things work, it was more of a freak out really, letting out all the emotions, so he did not bombard Slade with them, like a clingy teenager.

Ollie later returned, faking like nothing had changed around Yao Fei and Shado, even when they saw right through it. When he and Slade had a chance to speak again, he told the man that he would give up his plans to return home, for good anyway. They argued. They argued a lot over the next few days. They slept apart, only coming in contact to argue. Oliver never said what Slade was doing was wrong, because it was not, he never asked the man to stay or said that he loved him. He did not want to use those words as some sort of weapon, or leave his heart bare to rejection.

Finally, after days of waging between sadness and anger, Oliver broke. He slumped into Slade, wrapping his arms around the man's ribs. The two sat there, hugging and petting like they had in the past, but instead of light chatter and kissing, there was dead silence.

Slade said that there was no telling how long they would be on the Island, that it was up to Oliver if they stayed together or split apart while they were still on the Island, but Slade could not promise him a future, and the island was dangerous, one of them could be killed. If they met again after the Island, was completely unknown. Oliver did not know if he would ever see Slade again, and after months later, he started to see the future as bleak.

Oliver said that they should stay together. He could not stand being apart from the Aussie.

Maybe it was those months, when Oliver started to see things as hopeless, that one way or another, he and Slade would not last, but he stopped caring. Slade made him happy, and back then, that's all that mattered.

Years passed, Oliver still never said those three words. Not when Slade hugged him, nor when he kissed him, or fucked him. They were in limbo, purgatory, waiting to see their fate. For not the first time, the Island lived up to its name.

"There," Oliver said, leaning back to inspect his work on Slade's arm. He grabbed his phone from the nightstand, mumbling about all the missed messages and calls, even taking a few seconds to read one in particular, but ignoring the urge to reply in favour of taking a picture of his work.

Slade glanced down, it looked really good.

"Here," Oliver passed the other man his phone.

After forty minutes of drawing, the Australian-not that he had really noticed, instead admiring the naked blonde as he worked, a cute smile on his young lips- would have liked the drawing to have been good. It was. Very good.

The ink drawing went from just before the elbow, to the collar bone, covering the front and sides around his arm, minus the cuff which seemed to hold the ink on like it was a piece of amour. At the
very bottom were lines coming down like the points of a typical tribal tattoo, but instead they looked to be a sort of crawling plant, like ivy. The plant ran up weaving around the frame work like it was holding the whole drawing together. The whole thing was made of an array of patterns, including a cuff around the bicep of half diamonds, with black ink in the background with black framed rings above and below. Followed by a similarly framed, with a black background, of what looked to be a branch of a fern, the leaves was short and fat, diamond shaped, soft around the edges. The pattern travelled diagonally across the bicep, rounding back of Slade's shoulder, stopping after his shoulder blade. The other half of the shoulder was rounded by squared spirals, this when all the way around to frame the centrepiece. There was a large space in the middle, where sat what looked to be a swan, from its long neck, sitting down with another bird.

"Fuck," Slade looked at the picture with a stunned expression.

"I could not draw the birds."

Slade did not comment on how obvious that was.

"It's supposed to be a black swan for you and a starling for me," Oliver said, pointing at the picture. "And the patterns I based off Māori tattoos I found online."

Slade smiled at the way Oliver avoided eye contact. "Do you wish to know three of the many reasons I love you?"

Oliver looked over.

"When you make something, you put your heart into it. Trying to make it perfect. You never stopping trying to impressed me and most of all," he wrapped his arms around Oliver's waist. "You are so adorable," Slade kissed Oliver, pulling him over to straddle his bedding covered hips.

Oliver pushed Slade back, moving away from the man's chest but not his arms. "Watch the ink!"

Slade laughed, loud with a wide mouth and showing teeth, instead of his signature dark chuckle.

Oliver smiled, lowering himself down onto Slade's broad chest, on the man's left side, to avoid smudging the ink.

The two cuddled up together, kissing softly for many minutes, until Oliver spoke something that he had wondered since Slade's return.

"You came back."

"In general, or did you mean the flowers?" Slade asked with a smirk.

"Back on the Island. You said you were going to return to ASIS. What happened?" He asked, caressing a hand over the man's chest, slipping his hand between the few dark curls between his pecs.

Slade looked up to the ceiling, pondering how to explain all that he felt. "I did not want to go back, not without knowing you were okay. Then when I did, I was not happy anymore. Not that it's a life of frolicking through meadows of flowers but I liked it. But without you," Slade looked to his lover. "I was empty."

Oliver smiled, smacking his lips to Slade's. Humming a laugh as Slade moved his arms further around Oliver, pulling each other closer, until their bare skin was pressed together.


"It's funny, you know," Oliver said as he moved back, lying his head on Slade's shoulder. "My life was pretty empty too. I'm sure that Diggle and Felicity can vouch for that. Without you, all I had was that list."

"I'm sorry," Slade ran a soothing hand down Oliver's side.

"Don't be," Oliver kissed Slade's jaw. "I love you."

"I love you too," Slade said in a low husky voice, kissing Oliver's lips again and again.

Oliver smiled as they broke for air. "You read Persian, don't you?"

Slade cocked a brow. "Yes?"

"Laurel texted me. She said her father are looking for a translator for a case. Do you want to go out in public?" he grinned.

Slade will admit he felt a pang of jealousy, for Oliver wanting to do a favour for his ex-girlfriend, even though Oliver still felt he owed her for her sister's death, which made him feel pretty childish. Then, however, he realised what Oliver had wanted. For the two of them to go out in public, talking to people, openly as a couple.

"Yeah. Alright."

The police station was its usual hectic self, officers running around with paper work and answering phones. Working in law enforcement in a city was an unbelievably busy career choice but one worth having to all those involved.

Lance happened to glance up in time to see Slade stepping into the offices, Oliver walking behind. Slade met his eyes and smirked, heading over to meet him. A few other workers looked over, nudging their colleagues, so by the time they made it to Lance, pretty much everyone in the room had noticed them. Looking on, wondering why they were here and about all they had seen on the news.

"Heard you needed something translating."

Lance took the paper from his draw, it was tucked into an evidence bag. "If you can," He sighed, the top, dated and timed it before opening the seal. "It's already been dusted for fingerprints," he passed the paper to Slade.

"Cheers," he took them, studying the words for a while to get bearings. "Give me a few seconds."

Lance nodded. He turned to Oliver, "The two of you are all over the news."

Oliver blinked. "Are we?"

"Kind of hard to avoid," Lance pointed to the TV attached to the wall.

It showed a picture Thea had taken of Slade, dressed down to a black vest, with his large arms around Oliver's middle, the younger man pulled to his chest. He had his eyes closed, kissing Oliver's cheek. Oliver was smiling, he looked so happy to be there even though he was wearing a crop top, scars completely on show. The picture even showed the large burn on his lower back. Under the picture was a banner stating that the couple were believed to have started dating this week, and that Slade was confirmed to be forty, and that he was confirmed to have been in the navy since he was
Slade smirked. "Yes."

Lance gave them an odd look.

"I had a lot of missions that were never reported and made a shit ton of enemies," Slade explained in a low voice, turning the page around to read the other side.

"Won't they find you?" Lance asked in a hushed whisper.

Slade shook his head.

Lance looked to Oliver, who shrugged, then back to Slade. "That's it?"

"That's it."

Lance thought about saying more but Slade seemed like he fully intended to stay cryptic, and Oliver seemed to understand perfectly, and would only add to the barrier.

"My understanding of this note," Slade started with a raised finger. "Is that it's innocent."

"How so?"

"No talk of drugs or women, or any sorts of gifts or products. No mention of honour, or any sort of blame. There are no real hints of anything that I can see, just a few slang terms that don't mean anything bad but I can give you the whole translation now if you'd like?"

Oliver watched the TV, frowning as more pictures were shown, the camera focusing on his visible scars, with subtitled speculations about what could have caused them. He did not like people knowing about them, let alone seeing them. There was a relief however, about having people just know. A weight off his shoulders. Although he was not going to be showing them off -or the others for that matter- anytime soon.

"Yes. Thank you. So there's nothing unusual?"

"Not really. Plus, why write something important like that in a letter?"

"So, what does it say?"

Slade smirked again. "A very graphic, 'what I would like to do with you' love confession."

Lance laughed at that. "Really?"

"How bad?" Oliver asked, leaning forward in interest.

Slade lowered his brows in thought for a few seconds. "Somewhere between the dirty Mandarin in the restaurant,"

Oliver smiled at the fact that Slade had not said it was them.

"And Fifty Shades of Grey."
Oliver laughed.

"The dirty Mandarin?" Lance questioned.

"We went on a date once and there was this really pervy blonde flirting at the other table."

Oliver kept a completely still face, and with a sweet smile, he turned to Slade, and said in fluent Russian. "You utter bastard."

Slade chuckled. "Want me to write it up?"

"No," Lance held up a hand. "It was near the scene of a crime but I don't think it's relevant."

"Just kidding," Slade said, "It's not that dirty. The flowers were a good idea by the way," he added.

Oliver looked over to Lance. "That was your idea? When did you start talking?"

"Last night when I drank him under the table."

Lance crossed his arms, giving the Aussie an annoyed expression. Although to tell the truth, he was more amused. "You did not."

"Who carried whom home?"

Oliver grinned. Humming in interest as his phone buzzed his pocket. Upon further inspection, he found that Diggle had sent him a text.

Lance shook his head.

Slade gave the Detective a knowing look. "Did you have pre-drinks while you were applying your make-up?"

"Screw you."

"Again. I have a boyfriend. You're bad at taking hints."

Lance shifted uncomfortably, feeling the looks he was getting. He had no problem with gay people, nor being seen talking or spending time with someone who was gay, but he was from that kind of generation and he could tell that everyone was watching, which did make him uncomfortable.

His eyes flickered over to Hilton, surprised that Lance was talking with the young billionaire and his boyfriend, in such a friendly manner. Next to him, was John, head of forensics, and his newest assistant, Bradley. Both were giving him questionable looks, they had both been there when Lance had shown them that ASIS had deleted Slade's records. He would have to come up with an explanation for them.

"Come to the Verdant, tonight." Slade challenged, "You won't last but..."

Lance crossed his arms. "You think?"

Slade smirked. "Two to zero."

"Two?"

"The firing range."
Lance glared at the man.

"Free drinks," Oliver smiled. Slade had not spoke about his talk with Lance, minus what the man knew and found out. However, from what he could see, it seemed the two liked each other. Slade would have mentioned if they had met up now and again, so their only other meeting must have been last night. It seemed like the two got on well, which Ollie liked, and not just because it made things with Lance easier, it was nice to see Slade make himself more at home in Starling.

Lance shook his head. "That's fine. I accept."

Oliver knew the man was being polite, so he did not argue. His club, him giving free drinks. He turned to Slade, "I've got to go meet Dig," He said, switching to Russian. "You stay and have fun, and I'll see you in an hour or two at the club."

"What for?"

"An old friend. Name in my address book."

It was an odd thing to say but he needed to cover his tracks just incase anyone translated what he was saying, plus he knew Slade would get the drift.

"Ah, right."

"Detective," Frank Pike greeted, stepping over. "Mr. Queen," he held out a hand.

Oliver shook the man's hand, wondering about his presence.

"Mr. Wilson."

Slade took his hand in a strong grip. "Ow ya goin'?"

Frank looked a bit startled by Slade's causal actions, Lance had to hold his laugh in with the back of his fingers of his closed fist.

"Well, I got to go, so..."

Slade nodded. He was caught by surprise when Oliver lean forward and pecked his lips, before pulling back by no more than an inch.

"Bye."

He then turned and left, Slade could practically hear the younger man's heart pound. The Aussie smiled. Ollie was so cute sometimes.

Oliver got into the car as Diggle pulled up, giving Diggle a nod. The two set off.

"So Backman is in Starling?"

"Says Felicity," Diggle said, "What does he do?"

"He's an accountant for most of the people on the list, and is on it himself. We'll need to find the best time to speak with him."

Diggle hummed in acknowledgement.
Oliver looked forward, from where he sat in the back, wondering why his friend was being so quite. The man was keeping his focus on the road. "What's wrong?"

Diggle said nothing for a while before saying, "Your mother got a call this morning from the company that does Walter's life insurance. I think they may want to pay out. It's put her in a bad mood."

Oliver slouched in his seat. "We need to find him. Don't tell Felicity, it'll only upset her too."

Diggle nodded.

After a rather unexpected and surreal conversation with Frank Pike - which both Slade and Lance found uncomfortable with neither of them admitting to the other why, but both for the same reason - Slade spoke with Lance for a few minutes before taking his leave. Lance knew that he was about to do was a little disrespectful, but after what Tommy had mentioned about what Slade had said about his family's death. It fed his natural curiosity.

He found the story in the paper, it was an accident, a horrible one at that but still an accident. He had assumed that Slade must have been there, meaning he had survived and went to hospital. There was a report of a Slade Wilson in hospital that day... And the day before?

Upon seeing one of the pages of the report, Lance's hand flew to his mouth.

Slade came into the club, using the coded side door, with plans to walk through the hidden lair and into the club. He was surprised when he saw Oliver sitting down with Thea and Roy, who were looking at all the arrows lined up.

"Where have you been?" Oliver asked, "Lance is already here. Diggle is talking with him."

"Has he started drinking?"

"No."


"Hm?"

"Remember, it's only temporary but I kind of like it," Slade said, unbuttoning his dress shirt, so only a white vest covered his chest.

"Wha--" Oliver blinked when he saw his drawing. His brain did not connect the dots till he saw that his hideous looking swan and starling had been replaced by something that looked beautiful, elegant and very skillful. The rest had not changed, but Oliver had a feeling that it had been drawn over. "Oh my god," Ollie stepped over, his hand hovering over the drawing. Not sure if he should touch it.

"You got a henna tattoo?" Thea asked, "It's pretty cool."

"Oliver drew it," Slade said, turning back to his boyfriend and moving the man's hand to rest on the mark. "You said you wanted the event to be special."

Oliver felt his breath catch. Then he smiled.

"What event?" Thea looked at each of them.
Oliver's smile grew. He looked deep into Slade's dark eyes, who in turn looked into his bright aqua eyes, seeming emerald in the low green light. "I love you."

Thea gasped.

Slade smiled. "I love you too."

"Oh my God!" Thea smiled wildly.

"Now if you could have just done that five years ago."

Slade looked over to the metal staircase. There stood Shado, who was making her way over now.

"It's good to see you again." she said.

Three Days Later

Moira awoke feeling drowsy. Last thing she remembered, she was talking with her son when she felt a pain in her neck... Then passed out?

What was going on? Why could she not move her hands?

Moira opened her eyes, gaze looking down at her lap. Her wrists were tied to a wooden chair with rope.

She looked up. There was Oliver and Thea, also tied to chairs. She called out to them, asking if they were alright. They were awake and looking panicked. There was another figure Moira could see from the corner of her eye. A man, also tied to a chair.

She must have been dreaming, trapped in some sort of nightmare.

"W-Walter?"
The club had been full of many old friends of Oliver, Tommy, Laurel, Thea, and even a few guys Roy knew. Oliver hardly knew his so-called friends anymore, they were more just people he had met along the way in his old life, no real emotional bonds. Oliver enjoyed himself though. He drank, danced with Shado and Tommy. He joked with Roy and tried to see how much he could get Yao Fei to drink. A fair deal apparently.

His mother showed up, it was clear that she was stressed from her worries for Walter but she did not let it show. She brought a camera which Thea took, running around and taking pictures of all the guests.

Slade, Lance and Diggle sat drinking together and talking, who were later joined by Yao Fei, and occasionally Oliver and Laurel. By the end, the four men had got quite used to each other, three of them were blind drunk, Yao Fei looking at them in disappointment but laughed when Diggle went to go to the bathroom, sat on the floor because he felt dizzy and Lance tripped over him.

As the night came to an end, Oliver found himself with an arm around Slade's body, supporting his dead weight as they fumbled their way back to Slade's place, laughing to themselves about the night they had.

The following morning, Oliver attempted to slip out but as he was putting on his shoes, Slade walked out from the bedroom in a pair of boxers. His hair was sticking up in all angles and his eyes barely opened, only when he bumped into the sofa, telling it to fuck off in the process, did Ollie smile. He gave Slade a hug and kissed his lips, before directing the man back to the bedroom. Which lead to him getting caught up in a soft make-out session, before the blonde could slip away again. Leaving Slade to sleep in for a while longer.

Oliver set up for his night out as the Hood with Diggle and Felicity, took Thea and Tommy out to lunch, spent sometime with Slade and watched a movie at his place. This is followed by working out under the club together. He practiced with the wing chun dummy, battering the wings side to side till he could go no further. He also had a competition on the salmon ladder with Slade... Slade won.

That night, Oliver faced Backman, taking his laptop as there was no way the man would speak about his clients. It was the first person Oliver had been after since he told Thea about what he did at night. He called her before he left, she could tell what he was going to do before he said it. In retrospect, Backman was an ideal first target since his sister gained the knowledge. He did not need to hurt the guy at all, just get a source of information, which in this case, was a laptop.

The computer went to Felicity, who worked on it. Hours later she showed the group what she had. The news was shocking. They had found the people who had kidnapped Walter.

That's when this whole mess all started.

Felicity and Diggle went to an underground casino, owned by the man, whose men had kidnapped Walter. Diggle was there to support Felicity and they managed to get by without nearly getting killed. Diggle knocked out the owner, dragging him upstairs so that Oliver and Slade could grab him. They spoke to him, working Oliver's usual fear strategy, so he would not have to hurt the man.

He revealed that Walter was dead.

Oliver had to break the news to his mother and sister. As Moira stormed off, Oliver told Thea about
how he had really found out. He held her and she questioned her mother's actions, getting so angry. Slade had stepped in, walking over and placing a hand on the young woman's shoulder. Thea grabbed a hold of his coat, pulling him close. Slade allowed the siblings to rest their heads on his chest. The three of them stood there in silence.

Thankfully, the news about Walter's death was untrue. As a last resort, Oliver followed his mother to see if she could show a link to what happened to the man. Turns out Tommy's father had kidnapped Walter. He called Slade to give him the news, who would tell Thea. When Oliver hung up, he returned to the club to remove his suit but instead found himself leaning against a wall in disbelief.

Slade must have called Felicity to say that Oliver would need her help in tracking the phone call, as she showed up to the hidden base. Followed by Tommy. Oliver had completely forgotten that he was upstairs, getting the club sorted.

Oliver did not know how to tell the man, so he just played the recording. Tommy fell to his knees, begging "No, no, no," which turned into gasps of desperation.

They had to save Walter and Tommy needed to know why, so while Slade and Oliver broke in, Oliver parachuting onto the roof, while Slade worked his way in, fighting and knocking out everyone in sight till they met and found the man they were looking for. Felicity searched all she could about what had changed in Malcolm's life. She found that after his wife's death, Malcolm left for two years, living in Nanda Parbat, a mostly unknown city in the mountains of Tibet.

While searching for information, they found that Malcolm had brought the ticket the day he left. This unlocked a memory for Tommy, which he had always chalked up to a dream, or something else but as he thought about it... And then looking at pictures of his father and Thea... They had to be sure, they ran a DNA test between a hair from a jumper of Thea's that Diggle had found in the office, and Tommy's blood. They were still waiting for the results.

Slade stopped Oliver just as they were about to step into the room. He said that they needed to find out what Moira was hiding. So, they drugged Walter, taking him back to the club.

Yao Fei and Shado took charge of looking after the man. Thea came to see him, she could not hold back the tears when she saw that he was alive. He was okay.

Slade, Oliver and Thea returned to the Queen manor. Moira was playing the "morning card", locked in her room. So, the three of them did not have to talk with her. Oliver was finding it hard enough not to demand an answer, let alone Thea.

Oliver got into bed with his sister, they would sleep and then in the morning, they would fix things once and for all. Ollie was surprised when Thea asked Slade to join them. It was not as awkward as it sounded. It was a big bed. Thea lay between the two men as they watched a comedy film, managing to sleep before it ended.

Oliver fell asleep after the TV had been turned off, as he did not like too much sound while he slept, but Slade stayed awake for the next few minuets. Since losing his family, Slade found it hard to people let people close. They only left or betrayed him in the end, but this felt different. He came back for Oliver, but now he had Thea, someone who felt like a daughter or sister to him, who he needed to protect. Lance, Diggle, Felicity, even Tommy and Roy had become friends to him. For the first time in so long, he felt he belonged.

That morning, the plan was set in motion. Diggle took Thea to an empty warehouse, Yao Fei brought Walter, and Slade shoot Moira in the neck with a dart, shooting Oliver first to make the event realistic. Thea was tied up, as where the three other unconscious family members.
"Walter?" Moira gasped. "Is that really you?"

Walter blinked, cracking a small smile. "Moira."

Oliver was happy to see them together again, he hated to ruin the moment but he had to find out what his mother was hiding. "What's going on?" he looked around, still feeling dizzy as he had only awoke a few minutes ago.

"I don't know." Walter said with a worn voice. "I just woke up here."

"Well, at least you're okay."

"Where were you?" Thea asked, joining in the charade. "You were gone for six months."

Walter sighed. "It felt so much longer."

A door slammed from behind Moira and Walter. Slade came into the room, wearing all black and a black motorbike helmet, with tinted glass to hide his identity. He stepped around Moira, clicking on the audio modifier on his shirt, the wire leading up to a mouth piece in the helmet.

"Moira Queen," Slade said, his voice lower with a hint of a Russian accent. "We know of the Undertaking."

Had the situation not been so serious, Thea would have pointed out that if Slade could do a Russian accent, why did he not do that when he's speaking the language? Plus, that would have given away who was under the helmet.

"Wh- what do you mean? Who are you?"

"Let them go," Walter begged. "I'll help you with whatever you need, just let them go."

"Only she knows," Slade said, pointing to Moira. He turned to the woman. "What was so important about the list, that lead to your husband being kidnapped?"

Walter looked over to his wife.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Moira said, "I swear."

"Lair," Slade took the knife from the holster from his belt, he stepped over to her children. He stood in front of Thea, giving her a nod.

"Wha-what are you doing?" Thea said between short sharp breaths.

Slade lifted the knife and thrust it down. Thea screamed.

"Thea!" Oliver yelled.

Slade cut the area over one of her knees, cutting into the demine and the bag of pig blood.

"Oh God, oh God, oh God," Thea panted.

Slade took a small bottle of water from his pocket, "You're doing well. Close you're eyes," he whispered. He removed the tops and squeezed the plastic sides, water dripped down on to the corner of Thea's eyes, like tears. He did the same to the other eye before putting the item away.

"Leave her alone!" Oliver yelled, "She's done nothing wrong!"
Slade moved away, revealing to Moira that he had stabbed her daughter in the leg.

"Oh, God," Moira gasped.

"She's just a girl," Walter said, "What do you want?"

"She'll be fine if you get her to the hospital. All you have to do is tell me what is going to happen in the Undertaking," Slade said. "Thea can last a few hours. Oliver however," he turned, slashing the knife along Oliver's belly. Cutting thought the shirt and blood pack.

Oliver yelled out.

"Oliver!" Moira cried, her cheeks red, eyes shimmering with tear.

Oliver groaned and hiss at the pretend dripping wound.

"Mom, please," Thea begged.

"Stop! Stop!" Moira ordered, "M-my husband was part of a group that tried to make the city better. One of them had a plan to stop things once and for all-" she said between sobs.

"Malcolm Merlyn?" Slade supplied.

Moira paused for a moment before quickly nodded. "Yes."

"The Undertaking?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

Moira took a few breath, then gulped. She looked at her children, then back to the man who was killing them. "To level the Glades."

Thea looked at her mother, just stopping herself from asking what she meant.

Moira's head fell forward, a tear rolling down her cheek. "He found a lab that could make a machine that could create an earthquake."

All the people in the room looked at Moira in shock.

"You're kidding me, right?" Slade said, pulling back on the accent he had dropped. "How is that possible?"

"The Glades is over an area that has a high chance of having an earthquake. The machine creates power direct vibrations. The whole of the Glades will be destroyed."

"No," Slade said, "They won't." he wanted to put a comforting hand on Thea's shoulder but he could not risk braking the act. He stepped over to Moira, putting the speaker to her ear so only she could hear him. "Robert disagreed. Didn't he? That's why he was killed?"

"I could not risk anyone else," she whispered.

Slade ignored the welling in his chest and stood up straight. "Do you know how the device is set off?"
"No."

"Do you know where it will be?"

Moira took a breath. "Yes. The list as a map of the train tracks under the Glades," she gulped. "Under where his wife died."

Oliver sighed, looking over to his sister who was staring intently at her mother. Thankfully Walter also had his eyes on Moira.

"When?"

Moira gulped. "Within the week."

"The hell?!" Thea yelled out.

Moira and Walter looked over.

"We have all we need," Slade said. He clicked off the speaker.

"Good. Because I've had just enough of this."

Moira was all aflutter, completely perplexed by how Thea was acting. Like she was not hurt at all.

Slade stepped over, cutting Thea's bindings.

"Thanks," she said, rubbing her wrists.

Slade then moved to Oliver.

"What's going on?" Moira demanded. "Are you okay?"

"The blood is fake," Thea said.

Moira and Walter looked at them in disbelief.

"We had to get you to tell us the truth. We need to stop Malcolm," Oliver said. He turned to his sister and boyfriend. "We could see if Tommy could sneak us in to his father's company. See if we can find what sets it off."

Slade hummed to agree, removing the helmet and placing it down on the floor.

Moira blinked. "Slade?"

"You know him?" Walter spoke up.

Slade held up a hand in greeting as he made his way to release the couple. "Slade Wilson. Oliver's boyfriend."

Walter just looked at the man, eyebrows half way up his forehead. He stood from the chair when Slade cut him free. "Were you the one who got me out?"

"He was," Oliver cut it. He could not have them making any links to how he spent his nights.

Slade cut Moira free. "We'll need to get you two somewhere safe till this is over. We can't let Malcolm hurt you."
Moira placed a hand on Slade's chest. "Don't tell them."

Slade knew straight away what she meant. "They already know about the gambit."

Thea stepped forward. "You knew?"

Moira moved away, eyes on the wall, running a hand through her hair. "Robert wanted to stop them."

"And he died for it," Oliver said.

Moira nodded. "He did," she wiped the tears from her eyes with side of her finger, so not to make herself into a panda.

Slade unzipped his phone from his pocket, to find a few missed calls and a text from Diggle. "What's Unidac Industries?"

"It's a subsidiary of Queen Consolidated," Walter said.

"It was were the machine was made," Moira admitted.

Walter closed his eyes. He had no idea who she was anymore.

"Everyone in the lab was killed by the Other Archer?"

Moira's hand clamped over her mouth. "No..."

"What does he have to do with this?" Oliver asked himself.

"It's Malcolm," Moira said.

Oliver could not believe what he was hearing. "What does this mean?"

Moira turned to face the group, a sorrowful look in her eyes, face fallen. "It's starting."

"What's happening?" Oliver asked his team as he stepped into their hideout. Beside him were Slade and Thea, Moira and Walter were upstairs, sitting at the bar.

"Malcolm is at his company," Diggle said.

"The police are investigating but they have not found anything," Felicity add, typing madly away at the multiple computer screens.

Roy stepped over to his girlfriend, playing a hand on her shoulder. "You okay?" He saw the blood on her leg. "What happened?!"

"It's fake," Thea hugged him. "I'm fine."

"Yao Fei, can you keep an eye on them?" Slade asked, pointing to the ceiling.

Yao Fei nodded.

"I'll go up too," Shado said, "We did not recognise the outfit he wore. It's nothing like I've seen before," she added before the pair made their leave.

"Do you have any pictures of this Archer?" Slade asked, standing next to the blonde woman. He
turned to Tommy, who was sitting on a revolving chair with crossed legs, his knees sticking up due to lack of space. "Sorry."

"It's fine," Tommy mumbled. "Let's just get through this and I'll have theory for my mass murdering parent later."

Felicity gave the man a sad look for a few seconds, before she sighed and brought up the picture. Slade took a look at it and took a step back. "Oh."

"What?" Diggle looked at the Aussie.

"Did he spend a long period of time in Tibet?"

"Yes," Felicity said, "A place called Nad-Nanda-"

"Nanda Parbat," Slade cut in. "This is not good."

"Why?" Oliver stepped over, "What's wrong?"

Slade looked over to Diggle. "Remember how I told you that the League of Assassins was real?"

"What?" Tommy lifted him head.

"They are an organization of people, across the world who come to train and live together. Most pay their way by taking work as killers. If Malcolm is one of them, he's a trained killer."

Tommy's head dropped, he raked his hands through his dark hair. "What the hell is going on?"

Slade turned to Oliver, giving him an apologising look before continuing. "I have a friend there. Al-Owal. He can confirm, but we need more help. We need to get what the police know. We need a way to stop device, assuming it's not timed, and we need to find out if there is only one and track it down, where I can disarm it."

"Do you think there is more than one?" Diggle asked.

Slade nodded. "I believe so. I need to find out how powerful this thing is but I don't think one would be enough to level the Glades. I would have to see the plans to be sure," he turned to Diggle. "Is A.R.G.U.S. still in Starling?"

"As far as I know."

Slade smirked. "Then I may have a plan," He took his phone from his pocket.

"Who are you calling?" Thea asked as she walked over, Roy walking beside her, their hands joined.

"First Al-Owal, then ASIS."

Lyla Michaels stepped into the police station, her men following along behind.

Frank Pike stepped out of his office. "Miss Michaels. A pleasure to see you again," he said thought gritted teeth. "What can I do for you?"

"My bosses ordered that I come here to bring you and a detective for a meeting of very unusual
circumstances."

"How do you mean?"

"You must get a hold of a Detective Lance and come with me. It involves the case of the Stroke Of Death team."

Lance looked up when his name was mentioned. Pike called him over, and Lance did so with hesitation, grabbing his gun, slipping it into its holster. He was curious as to what was going on, but like with everything involving A.R.G.U.S., the whole thing seemed rather hush, hush. Although, it seemed like Michaels did not know too much.

"Who does this meeting involve?" Lance asked.

"I'm afraid I can not say," Truth be told she did not know, but when the head of the whole of A.R.G.U.S. himself ordered her to go, she did not have much choice. "Only myself and the two of you will be attending. My men will stay here." she turned to her side. "Now, if you please follow me gentlemen."

Pike and Lance looked at each other for a second, before following her lead.

Lyla drove them in her government issued black Land Rover, driving to an indoor car park only a few minuets away. They drove up to the second to last floor and got out, walking over to a sigh that pointed drivers up to more parking spaces on the roof.

"They should be here any minute," Lyla said, looking around.

Diggle and Oliver watched from the bodyguard's car as the group stood, waiting.

Oliver nodded to Diggle.

"All set," Dig said to Slade, who agreed. He then switched to Felicity. "Are you ready?"

"As ready as we can be... About to break into a multimillion dollar company, to steal data about... Something..."

Diggle smiled. He could imagine the blonde standing in front of the building, hands shaking lightly, being very careful about what she said while Tommy was standing right next to her. The poor guy was having a very bad couple of days.

"You'll be fine. You can do this."

"Um, Dig? Is it just you or can..." Can Oliver hear.

"Yeah."

"The test results came back."

"Here we go," Oliver said, watching as Slade, dressed as Deathstroke approached a very shocked A.R.G.U.S. agent, Lieutenant and Detective.

Felicity and Tommy stood, ready to enter Merlyn Global Group to get the documents they needed and hopefully find exactly where the device(s) was.

Tommy watched as Felicity broke the news to Diggle, which would go on to Oliver. He felt like he
did not know his father anymore. The man had hidden so much from him, using his mother's death as a sort of reasoning for killing so many people. He killed Robert and Sara, sentenced Oliver to five years on an Island full of people trying to torture and kill him. He kidnapped Walter, blackmailed Moira for years. What kind of man was he, that he could do such things and not even care?

What ever the case, he needed to go in there and act like nothing had changed. He mumbled over and over the excuses Shado had given him, taking deep breaths in-between to calm his nerves. He would have to face the only family he had left, who he loved, who deceived him for years, and lie to the man's face, act like he still loved the him. If it were not for saving this city, for righting his father's wrongs, he could not do it.

He pondered if this was what drove Oliver. To fight as the Hood and then pretend like he was who he had always been.

"Malcolm is Thea's father."

Tommy sucked in a breath at the words, his gut knotting.
I don't know how true this is, but I read that Billy's code name was Bishop. So when Slade left the Island, he became Deathstroke but there is no mention of his code name before. Cookie for anyone who sees a comic book reference.

Also, this chapter went longer than expected, so I'm splitting it into a two parter. There will now be 27 chapters. After, there will also be a story of all the little moments I wanted to fit in the main story but could not.

Lastly, the thing Oliver did with his hand is a real thing! Stephen Amell does it purposely to give Oliver depth. He talks about it on a facebook video.

Slade stood before the agent, Lieutenant and Detective, in all his team eight, or Deathstroke gear. His mask had been updated to metal, something custom made with reinforced metal, giving the best possible protection for his skull. With the swords strapped to his back padded, a gun on his belt and a knife at his tight, he looked like he was back on the Island again.

Slade crossed his arms, almost wanting to laugh as sight of fear in the Detective's eyes, before the man's face hardened.

Lyla's brows lowered. "Where are the rest of your team?"

Oliver typed the text into Slade's phone as he listened to the conversation from the open window of the car.

"This was all there ever was," Slade said, his voice clear of its Australian accent. "I had a partner but he died in our last mission."

"He messed up?" Lyla asked, a smirked threatening to pull at her lips.

Slade nodded. "Badly, but that is not why you are here.

"Then why-"

Her phone started to ring.

"Right on time."

Lyla took out her phone, her eyes only leaving Deathstroke to glance at the phone but quickly returned to the device when she saw that it was Amanda calling.

"Michaels," She answered. Over the next half a minuet, her face when from serious to disbelief and shock. Part of her expected that any minuet, Deathstroke would take off his mask and it would be one of her men, that this was all a big joke... But what she heard was even more beyond belief. She hung up the call.

"Deathstroke," she started. "Consisted of a two man team, codenames Bishop and Jericho, employed
by the government, to collect foreign intelligence. They're agents like myself."

Pike turned to Lyla. "You're kidding me?"

Slade raised a hand. "Jericho."

Slade remembered the day they got their codenames. It was after his cousin Wade had brought it up. Before they had just been team eight but Wade had been right. It would be useful. Billy became Bishop, it meant overseer, which seemed fitting as he was a pilot. Jericho had biblical meaning of a city which walls were destroyed, at the time, it had became nickname of laying a pattern of explosives to destroy a wall, the strongest but widest that was possible. That was also when they became Deathstroke, a deep cover mission that was set to never really end.

They had not gone into it alone. Then Deadshot joined. Like Deathstroke, he was named by the people, not a codename. Wade had joined to. Slade had torn him a new one for that but Wade had kept his word. They would always stick together. Slade had lost his family, Wade had almost been put away by his, back in a time were his actions less over-excitable but damaged, too much to deal with. Looking back, it was odd that such a person as easily irritated as Slade could take life with Wade. Without Wade, he would have never been able to make it those first few years.

That year he got to the Island, had been the worst in his life. At the start of it Deadshot had betrayed them, as the end Billy had betrayed him, where in the following year, he would live a captive, then on the run on a Island, all alone as he no reason to really trust Yao Fei. Between those events however, Wade had died. He had been on a mission and had gone missing after an explosion, the amount of blood left behind said it was unlikely he had survived. ASIS never heard from his again, even after Slade came back to Australia after the island. Slade had thrown himself into his work after Wade's death, which is how he ended up on the island, may have even been the reason he isolated himself after Billy had changed sides.

"Why did you kill Deadshot?" Lyla questioned.

"I know him. He's not stupid. He would have killed you, and he almost did, else my plan would not have worked."


"Only those higher up did."

Lyla sighed. Deep cover operations remained secret to make sure there were no leaks. She just felt so stupid for hunting them for all those years.

"So, is that all we're here for or..." Lance asked. It made no real sense why he and Pike had to be here to hear this too.

"I knew there was a reason I liked you."

Lance blinked. "We know each other?"

Lyla and Pike turned to Lance.

Slade hummed to agree.

They turned to Deathstroke.

Slade tutted. "Just yesterday, I had to wrestle with you to get you to drink a glass of water."
Then back to Lance.

Lance's hand flew to his mouth, which hung open. It could not be possible that... "Slade?"

Slade took hold of his metal mask with both hands, pulling it off like he would his motorbike helmet. "Ma chérie," he sang in his low husky, Aussie rich voice.

Lance was shocked beyond belief but then his mind started to connect some dots. Slade killed Deadshot, someone he knew... That night, when they drank together, Slade said his friend had died, a sniper. Slade had killed his friend? Deathstroke had been out of action for six years, the exact amount Slade had been gone for, so if Billy was his friend then, he could have been his partner in this team, but that still did not explain why Slade seemed to hate the guy. Was it because he died? No, there was something else. What had Billy done? What happened on that Island?

Pike blinked. "I know you," he pointed at the padded man. "You're dating that Queen kid."

"Indeed," Slade smiled. He nodded with a hum.

Pike frowned at the odd gesture but continued. "Does he know?"

Slade smirked and seconds later, Pike felt a tap on his shoulder.

Pike span around, his hand naturally going to his gun, from all his years of training. Before he could touch the metal however, a hand grabbed his wrist, locking his joint still. The other took the gun from the Lieutenant, before moving away. The sound of the safety latch being pulled back rang out, before Pike met the face of his attacker.

There stood Oliver Queen, gun in hand, pointing it at him, smile on his face.

Lance found himself smirking as realisation set in, both at the expression on his co-worker's face, surprise with a drizzle of fear, and by the skill that Oliver presented. Five years on an Island his arse.

Oliver flipped the safety on, then swung the gun around, holding it out to the Lieutenant by the ring around the trigger handing from the dip of his first knuckle. "Sorry."

"Neat trick," Pike grumbled, taking back his gun and slipping it back into his holster.

"To finish what you were asking," Slade cut in. "No, we are not here just for this. We have a big problem."

"How big?" Lyla asked.

"Five years ago," Oliver started, moving to stand next to Slade. "A group of people, including my father, came together in order to improve the city. They were all wealthy, and they took it upon themselves to try and lower the crime rate."

Starling was not riddled with prostitution like Las Vegas, drugs filling every street like Baltimore, nor did it have a church with a stone wall dedicated purely to murders like New Orleans. Seven years ago, things started to go down hill. Drugs rings started popping up everywhere, drugs being made locally, promoted by the rich and powerful. Guns, and not just simple hand guns, but automatics and semiautomatics, every criminal going seemed to have them. This drew in more and more issues which further poisoned the city. Starling was not a unsafe place to live, but it was quickly becoming one.

The list detailed the problem, well problems, believe by the group. The spectrum of unbelievably rich
and dirt poor was just that, one or the other. There should have been more variation like most places but there had not been for years. The more who were rich, created more that would be poor, and made things by protecting drugs and prostitution so it could thrive, it's claws digging deeper. In those two years alone, things really got bad, with no clue as to what exactly had started it. The next five had only allowed things to grow worse.

Oliver knew now, that even after he stopped the undertaking, where his father had failed to, he would have to finish fixing this city, one name at a time. Malcolm seemed to believe that just stopping them would not be enough, that he needed to get rid of them for good, their buildings, their empires, and all those who lived there, tainted by their world. For a second, that Oliver hated to admit, he understood. It had merit but no... There were people down there, innocent people who worked hard, hell, even those who were part of that life had no other choice, they were entombed by a life they were born into, would live in and pass on.

It would take a life time, and even long after, but Oliver was not going to give up or destroy it all just because it was hard. This was not about revenge anymore, but doing what should have be done. He was a soldier, it was only right that he kept fighting.

Oliver exhaled a breath, his eyes falling shut. "One of them had an idea, a machine, that if funded, would be ready in five years. Some agreed to the theory but never thought it possible, till they saw it was," His eyes opened, "My father went to stop it but he had to do it without him finding out, but he did and," he gulped, looking down to the floor. "My mother was scared, for Thea and herself so after dad died, she helped him create the machine," He raised his head, meeting Lance's eyes. The man had not taken the hint. "I'm sorry."

Lance looked at him, frowning. "For what?"

"He could not let my father stop him... So he rigged the gambit to explode," He said, "I'm so sorry."

Lance felt the air being sucked from his lungs like a punch to the gut. He shook his head, eyes on the floor, mumbling words that even he could not understand. It could not be true. His little girl... No, no, no.

The panic felt like Moira was telling him Sara was dead all over again. His insides felt cold and aching, like his blood was liquid nitrogen, freezing his blood vessels, then his organs, with a painful burn, that unlike the real thing, would not just end in the next for seconds, he would have to live with it. It would dull over time, mostly with beer, but it would always be there, his heart frozen solid.

Something did stop it though. As he lifted his eyes, he spotted Oliver's right hand. His fingers were crooked, his knuckles moving up and down, as if feeling something.

Lance's eyelids flew wide. He had seen Oliver do that a few times, only just noticing it due to his keen attention to the way a person acted. Oliver had even once lifted his hand passed his hips, his left shoulder tilting down. He did not get any further, his fingers twitching, as he stopped himself. At that time, Lance firmly believed that Oliver was reacting for his arrows, that were not there, especially as Lance had advanced on him at the time. Most of the time, when Lance saw Oliver doing this, he was trapped in a confrontation, but not every time.

Lance's believed that this one occasion was Oliver preparing to strike back. For the rest however, maybe it was more than that. Maybe it was some sort of safety blanket. The simple hand movement was him comforting himself with his knowledge of his craft, that he was safe.

He did not know how Oliver had learned how to use a bow, or why but those were issues he was unlikely to ever discover. Why use his skills now? Now, that was the real question. Corrupt business
men with links with gangs like the Chinese Triad, and who killed or had others kill for the them. People who protected the drugs industry, allowing them to grow stronger, to manufacture more. All those who were ruining the city, and the police and lawyers could not, and sometimes did not even try to touch. The hood handled it.

Oliver was fixing the city. Like this group, who had gone to such dire extremes to do so. He was, in his own way, continuing where his father had left off. He was just trying to make things better and he was risking his life. Every. Single. Time. To do so. Sacrificing everything for the chance to fix things. Lance never thought he would have believed it but... Oliver was a hero.

In that moment, Lance remembered that Oliver took every hit for Sara's death, he accepted it was his fault... But it was not. As of late, Lance found that he no longer blamed the blonde, he hated the storm for taking his little girl, Sara for going, which pained him, but most of all, and he guessed he always had, he blamed himself. However, this was no accident, no natural disaster. It was not his fault, nor Oliver's. She was murdered, and as much as it angered him, it also gave him a sort of relief. He finally knew who he could and should hate.

"It was not your fault."

Oliver stared at the man, not believing what he had heard.

"It never was," Lance raised his eyes.

For a few seconds Oliver just stood there. He had no idea what to make of this moment. It was surreal, borderline wrong... No. It was wrong, Sara's blood was on his hands.

Lance must have seen the disbelief because the next thing Oliver knew, Quentin had pulled him to his chest, an arm wrapped around his back.

He expected anger, hate, never this. Lance was holding on to him far too tightly, and it lasted several second too long. He was upset. Oliver was no longer his enemy, not yet a friend, but at this minuet, he was a lifeline. Ollie never returned the hug, too worried about the reaction it could cause, but he did relax. For the first time, Oliver felt welcomed.

Tommy opened the door to the room which Felicity was sure would house the information they needed. The room was dark, brightened by only the lights of the machines that held such vital information, that Tommy would have to face his father in return for letting them in.

"Okay. No one's there. The guard just went by, so you should have ten minuets till he comes back, he won't check the room though, so don't leave till I can get you."

Felicity nodded. "Got it," she ducked into the room, stopping to turn back to the young Merlyn. "Good luck with... Everything- Not that anything will happen! Just..."

"Yeah," Tommy smiled. "I know. Thank you. I'll be back in a few minuets."

Felicity smiled, patting his bicep before heading to work.

Tommy took a deep breath, stepped into the elevator and let it out as the door shut. He had called ahead, telling his father that he wanted to talk with him. Malcolm, even in his very busy day of destroying the city, accepted, as Tommy had not spoken with him since he had invited him and Laurel to dinner, since he tried to have Tommy sigh to save the clinic demolished. The man had unfortunately been at his office but having him there at least meant that Tommy had a good excuse for entering the building and he could leave quicker than say meeting up for lunch. Tommy passed
with ease, Felicity pretending to be a currier from Big Belly Burger, beside him.

Tommy took one last deep breath as he reached the second to the top floor, he let it out. His eyes opening as the door pinged open.

Malcolm stood from his desk, a smile across his lips. "It's good to see you again."

Go to hell. "Yeah, you too," Tommy stepped out, taking a seat opposite the desk as his father ushered him to do so.

Malcolm sighed in relaxation as he sat down. "I really did not expect you to call. I'm sorry for what I tried to do..." his smiled fell. "It's just that, since your mother died, I've hated that building. It got to me and it shouldn't have, and I'm sorry for that."

Tommy nodded. "I know but that building was important to her, so were the people who would be suffer if it was gone. You can't hate the place or the people, or hurt them. It's not their fault."
Malcolm kept the expression, Tommy was pretty sure he was just putting it on to make himself look good. That Tommy would never find out what he was planning. So, he added; "It's not what she would have wanted."

Malcolm's eyebrows twitched at that. Tommy had hit a nerve.

"Just say you won't destroy it."

Malcolm smiled. "I won't."

Tommy had to look down. He hoped his father would take it as Tommy just thinking and not holding down the urge to leap across the desk and punch him, and Tommy had never been a violent person. He always had a knack for talking his way out of trouble, Moira had said it was because he had grown up with Ollie, but right now, archer assassin or not, he wanted to beat him till all his anger was gone.

"Thank you."

"It's okay. I should have never even thought about it."

It was almost like Malcolm was trying to break him, instead of the other way around. He had to keep this going.

They spoke about a few things, like where he was living, what he did in his spare time, about Laurel, his work, which lead to how Oliver was.

"He's fine. Slade is a really good guy for him... I never thought I would say something like that but I'm happy for him."

Malcolm nodded. "That's good to hear. How are the rest of the family."

Oh, how is Moira, you mean? Has she heard from her husband since the Hood got him back? Tommy was prepared for this, he had gone over what Slade had told him enough times to leave the words burned in his brain. "She's been really upset about Walter lately. She has arranged for her, Thea, Ollie and even Slade and Thea's boyfriend to leave the city for a few days. They're going today, Ollie had no idea where but he said it would be for a few days."

Malcolm nodded again, humming.
The man should not pay too much need to know where Moira is if he thinks she had ran away.

Tommy saw his moment. "Which means I'll be working tonight. Down at the club."

Malcolm's head jerked up. "I'm sure they will be fine. You should come home, we'll have dinner."

"I'd like to but without Oliver and Thea's boyfriend, they will be short staffed. Plus, it mean Laurel will be working late and so will her father, so I was thinking that after, we would all have a late dinner at a diner," There. They would all be in the glades. "We have not spoken in a while, so since then, I've really started to get to know Laurel more, along with her family and friends," More fuel to the fire, more guilt. "And I've realised that..." his eyes fell shut. He felt the warmth in his chest, his gut becoming one big knot. Now was not the time but he knew it to be true. "I love her."

Malcolm blinked and after a few seconds he smiled. "I'm happy to hear that. Are you sure that you and her could not pay me a short visit today? I would love to see her again."

Nothing to save Lance? Well, Tommy should have been thankful that at least his father wanted his girlfriend to be safe too. Oh, was that sarcasm?

Tommy had not meant to poke the bear with this subject but at Malcolm's question. He got an idea. He looked over to the clock. Nearly Three. He wanted to give Slade all the time he could, but not too late, as that would look suspicious if he had work. "Well, I have to get back to work soon. Sorting out the last shipment. But Laurel and I can come by about half six, stay till seven?"

Malcolm grinned, large and showing off his white teeth. "That sounds great."

Tommy smirked. Now they had a time.

"This is insane!"

Tommy and Felicity looked at each other at the yell coming from the police station offices. They continued to the double doors where Shado stood guard.

"Just in time," she said, reaching for the handle. "The fun has just started."

The doors revealed that then entire Starling city police department, with the title of detective or higher, including SWAT, the bomb squad and a few members of A.R.G.U.S., were stuffed in to the large but not that large, room. They were about seventy people, all clearly shocked, some angry, most were yelling as they stood, squashed between desks.

"Follow me," A voice said, which turned out to be Diggle. He lead the two of them to the one end of the room, just before the door that lead to the little kitchen for coffee. There was Slade, who had shed his swords, and allowing everyone to voice their concerns, for the time being. Next to him was Lance, on his other side Lyla, who was speaking with a rather distressed looking Police Commissioner Brian Nudocerdo. Behind them was Oliver, Roy and Thea, who looked to be having a three-way argument amongst themselves, in hushed whispers.

Slade saw them and waved them over, also walking up to meet them as they entered the clearing.

"Did you get it?"

Felicity nodded. "I don't understand it but yeah, I got it," she handed the Aussie the portable hard drive.
"We also have a time," Tommy said, following Slade to a desk where Felicity's laptop sat.

Slade paused, his eyes returning to them. "A time?"

"I told him that I would be in the glades all night, not including six thirty, where Laurel and I would come and see him for a half an hour at the house."

Slade just looked at him for a few seconds before his face broke out in a huge smile. He chuckled as he grabbed hold of Tommy's shoulder. "That's using your head."

Lance watched as Slade turned back to the laptop, bending over the desk and staring intently at the design prints that looked completely foreign to him, then again, he had never been any good with wiring. He approached Tommy.

"You did well. I know that must have been difficult but thank you."

Tommy smiled. "So... Everyone knows everything."

Lance snorted. "Yeah. Earthquake machine, go figure."

"Have you told Laurel?"

Lance shook his head. "You know her. She would not leave even then, she would get every one she knows and passes, out. That's what they're arguing about," Lance said, jerking his head to the upset men and women. "We can't tell anyone, else everyone will know and panic."

Tommy nodded.

"They also know Moira's involvement but not you're father's. We can't have them going off and..."

"Yeah," Tommy caught the drift. Well, at least that explained why no one was trying to kill him.

"It's not your fault."

Tommy nodded. "I know. Just feels like I should have known."

"You're helping us to stop this, that's all that matters now," Lance told him. "Out of all the man who have dated or tried to date Laurel. You're the only one I would consider family."

Tommy blinked. He smirked. It felt this was the end of the world and everyone was saying what they needed to say, first admitting that he loved Laurel, now this. He met Lance's eyes. "That's means a lot."

Slade stood straight with a sigh.

"Is it bad?" Felicity asked from where she stood next to him.

Slade ran a hand through his hair. "Pretty bad."

"What do you mean it's pretty bad?" Commissioner Nudocerdo demanded, braking away from Lyla.

"Nothing we can't deal with," Slade said, "It's just not going to be as easy as I would have hoped."

Nudocerdo nodded. He turned to his men. "Everyone, quieten down!"

As people continued to argue with each other, Lance stepped forward. "Listen up!"
Slade added a double toned whistle for good measure.

The majority stopped, which was just enough for Slade to speak.

"Alright," he called out. "We can stop this," the room fell silent, which in contras was very unnerving but Slade did not even blink. "I know how to shut this thing down, and just in case, I have a hell of a lot people who can help me. We have three issues however," He raised a finger. "First, it's set off with a remote. Now, as I've already said, the guy is also that dark archer bloke. So to hold him off, we'll fight him, archer to archer."

This brought up the whispers.

"How are we going to get the Hood to fight him?" One Captain called out.

"We've already got in contact, he'll help us."

The whispers continued. It was no real secret that many of the police force supported the Hood's work, most of the city did, but asking for it? That was completely different. He was still a vigilante after all.

"These are special circumstances," Which took a long while for Slade to get Commissioner and Lieutenant Pike to agree to.

Tommy looked over to Oliver. He had told him before how the dark archer had nearly killed him. Why did he look so confident? And would he kill his Malcolm? Even after all his father had done, Tommy would admit that the idea pained him.

"Brilliant piece of news, we know that the attack will most likely happen at half six to seven, this is the only time slot he will have unless he wants to kill a member of his family. regardless, we have the location, so we need to get to the machine and be at it, ready to go as soon as possible. And that's where the hard part comes in. Lucky for us, he can't just start it at anytime, it's a machine that needs to..." He dragged the 'o', trying to think of the right way to explain it. "Basically warm up. Which could take five minuets to half an hour. The reason he will likely leave warming up the machine until he needs it, is because that is the only point where it will be exposed enough for me to disarm it."

Slade looked out. The people were worried, some scared, and a lot angry but they were all listening.

"The last problem we have is that this work confirms that there are two machines," He whistled again as they started to speak up. They stopped. "This only means that someone else is going to have to go down with me to go handle the other machine, as we want to disarm them at the same time, or pretty much, as according to this, they are both in sync. They both warm up at the same time and if one is shut down, the other will go off minuets or seconds later. The paused will be enough to cut that last wire or whatever, so no worries. Plus, we will be communicating with each other and all of you at all times."

"I'll go," Lance spoke up.

Everyone turned to him.

Quentin shrugged. "You said yourself, even if you had no idea what you were doing, we will have cameras and walkie-talkies. So, if we do everything at the same time, we'll be fine."

Slade tapped the wooden desk with his knuckled, smiling as Lance rolled his eyes. "Alright, but if you wet yourself, you have to send me a picture on instagram."
"Wow, you're in the twenty-first century. Well done."

Slade laughed, throwing an arm around Lance's shoulders and pulling him to his side. "Did you know they have porn on the internet now? Brilliant."

Lance rolled him eyes again.

"We'll head off as soon as," Slade said, pulling his arm back. "We just need to get set and we'll be on our way."

"Well, what if it doesn't work," Detective Rivera spoke up. "If it warms up and you can't disarm it, then what? Hm? There'll be no time for anything else."

"We need to evacuate the glades," Another Detective added.

"The only way we could possibly do that is if we broadcasted it on TV," Slade explained. "He'd just set it off straight away. To hell with the naturel disaster plan."

"My wife works downtown!"

"My brother lives there!"

"What about my daughter?!"

Slade pressed his lips together. This was not going to be easy.
Wade

Chapter Notes

Wade Wilson's Marvel confirmed height is 6'2", the actor who plays Oliver is 6 foot and who plays Slade is 5'10. Although in the comics, Oliver is 5'11" and Slade is 6'4"! Crazy hn?

I wanted to make Wade as realist as possible to fit with this story. Also, Wade is Marvel, Slade is DC. No cannon relation.

And Shado has the same bow Oliver does in Season 2. It fits her.

"Come on wanker, I'm booooooooard~"

Slade snorted. "Serious Wade, paper work is hard enough without you pestering me," the Aussie said, focusing on the work laid out in front of him on the desk.

"We're mercenaries."

"Undercover."

"Same thing!" Wade threw himself down on Slade's bed.

"Clearly."

"You always have to have the last word, don't you?" A muffled voiced sounded from the bed.

"No."

"Yeah, you do."

"No, I don't."

"You're doing it right now!"

"No, I'm not."

Wade smirked. "I want to go out and play Onee-chan!"

"Nii-chan," Slade said sharply. "Onee-chan means older sister."
"You feel like one sometimes," he put on a voice that sounded like it belonged to a heavy smoker. "Don't do this Wade. Don't do that Wade."

"For good reason."

"Stabbing you with a sword was an accident..."

Slade sighed, turning the chair around with his boot covered feet.

At this point in time, Wade was thirty, only four years younger than his dubbed "big brother" or "sister", which was the case most of the time. He should have never let the man near anime.

Wade had been shorter than his brother for years, now standing at six foot two, he was four inches taller. They had met first when the younger man was nine, when he had gone to visit the family he never knew he had. At this time Wade started to fox walk, walking on his toes, trying to match Slade's unbelievable height. His family had told him off for it back home so he only did it when he was around Slade, who had found it pretty funny. It was the first thing he had laughed about since his family's death.

Wade had suffered from a few mental conditions. He lost attention very easily, and even after turning thirty, he never lost his need to run about like a three year old, he found it hard to talk to people, talking to new people or in a crowd, was a no go. Now he could talk to anyone about anything, he really had no shame, but for years, he spoke to people through Slade, whispering to the Aussie what he wanted to say. He trusted the older child. The reason being, that he had been the first person to inadvertently praise his fox walking. Everyone else had always told him off for it, but when he was around Slade, doing it, no one commented, thinking Slade to still be fragile after all that happened to him.

It would not be until the following year, that they would find out that Wade had high arches, that the middle of his feet was raised more than usual, making flat shoes uncomfortable. This meant that walking on his toes -or in heels, which Wade had found very amusing- felt more natural and comfortable, something he had been unable to explain with his socially awkwardness. Slade had been the person to allow Wade to move comfortably, taking away his pain, until he was given padding to slip into his shoes.

Slade looked over his family member. Who was still face down on the bed. All these years, they had argued, laughed, but through it all, they stayed together. Wade was bat shit crazy, he was overactive, reckless and a child. When he was a child, he used to pretend he was in a comic book -which later became a film, and at some point a game- voicing over climbing trees and playing with his toys, even arguing with the director and writer, who were animated boxes, like in a comic. A habit which he still had. He let people believe what they wanted, it was funny to see their expressions, but no one was really sure if it was a joke or not, the dedication was a bit much. Expect for Slade, who knew Wade liked to discuss problems, so why not do it out loud? His two characters were just the angel (White box) and devil (Yellow box) on his shoulder. Yellow was the one who told him to hurry up and run off half cocked, who gives a shit! Time's a wastin'. While White was apparently more wise, Wade could envision White as the kind of guy who sipped brandy, while sitting at an old stone fireplace. He gave Wade his more dark but clever humour, and often pointed out the mistakes he had made or what not to do.

And Slade? What was wrong with him? He was a loner, he was a pot head and a drunk for ten years, he saw the world as a dark and hateful place, and until Floyd ratted him out, the only living person who knew he was gay, was Wade. He was cynical, self hating, and yet, Wade changed that. He brought out the side of him that liked to joke, that wanted to have fun. He even started Slade's need to master languages. First French, as Wade's grandmother only ever spoke it, Wade taught
Slade a few fun bits, so when he returned to school, he switched classes from German to French. In return, Slade gave him a few choice words in Māori. Slade went on to learn Mandarin, and many others after he enlisted, while Wade did not, saying it was too much for his head to take, but French had always been their little language. Which is why never considered teaching anyone it, not even Oliver.

Wade looked up from the bed, eyes sparking with devilish glee. He was Canadian, although he had no real distinctive accent, his voice was on the deep side but he had grown in confidence over the years, so most of the time he was yelling and whining. His hair was a bright, almost white blonde, eyes a honey brown. His eyebrows were thick, lips full and defined, especially his cupid's bow which gave him an almost feline like expression when he smiled, like Thea had, come to think about it. His body was just as wide and well build as Slade, seeming leaner due to his height and his skin was light, although tanned from being outside.

Slade had been so pissed off with him when he followed him to ASIS, which turned to them when they let him it. He took the same risky mission, posing as a friend of the Stroke of Death group, who had been trained by them, all mercenaries, killers for hire, for the highest price. Slade felt guilty for introducing Wade to that world, and when he died, the Australian just fell apart.

"Come on. Let's go get some Mexican food or something," Wade said, rolling off the bed into a crouch.

Slade smiled at that. "Alright," He crossed his arms. "Where do you get tacos in Kiev?"

"Well that has to be someplace somewhere," Wade said, as if it was obvious.

Slade shook his head at the man. The guy would have lived off every take out under the sun and his most loved chimichangas of course, had Slade not learned to cook, so he could feed the two of them. Although Wade was the master of pancakes, it was the only thing he knew and would make. Back when they were on leave in Australia, Wade would make an unbelievably amount, enough to feed two extra guys to the point of exploding. He would say that they were not perfect, then that he was throwing them away but placed them into an old processed food box, before running off. Slade did not ask, if Wade did not want to talk about, he would not. The next time he did it, two days later, Slade followed, to find him ripping the pastry up and throwing the bits to a group of seagulls on the beach, before, once again, running off. Slade never mentioned it, and Wade never brought it up, till he started bringing Slade along. Feeding the birds became the first thing they did once they got home, and would be for years after.

"I'll find us something," Slade gave in. He stood from the computer chair, grabbing his coat from the backrest. "But I can't promise Mexican."

"Then what use are you?" Wade called from where he had already left the room.

Slade just chuckled, following behind.

Wade Wilson had a kind spirit, completely ignored by everyone around him, thinking him to be unstable. He never got to have a family because all he felt he needed was Slade, who never told him other wise, needing the other in term. And then he died, well before he should have, something for all the good he did, he never deserved and would never get praised for. Wade Wilson, the guy who everyone knew had stabbed the great Slade Wilson, letting him take the fall before dropping off the face of the earth.

Pike and Lance tried their best to calm everyone down but after ten minuets of arguing, they were
getting frustrated and trying leave to call their families, which lead to Diggle and Shado blocking the exit, and Slade stopping the officers from using their phones with a signal jammer, meaning even more yelling.

"Listen up!" Slade yelled. "We're not heartless arseholes, but if you tell people then everyone will die. That's the fact of the matter."

"You expect us to do nothing? Just pretend like nothing's wrong when there is about to be an earthquake?!"

"We understand that," Oliver moved forward with raised hands. "You want them to be safe, but you're lucky it's even possible to stop this; we know when, where and how. We can't-"

"Lucky? Fucking lucky."

"You don't understand!"

"All my family are here, in the Glades. My mother can't move for her own safety and I have just spent half an hour arguing with a sister who won't leave because she wants to help," Oliver said, this did make the officers listen. "We can save the Glades, every last person in it. We would never have asked such a thing of you, if we need not thing it was entirely possible."

"What do you mean we?"

Officers called out agreements and seconds later, Oliver found himself being bombarded with insults and demands.

"You're just some rich kid."

"Brat."

"You don't understand."

Like a pack mentality, they only make each other worse, more angry, more hateful, till someone took it a step too far.

A man stepped. "Well, what are you going to do," he came up to Oliver, who thinking it was just a question, paid it no mind, until the man was in his face.

The man was a Detective, his skin slightly tanned but his race was unclear, he was nearly as tall as Oliver, with a body hardened after years of work. He grabbed Oliver's shirt.

Oliver's blue eyes flew wide, he grabbed hold of the hand, pulling it back sharply with a hard tug, batting the man's arm with his spare arm. That was almost unconscious, the rest he did with full intension. He gave hard and fast strikes to the Detective's chest and gut to wind him, then a kick to his shin to get him down to one knee. Lastly, as Yao Fei had shown him all those years ago, he dropped down to one hand in order to wrap his legs around the man as he span his body around, the man landed on his back with an all mighty thump. Whereby Oliver held his arm across his neck, pressing down enough to make breathing difficult but possible, while one hand had a hand pinned down, the other held down by his knee.

The displace was shocking, the whole room going completely silent, that was when the words were spoken.

"I was trained by a master fighter, an army General and a navy Commander for five years on an
Island full of mercenaries with tons of fire power trying to hunt us down and kill us. I've been stabbed, shot, had bombs dropped on me, had my bones broken, sown up my own wounds and made my own splints, and even-" his voice cut off with a sharp breath. I've even dug my father's grave. "I have fought for my life and that of my family. I know what I'm doing," he removed his arm and pushed himself up. Then he held out a hand. "I know what we're doing."

Not a mouth in that room was not hanging open, eyes wide, completely stunned. Even Lance, even Slade. It was unexpected but wrong? Maybe not.

The man took Oliver's hand, gripping it tightly as the Ollie tugged him to his feet. "Dante Mathers."

A small smile pulled at Oliver's lips, not his large show smile but his pleased smile, the one he wore on the island, the real him. "Oliver Queen," he then took a step back, his hands moving to hang by his hips as he bowed.

"You do realise how much that is going to come back and bite you in the arse, love?" Slade strolled over.

"For sure but maybe it's better that way," Oliver said, turning to his partner.

"I'm glad to see all that training we put you through did not go to waste." Slade said loudly.

Oliver blinked. He just...

Slade smirked. Then he held out an arm to officers watching the scene. They were still in a shocked science but something had changed, for the first time, they seemed to really be listening. "Take lead. You're good at it."

It was like Slade handing over the radio after they had stole the circuit board to Fyers' machine. Oliver had the idea to take it, he gave them a way to get it, luring the guards over with Slade as his hostage. His plans, so he took lead. Even if they had to steal it a second time.

Oliver nodded and turned to the men and women. "We do have two choices. You can go, tell your families and run like cowards," he said clearly and with no malice. "Let's say one of you does this. I see your thinking that he could not possibly find out but just one person would be unfair, and your partners, children, family, they will tell friends, who will tell their families and so on. It's a normal thing to do. But I don't know about you, but even when I first got to the Island, when I caused more trouble than helped, I never left innocent people behind," he thought about how he had left a man behind in Yao Fei's cave because he could not take the risk with Slade being so sick. Oliver did not allow himself to care for his lies, although felt guilt for running. He had no way of knowing what would happen, just like this moment in time, they could fail. But logically, this was their best option, and if it was going to work, he had to make it believable.

Oliver held up to fingers. "The second option is we work together and we stop this. Not a soul has to be taken this city. Every. Life. Saved," he snorted. "You are the police, the answer should be a no brainer. We can and will do this," He glanced to Slade before he turned back. "Survival is not a birth right but a privilege."

Slade smiled.

"You don't have to be tactical to know that this is not just the best option, but the only one."

Slade saw the changed expressions. They believed Oliver. Some may still go out and try to tell their families and friends, Slade was not naive but this would reduce the chances. He works in shadows, surrounded by secrets, maybe that was why he felt so nervous. Or maybe it was because Staling City
had become his home, meaning he could not long detach himself from the worries that bubbled in his stomach.

The atmosphere had really picked up in the station. The police and A.R.G.U.S. were going over where the machines were placed, Slade had been working with Lance and Felicity on how to disarm this thing but was now on the phone with an associate of Al-Owal from League of Assassins, which he had wrote off as being a call from a friend in the navy. Before meeting up with Lance, Pike and Lyla as Deathstroke, he had informed his old friend, Al-Owal, the man who had taught both Slade and Wade how to use swords, of Malcolm's plan. The women who he was speaking to, said that some of the league were on their way to asses the situation, and whether Malcolm would be killed for his actions, if he survived today.

Oliver had just got back after talking with Shado and Yao Fei, who had to be reached over the phone as he was setting Moira and Walter up in a safe house, well more like the warehouse Oliver had brought as a back up lair. Tonight the three archers would assemble as a team once more, to take down the Dark Archer. Shado would use her brand new customised oneida kestrel compound bow, made completely of metal, the bow was a lot shorter but was perfect for hand to hand combat. Oliver would use his customised recurve bow, and Yao Fei would be going to the club to grab his carbon fiber long bow. Ollie had smirked when he saw the symbolism of old, current and new. The past, present and future.

Oliver moved past everyone with his eyes cast down, slipping into the break room.

Slade frowned. "Thank you, Ta-er al-Asfer," he said before hanging up.

"Odd name," Felicity commented.

"Means yellow bird in Arabic," Slade shrugged, "Anyway, I've got to make a few more calls," he said, heading to the break room.

Lance hummed in understanding, eyes still looking over all the drawn wires he would have to come to understand intimately.

Slade closed the door behind him, pushing the mobile back into his pocket. "Everything okay?"

"Fine," Oliver said, not looking up from where he sat on the old worn sofa. "Shado is picking up outfits. With the three of us working together, we can catch Malcolm alive and recover the detonator."

"It looks like we will be able to disarm them, while they are warming up. I'll radio if we do so before you can take it," Slade said, coming over to sit next to his boyfriend.

Oliver nodded. "Sounds good."

"Then what's wrong?"

Oliver smirked. "I want to kill him but I can't, for Tommy, but God, I just want to kill him."

"I would want to too. After Wade died, I tracked down the bomber and shot him," Slade said, "I would not blame you."

"Tommy would."

"He would," Slade agreed. "But remember when I told you that killing the person or just knowing
that they are dead, meant they no longer had power over you? That you could just move on."

"I remember," It was how Oliver got over what Billy Wintergreen at done to him and how he could move on from all that had happened on the Island by killing Fyers.

"I was wrong. It does help at first but it the long turn, you took the easy way out. You took revenge and if they were nothing to you, you've just made another blood line on the tally," He said nonchalantly. Killing was just a thing they had to get used to, it helped when you could not see the person's face, or did not know their name, or best of all, in self-defence or when you knew for a fact that they deserved it. It made killing on the Island child's play.

Slade cupped Oliver's cheek, turning his head so their eyes met. Dark brown into bright blue. "Which can make you stronger but further ruins you," his eyebrows knitted together in concern. "And when this person is a part of your life, like Malcolm, you do nothing but lose, in the end. But to win, to put him away and move on, keeping all those close to you and proving that you are as beautiful a human being as you ever were," he stroked his thumb along Oliver's jaw, prickly with stubble. "That's truly winning."

"I'm not beautiful," Maybe physically to Slade but not mentally.

"You are. You're feeling guilty," he said, as if reading Oliver's mind. "I can see that as much, you believe you have to do this for your father but you know it's wrong. You have proved that you can both survive and stay who you are."

"Who am I?" Oliver asked.

Slade smiled. "You're Oliver. You're a master archer and fighter, you're the person I trust most to protect my life. You're smart, kind and self-less, putting your life at risk to save this city and taking no thanks for it. You're mature in ways you should never have been yet still innocent. You're funny and have an unbelievably sexy body."

Oliver grinned at that. His eyes fell shut as Slade's lips met his neck. His dry lips ran up Oliver's throat, causing his own to part in bliss as Slade spoke about the attractions of his chest, arms, legs, hair, eyes, nose, till a soft gasp left his mouth as Slade palmed at his butt cheek. The Aussie continued to praise his angular jaw bone, his neck, firm muscles, his perfect smile, even the mole under his bottom lip.

"One of the things I love most about you," Slade whispered huskily, which had a shiver running up Ollie's spine, his hips thrusting forward, jutting his starting to harden length towards Slade, as the older man's hand ran along the inside of his thigh. "Are you're scars."

"Why?" Oliver asked softly, his eyes peeking open, although his glaze was at the white painted ceiling.

Slade pulled back, giving Oliver a chaste kiss; something so soft, so loving, even as their bodies demanded passion. "They're part of what made you who you are, they're part of you."

"Funny, that's why I love yours," Oliver wrapped his arms around Slade's strong neck, his slender fingers gripping at Slade's short black hair as their lips met.

Lance and Slade stood before the entrance to the old subway. They turned to each other and removed their hand guns, the safeties pulled buck with an in sync click. They turned their touches, holding them to the back of the weapon as they ventured further into the pitch black tunnel. They walked along the sides of the track, small rocks crunching under their boots. There was no room to
walk side by side on the track, plus the metal still making a clanging sound under foot.

"Remember the plan?" Slade asked.

"Yeah. Wrote it down, just in case."

Slade chuckled softly. "Might as well," he shone his light at the walls. No directions, but then again, there were no splits in the road yet, and they had a map, and Felicity in their ears.

"I can't believe I'm going to disarm a bomb."

"It's pretty rewarding, although you might feel more sick than anything, the first time."

"I'll settle for just stopping this."

"Good."

Lance glanced to the Aussie, his eyes sticking at how relaxed the other man seemed. No, more than that. His eyes were squinted, that along with the smile, looked like he was thinking about something that made him pretty happy.

"What's got you in such a good mood? Must be pretty good for you not to worry about the..." He lowered in thought. "Earthquake machine."

"Creative name," Slade said.

"I'm serious," Lance grumbled.

"I'm not," Slade grinned. He turned to Lance, smiling again as he told him what had happened, leaving out some of the details.

Oliver lay on Slade's chest, their bodies were spent, still fully dressed, minus their members which hung out together from their exchanged shared masturbation. The double doors had Slade's belt around the rectangular door handles in a shear lashing knot. They would have to remove that soon, else it would all be too suspicious. The open vanilla coffee syrup bottle they had found in a cupboard sat on the side table. They had used it as lube as they had been caught short, it was thick like the honey they had once used, which brought back memories of their last time.

"Wonder if it will taste as good as honey," The words 'in you' were left out, but Slade's smirk on Oliver's neck said all he needed to know.

Oliver kissed the top of Slade's head, smiling when the man under him sighed. "Might as well. They won't want it back."

Slade hummed. "True," After a pause, he remembered something he wanted to tell the blonde. "Yesterday, when you left me and Lance with Pike. The guy offered me a job."

Oliver moved back. "Really?"

"Yeah. We spoke about the years I had spent in the navy and he offered me work as a police officer," Slade smirked. "He may reconsider that now."

Oliver hugged him close. "Don't doubt yourself. Would you want to be a police officer?"

Slade shrugged. " Seems like a step down but it's a thought," he snorted. "But it had me thinking
about some things."

"Oh?"

Slade ran a hand down Oliver's spine. "I fully intend to stay here in Starling. It's my home now and work will be vital. I can't sit around and do nothing."

"That's good to hear," Oliver smiled, placing his head to Slade's chest, which made the older man fidget for a second. "It's the first time we've been together since I told you I loved you. I still can't believed that happened," he sighed.

"I could make this time more interesting." Slade suggested.

"Go on."

Slade pulled at Oliver's shoulder with his hand. Ollie moved back at the hint. "Oliver Queen, you are the love of my life."

Oliver's smile grew.

"And I wish to spend my life with you. Wake up to you every morning."

"You want me to move in?" Oliver questioned. He also felt like laughing, he was just so damn happy at the idea of him and Slade living together. Going to bed together every night, watching TV and eating their meals together, inviting Thea and Tommy over, and even Diggle, Felicity, Yao Fei and Shado, or Lance, seeing how much he and Slade got on. Wearing each others clothes, having all his clothes in one place, with Slade's. Having showers and working out together. Living in a world where they no longer had to fear about hiding what happened to them, or how long they had been together, because what Oliver had revealed was bound to come out one way or another.

Without a single skip of a heartbeat, Slade looked deep into Oliver's eyes and asked; "Will you marry me?"
"Same-sex marriage in Pennsylvania became legal on May 20, 2014."

Meaning, In Arrow terms. Gay Marriage was not legal till late in season 2, maybe when Moira was running for Mayor. As I based Starling City in Pennsylvania, I read it somewhere. But as mz_valkyrie pointed out, Starling does have a body of water. That's why I based it Next to (or on) Erie, as it has a large port and it is right next to New Jersey. Where Thea, Ollie and Slade went.

"You asked him to marry you?" Lance could not believe what he was hearing. Oliver Queen married? The whole idea baffled him but all the same... His expression softened, then furrowed when he realised he had not heard the end of the story. "Did he say yes?"

Slade nodded, smiling wildly. Oliver had looked at him, beyond shocked. He asked Slade if he was being serious, and upon getting confirmation, he said yes. The next few minutes were full of kisses, smiles and I love yous. They had both been so giddy with happiness, that it was near impossible to hide when they left the room. They really wanted to tell Thea but as much as she would love the news, it did have that end of the world feel, and it would have been nice to spread the word on a better day. Telling Lance had just kind of happened, Slade was excited after all.

Lance smiled. "That's good to hear. I'm happy for the two of you," and he meant it. He never thought he could live in a world were he could forgive Oliver Queen but he did, he had forgiven him. Ollie should be happy and Slade could give him that, plus Lance liked the Australian, he was an interesting guy to know. "So, I take it the two of you will be sorting out when and where after today."

Slade hummed. "Yeah, but I think Oliver would like it here, in Starling."

"Gay marriage is not legal in Pennsylvania," adding; "but there is talk about it."

"I know. Looks like we may have to wait for out rights to come in."

"I wish the two of you luck," Lance said honestly. Who knows what would lie ahead. The future was full of the after marks of secrets coming to light.

"I better radio in," Slade said, holding a finger to his ear piece. "Wilson here. How do you read me?"

"Loud and clear," Felicity said in their ears. "No interruptions... Over."

Slade laughed, before clicking it on again. "Well, aren't you adorable," he smirked. "Overloaded by cuteness and out."

"Don't be a dick," Thea's voice cut in.

Slade chuckled. "Speedy. How's it holding up over there?"
"Better. We know you can do this. According to Oliver, you know your bombs."

"Did you really disarm bombs in the navy and ASIS," Lance asked with raised brow.

"Caught me," Slade raised his large hands, "I learned mostly from making them. It's just a little more uncomfortable to say," he turned on the speaker. "Disarming a device when it is active is the hardest part. The only time I have ever failed, which was not due to a lack of time, was a world war two mine, but mines are a very different set up, especially when someone is standing on it."

"You're never going to let me live that down are you?" Oliver asked.

Lance shoulders shook, grin pulling at his lips.

"You've gotta admit, although it may have been frightening at the time, freakin' hilarious after."

"I'm sorry but who slid down a cliff?"

Lance turned to him with a raised brow, grin growing further.

"You must always be aware of your surroundings- Ahh," his final word was caught short, to display how Slade had slipped out of view.

Lance's shoulders shook again.

Slade smiled. "You win that round. Who else is listening in?"

"The three of us and Lieutenant Pike."

Both Lance and Slade smirked at that, imagining the irritation on the man's face.

"Alright. Thea, keep the moral up. Felicity, you've got this and I know it. And Oliver," he smiled. "Be safe. I love you."

A slow warm smile pulled at Oliver. "You too, and I love you, too," he said, before releasing the microphone and standing straight, "A.R.G.U.S. have asked me to be part of the team to watch the target's place of work, so I will need to be going," he explained to Pike. Lyla had provided him with a useful cover, although they did have to lie to her, saying that ASIS needed him to act as the Hood's contact, to relay information to the front. All in all, one lie covered another.

He could almost feel that rush, coming from fear of being caught, he had first experienced when he went undercover to get into Fyers' camp. Although his heart did not palpitate like it had back then, his lower back covered in sweat. His whole vigilante attire was hidden under his suit, making his already warm body -both from stress and from being used to cooler climates- sweltering hot. Outside, in a car where Diggle waited for him, were his boots and his bow, along with his quiver and trick arrows. Soon he would face Malcolm, and this time, he would win.

Pike let out breathy; "What?" he pushed himself up from where he had leaned against the wall, which belonged to his office, so Oliver's tech could have some privacy. He accepted that miss Smoak may have been a better choice to control the computers, with her skills, but Oliver? "No way am I having you out there. You are not part of A.R.G.U.S. or the police department."

"I can fight hand to hand, I can fire and reload small to large gun, semi-automatics included, and my main weapon is a sword," Oliver said with a stern expression, while attempting to throw Pike off him being an archer. Although it was not untrue that he did not have a sword of his own.
"What's that?" Oliver flicked the greasy bangs out of his eyes with a shake of his head, only for them to fall back down, from where he sat at the door (well, giant hole) of the plane, ivy hanging up above him.

Slade stepped over in his black vest and cargo pants, his large arms as intimidating as ever. Sat on his open hands were what looked to be a sword, it lay mostly hidden in a black wooden holster, with Japanese characters running down the side, the handle peeked out of the top, looking only just thinker than the blade, and it had black leather laced around it to protect the user's hands, like Slade' swords had.

This was just a few days before the cold started to settle in. When the breeze was chilly but Oliver was used to it. On this day, Yao Fei and Shado went to gather water from a water fall, the same one that Oliver's body had fallen from. Where he had awoke, so thankful to be alive, but scared, very scared. Over the many weeks, Oliver had learned more about the art of archery but was still nowhere near a master. The bow felt naturel to him, like it belonged in his hands, but his mind did not know what to do, but we would learn.

"When I was in the navy, I met a sword master. He was awaiting word for a mission from his origination, and he was board. He agreed to teach me and Wade," he fell silent for a few seconds. Even well over a year later, the wound of his loss still felt raw. "My cousin, brother really. He trained us to use katana," he came to sit opposite Oliver, in the door way. The space was limited, so sitting like they were, with their legs up, had them bumping knees. Not that either of them minded, in fact Oliver leaned into it.

"Although, it was a years later that I would get my custom made katana. They're not an easy weapon to come by, ASIS got them for me," and Billy. "Wade jointed a few months later, where they got him his own blades. But before that, before we could use something like that in a mission, back in the navy, after we were trained. We bought this together, as a way of homing our skill," Slade took out the blade, watching the dim light shrouded by clouds, shine on eleven inches of metal. It was smaller than what Slade and Wade went on to use, and it was only a single blade, not a double like they had grown an accustomed to.

"It's a Tantō, a Japanese sword, samurai. Wade jumped up and down like a whack job when he found it," the tiniest tug of a smile pulled at the corners of his full lips. "We used it to fight, to kill, but for the most part, it was used to train," he pushed the blade back in. "You should learn how to use it," he held the weapon out for Oliver to take.

Ollie just stared at it for a while. Slade had never spoke about his family before, to hear there was a member of his family that was just like the Aussie, even had a first name that sounded similar, it was unexpected. Wade must have believed Slade was dead. After well over a year of being on the Island.

Oliver took it. He examined it, ran his fingers over the handle and down the back of the stainless steel, even down the grove of the case. "What does it say?"

"LaFarge. It was Wade's family name, he changed it to Wilson after he broke apart from them," Slade eyed the sword with a sorrowful look, his voice coming out low and worn as he spoke. "I wanted to give him a way to remember who he is."

Oliver held the sword gently and respectfully, it clearly meant a great deal to the older man. Though his brain did flutter with wonder about Wade's name. It sounded French. "Why did they break apart?"

Slade raised his eyes. "They thought he was mentally ill," he smirked. "He was. A total nutter. They
wanted him to be *normal* and would not accept anything but perfect, a real tight-arse family. So he
lost his, mine were dead."

Ollie's eyes flew wide at that. Slade's family were dead? His gut wrenched as if it was squeezing it's
self, tying far too tight.

"We were each other's only real family since I was eleven, but we were fine with that. I never
imagined a world without him but..."

No one should have had to lose so much at such a young age. For Oliver, losing his father was
something he would never get over, a scar cut deep inside of him, but even so, it was but one. His
mother and Thea were still alive. All Slade had left was Wade. Oliver moved his leg to the side of
Slade's legs, trying to give all the comfort he could muster. "We won't be here forever."

"But Wade will still be dead."

Oliver sucked in a breath. His lungs were stuck in a clamp, the empathy shifting his expression to
one of sadness. Slade had lost his family, his brother, and his best friend had left him in prison, to die.

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Slade held Oliver's knee with his large hand, pressing down lightly with his fingers.
Trying to express things he wanted so badly to say but knew it best not to.

You helped me. You saved me. I love you.

Oliver grabbed the black bag from Pike's desk, something Yao Fei had dropped in to help confirm
his cover. He took out the sword. "LaFarge," he read, turning back around and sitting on the desk so
that he could tie the leather strings to his belt, to hold the sword to his hip. "My craft. My art," he
stepped over to Thea, kissing the top of her head.

"You are not going," Pike ordered.

"I'll get back in contact when I get there. Radio silence till we can confirm that no one else is
listening," Oliver said, completely ignoring the man for that time. "Lieutenant," he met the other's
glaze and nodded, before walking right out.

"Mr Queen-"

At that Oliver did stop, he turned, one hand went to the hand of his sword, giving him a warrior like
stand. The other hand went to the Chinese writing down his chest, and in the crowded room, he
declared; "My name is Oliver Jonas Queen Yao Wilson," His middle name was not there, nor was
Slade's last, but latter he would now have to add. "With the family I have and the live I have lead,"
His eyes flickered over to Tommy, who was watching him with wide worried eyes. Ollie removed
his mobile from his jacket, typing a message with his thumps as he continued to speak. "I can handle
what I need to do, and will not back down from my duty, even if I have no rank to my name," he
moved on, sending the message as he left.

There was a pause where Pike seemed stuck between wanting to yell at the blonde, order his men to
bring him back, and wanting to smile at his determination, as foolish as it may have been. But
instead, he set off to the break room, muttering about needing coffee.

Tommy hummed when he felt his phone buzz in his suit pocket. He took out the phone, his breath
relaxing as he saw the message on the lock screen.
Oliver jogged down the stone steps, hopping into the car sitting ready for him. The moment the door was shut, Diggle started up the car and drove.

"What's with the sword?" Diggle asked, eyeing the blonde from the rear view mirror.

"Cover story," Oliver explained, looking out the bright sky. Being July, the cloudless sky was still light blue and bright, and being that sunset was at half eight, it meant that for the first time in a long time, the group of archers would have to fight in the day. Hiding who they are would be harder but Oliver could not risk wearing a mask, he would need to paste on a lot of paint.

"Everything is set and we have exactly an hour before the devices should be activated," Diggle said, "All is going well."

Oliver looked over, watching as the digital clock in the car turned to five thirty one. "Time moves quickly," his blue eyes flickered up. "And anything could go wrong, especially with consequences being this large and so many people knowing."

"I know," Diggle nodded. "What would you like me to do?"

"You're coming with me."

Diggle blinked. He had not expected that when Oliver had Yao Fei and Shado with him.

"Being an archer, Malcolm will want to somewhere with open ground, thinking I have no chance against him. The roof if I had to guess. Yao Fei and Shado will act as a surprise attack. You and I will storm the castle."

Diggle smiled.

They pulled up to Oliver's club. In front stood Yao Fei and his daughter, they were both wearing all black that hid their skin, both had hoodies, they were set to go. However, as the car pulled up, another figure appeared from the doors. Moira Queen.

Oliver stepped out, muttering to his fellow archers for privacy, in Mandarin of course. They complied. He walked over to his mother, where the two just stood for a few seconds. "I'm sorry if Slade scared you."

Moira shook her head. "There is no need."

Oliver gulped. He was really not sure how he felt. He was just empty. "Thea and I know what Malcolm did to dad."

Moira swallowed, her eyes, just as lifeless as her son's, fell to the floor.

"I found out how the boat went down a while ago, and told Thea last week. So, we've had time to come to terms with it. And we both understand that you were worried about what he would do," Thea had been angry, sure but she did not hate her mother, although that was not to say she wanted to see her. "But..."

"I still failed," Moira said, eyes returning up. "I should have done more. At first I thought I was being smart, biding my time but then I just denied everything."

"We have a plan to stop this, and we will stop this," Oliver said, voice strong, face still. "And then"
we will move on."

"I would like that but I'm not sure if that's possible."

"You have not told me everything have you?"

Moira shook her head. "I never wanted to live a life with so many lies, and I never wanted to tell you this, but it's out of my control. Mr Diggle and Tommy found out and they think you should know," she took a breath. "Diggle has offered to tell you. I can't see the look on your face."

Oliver frowned. Diggle had been acting odd for a while now, ever since he and Oliver went to the meeting with Slade, and Tommy had avoided him, while at the same time giving him saddened looks, almost guilty. But Oliver had guessed it was his worry about his father's fate and what the man had done.

"You did the best you could, and you will always be my mother," Oliver said, "And I wanted to wait till later to tell you this, but Slade asked me to marry him," he smiled at her stunned look. "And I said yes."

"He- You..." Moira's eyes moved rapidly, her breath catching. She seemed torn between whether or not to move closer. The joy was clear on her face, but still fear for all that she had done. Little did she know, Oliver's hands were no where near clear of blood.

Oliver hugged her, burying his face in her blond hair. "I'm safe, I'm happy and I'm in love," he assured with a deaden voice. Oliver relaxed as he felt his mother hold him, her grip tight, like he was her lifeline, and he supposed, that in this moment, he was. He wrapped his arms further around her as he felt the dampness on the solid muscle between his shoulder and neck. His mother was such a proud, unbreakable woman. And today was the first time he had seen her cry.

Oliver slipped into the car, dull eyes staying on the dashboard as Diggle sat down next to him in the driver's seat. Dig had finally told him.

In the back were Yao Fei and Shado, looking at the youngest in their little family, with concern. Shado looked over to the club Moira had long since returned to. Since she had insisted that she speak with her son, she would have to get a ride back to the safe house, which Tommy had offered to do.

"Are you okay?" Shado asked.

Oliver's head moved slowly side to side.

Yao Fei's brows knitted, his expression changing to stormy, his eyes like black clouds, threatening to spark, then they glistened with worry. He took hold of Oliver's shoulder, squeezing.

The elder was family to Oliver, a father figure in every sense. The master archer was not an affectionate man, which only made the young billionaire feel safer, loved.

Oliver bent his arm back, his elbow knocking against Diggle's seat, so he could grab Yao Fei's arm, just below his wrist. Saying through touch that he was thankful. He blinked when he felt another hand on his, it was only due to the smaller, thinner size that he realised that it was Shado, being that all the archers had slender fingers. Ollie relaxed into his seat, the fake leather giving off a deep crackling purr under him. The back of his hand leaned up into her, while his finger's stayed fixed to Yao Fei's hand.

He really needed this.
Diggle started the car, putting into drive. There was nothing else he could do now, he had to tell Oliver, Tommy was one thing, but if let Ollie kill Thea's biological father, he would have never forgiven himself.

Oliver's eyes flashed green in the passing shadows of the skyscrapers, flashes becoming more rapid as they drove deeper into the city, his expression darkening which every flash, lips crinkling and trembling in anger. The only sign of his rage. His eyes were no longer that of Oliver, pools of lime green with waves of blue and speckles of gold, but of an archer, with emerald eyes.

"Whoa," Lance looked at the circular stainless steel and glass tube, large wires buried into the ground, making it look like some sort of alien. "I take it that's what we're looking for?"

"Yep," Slade approached it, admiring the device. "It's incredible. To believe that something like this really exists."

Lance snorted, but kept his eyes on the machine, it was worrying. "It's terrifying."

"For sure," Slade nodded. "I'm glad that we found out about it. Thankfully the metal it's made of, and most of all, the chemicals, are distinctive. If it's ever made again, it will will be a lot easier to track," he glanced back to the Detective. "Hell, you can make a bomb from items at a store. There's a type of explosive with three parts you can buy, including sugar."

Lance's brow shot up. "Really?"

"Yeah. Brown sugar goes a bit funny but maybe that's just me," Slade turned back. "Right, we have a while yet," he said, flashing the light of the touch on the control panel, which was covered by a metal ring. "According to the blue prints. This would be exposed when it is active," he pulled out his phone to check the time. "All in all, it should take ten minuets to disarm, keeping in mind that you are new at this. So, we're take a break, go over the plan, then I'll head over to the other device."

Lance nodded. "Sounds good," he sat down with a grunt, on the cold metal bars going along the width of the track, legs bent up as the floor was not comfortable. They had not stopped walking since they had left, so Lance was exhausted. The other device was about twenty minutes, so, at the moment, time was on their side. Still, only to regain energy was their priority before setting off once more.

Slade sat down next to the man.

"Oliver is the hood."

Slade blinked. He turned to the detective. "Would you like to elaborate on that?"

Lance's shoulder jolted up with a single laugh. "I didn't really believe it at first but there were a mixture of things that made me think it was him. And before you and Oliver outed yourselves for being on the Island. I found out that you, and a Billy Wintergreen went to the island in September of two thousand and six, though I can't be sure of the exact date," It was the best he could tell from Slade's bank records. "You got there on a Wedgetail three two five."

Slade stiffened at that, then he grinned. "You so have to tell me how you found out all of that some time."

"I will," Lance nodded. "Weird thing is, after that night out the two of us had, I realised you were a good person, not all you seemed but a good guy, and neither you, or Oliver, deserved to be punished. I did not want to tell anyone what I found out, I don't think I ever did. And I know Oliver
is the Hood, I can feel it in my gut, And I still don't care," Quentin turned to meet Slade's dark eyes. "What he did, what he found out, saved us all, and if he can become better at what he does, protecting instead of taking revenge, then he could be exactly what this city needs."

Slade smiled, seeming more like he was planning an evil deed than happy, but pleased all the same. "If he was the Hood, I think he could do that."

Lance smiled, a laugh jerking his chest. "I bet," He looked over to the wall, although completely hidden by shadows. "But while I was looking into you, still thinking about what I should do. I found out a few things. You tried to join the navy at sixteen," he leered at the Aussie.

Slade chuckled.

"You got in, did the training but got caught before you could leave for a tour. You were reprimanded but a general put a good word in for you. You got into the navy at eighteen. Followed by a Wade Wilson, at the same age, who also tried the same stunt."

Slade laughed at that. "Yeah, Wade and I were very different but similar in so many ways."

Lance did not miss the use of past tense, nor the way the ASIS agent's jaw tightened. Lance sighed. "Then I came across the report about your family."

Slade flinched. His fleeting breath causing his shoulders to slump.

"I'm sorry about your loss."

"It's fine," Slade mumbled.

Lance took a breath before continuing. "I found another report by accident. It was linked to the report on your family."

Slade thought for a second but quickly concluded what the detective meant. "I see."

"The report said you were in hospital for two cracked ribs, a lot of bruising, one of your kidneys had been bruised and you had a cut in your skull. They found a glass fragment."

Slade frowned. He could feel the tingle from the small lump on the back of his head, a wide cut long since healed.

Lance looked out again. "The police over there found that one of the bedrooms, yours, was trashed, and that your father's knuckles were cut-"

"You can guess what he did, and no one else gave a flying fuck," Slade looked into the seemingly endless tunnel. "It's who they were, in a time where what I am, was not accepted."

"What you-" It was then that Lance understood. "They found out you were gay."

"I told them," Slade said. A smile appeared on his face, although it was distorted. "It was meant to be my new year's resolution or something, and I ended up just telling them," His parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. "My mum took me to the hospital, and begged me to stop pretending, that it was all an illness, and when I got home, we would sort things out. But telling them, saved my life."

"I'm sorry, for that happened to you," Lance said, and he really meant it. No one, no matter what they did, deserved that. Lance guessed that maybe this was the catalyst for what Slade became, like Oliver after his father's death.
"Blood is thicker than water, but water is what you choose to have, and what you need. I chose own my family, and although all I have left now is Oliver, Thea, Yao Fei and Shado, it's all I need," He turned to Lance. "If you found out Laurel was not biologically yours, you would still love her the same."

Lance smiled. "You're right. I'll be honest, considering how you're coming out started, you're taking the fact that everyone knows you're dating, soon to be marrying Oliver, well."

"I'm finding it hard not to shit myself."

Lance laughed.

"Moira," Tommy called out as he entered the club. "Are you here?"

"She is."

Tommy froze, his eyes went wide, his breath trapped. His heart stopped, then began beating rapidly as he lifted his view to the balcony above the bar. There stood his father, wearing a black, all leather combat suit, the top of which was ruffled like keffiyeh. A bow was strapped to his back, by the wire that hugged his chest, arrows stuck out from over his shoulder.

"Nice little plan you have going," Malcolm smirked. He started to stroll down the metal and marble staircase. "It's time you heard something. It's time everyone heard something."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry about pushing the last chapter away AGAIN but this chapter got a little too long for my liking and I want the ending to be just right.

The next and last chapter WILL be up in a few days. Hope you have loved this story as much as I have.
Slade was heading down the tunnel when Felicity cut through his ear piece.

"Guys, Merlyn Global Group is making an announcement." There was a pause, but before anyone could ask anything, she continued. "It's security footage from the club."

"Is my mother still there?" Oliver asked, his voice clear and calm but Slade could hear his worry all the same.

"Malcolm is there and he said Moira is too, he's speaking to Tommy."

Slade sucked in a breath. "Tune us in. Is it live?"

"Nice little plan you have going."

Slade swore under his breath. Malcolm found out.

"It's time stamped ten minuets ago. They're not there anymore."

"It's time you heard something. It's time everyone heard something."

"Stick to the plan," Slade broke out into a run. If the man knew, then they were running out of time. "Lance. Is it active?"

"No. Still closed. No sign whatsoever."

Why? Was he not going through with his plan.

"Mm-Malcolm," a weak female voice broke through the static from the bad connection. As she continued to speak, it became obvious the breaks in the recording were due to the woman herself. She sounded scared, maybe even in pain. "I-I told the-them. I told them to take everything, my money," she gulped. "My ring."

Laurel watched the TV screen, a hand over her mouth as the recording of Tommy's mother's dying voice boomed over the sound system of the club, Tommy could only stare at his father, who stood
before him, in horror.

"He," her voice dragged out with a ragged breath. "He shot me. I screamed for help but- but no one would come," She sounded like she was bordering a sob. "Oh G-God, Malcolm, I don't wanna die alone." Her breaths echoed in the mostly empty building, the speakers ripping into every fibre of Tommy's being. They were slower now but still desperate. She was dying.

Oliver held the ear piece painfully close, batting away Diggle; who was asking what he could hear. "Get us to his company, now!" he ordered. There was no telling what Malcolm would do but why were the devices still inactive?

"She bled out into the pavement while people passed and did nothing," Malcolm said.

Oliver's lungs felt tight. That must have been terrible for Tommy to hear, worst to hear his mother as it happened. Her breaths still sounded out as the men spoke.

"Your mother built her clinic in the glades because she wanted to save this city. It can't be saved, because the people there don't want it to be saved."

"So, you'll kill them all-"

"Yes!" Malcolm roared, causing the youngest archer to jump.

Thea and Roy watched with the officers as Malcolm yelled at his son, the brunette very nearly jumping out of his skin, his expression was unclear from the footage. Felicity continued to work, trying her best not to listen so she could find out where the video was coming from, but like the announcement over taking a news broadcast, the technology was far too strong, throwing at her direct, teeth rattling hits, while at the same time, covering each its tracks, and blowing back her attempts to work around it. The elder Merlyn must have had something like this created a while ago, as a nice little escape program, allowing him to do what he wanted without being followed. There would be breadcrumbs, but just that, breadcrumbs, and not until he was long since gone, when the program would stop fighting.

Malcolm continued to bellow; "They deserve to die. All of them. The way she died!"

Thea shook her head side to side. This could not be happening. She unzipped and put her hand into her leather jacket pocket, running her fingers over the Hōzen Oliver had given to her on his return. She now knew he had found it on the Island, in one of the camps but the group thought it might have been there long before. She felt unsettled that she found caressing the arrowhead to be comforting but became at peace when she ran her fingertip along the Japanese characters.

Poisoned arrows do not need to kill.

The video cut out, leaving only static in its wake. Seconds after, the officers were filled by a barrage of calls from scared and vexatious citizens.

"Oh no," Felicity gasped. "No, no, no," she banged her palm against her head set.

Lance's eyes flew wide as he saw the device come to live. Glowing blue as chemicals started to fill the bullet proof glass, the metal belt moving away from the wires he needed to get at. He stood, placing the blue prints on the floor, next to the weapon, so he would be able to see them. He went to the wires, looking down at a sea of metal wrapped in plastic. First, before he did anything. He
needed to radio this in.

Mind still dizzy with panic, Lance pressed down on the ear piece. "The device is active," he waited, and after ten seconds he repeated his message, waiting a little longer this time. "Hello? Can anyone hear me? Hello?"

Nothing.

Slade stopped his sprint down the stone halls, his pants echoed as if never-ending. "Has the device been activated?" He listened but there was no answer. The static was too think. "Can you hear me?" With no sign, Slade ran a hand through his military cut black hair, he tugged on the ends, not that it would bring about any ideas.

The radio was jammed. If Malcolm did know about their plan, if he had found out exactly what they were doing, then he likely had started this. Acting like this, with no form of communication, there was no way Slade and Lance would be able to disarm the weapons at the same time. He could go back and have them do it in exactly a set amount of time but that would waste time and if something went wrong, and one of them went past the time limit, half of the glades would fall into the earth.

Slade broke into a jog. Regardless, he had to get there, maybe there would be a phone or something he could find along the way, as there was zero signal down here.

The Aussie blinked, nearly tripping over his own feet had his relaxes not been so good. He took his mobile from his pocket.

"Thank you," Oliver said into the ghost phone, before hanging up. He turned to his team. People outside the diner they had gone into to get changed, were running and screaming, believing that life as they knew it was about to end. "The private radios are down. We can't make contact with Slade or Lance."

"Can't he just get them a police radio?" Diggle asked.

Oliver shook his head. "Something is blocking the use completely. Felicity can get ours working again, but something else has stopped the connection to the underground. It's our job to stop it," He sat down in a booth, picking up his green paint. Sat next to it were his black leather gloves. They ended at his wrist and truth be told, they did not always belong to him. They used to be Slade's training gloves. Ollie first saw them when Slade was doing pull ups with a bamboo pole tied to the sides of the plane they once lived in, joking about how they could escape by building a boat. Slade had another, winter set, which, back then, he had used daily to keep his hands warm, or Oliver's, due to his over protective nature.

Oliver would have smiled, had the situation not been so dire. He wondered though, what Slade was doing right now? He had never got the chance to tell Slade about how he put his gloves to use, as a way of remembering the love of his life, as he could not risk wearing the scarf Slade had left, due to the fact he could not bare to wash it, as it still smelt of the older man. The older man had probably guessed but still...

Oliver began applying the thick wax paint, covering the whole of his face, including the two-day old stubble. He should have shaved. He felt a little panicked by the fact he had not, maybe it was due to the fact that he was in a stressful moment in time, maybe he was trying to distract himself. Either way, he had to end this, once and for all.
Two figures stood before the subway entrance. Trying to ignore the apocalyptic scene behind them, even as the sun shone brilliantly bright, the weather simply divine.

"How do we know he has not followed us? That he's not already there." The woman asked.

"We don't," The man sprinted inside, fishing his phone from his pocket to use its torch. He's breath were sharp and deep, he had been trained to keep running at a high speed after all.

"Wait damn it!" she yelled. "Crazy... Damn... Idiot!" she looked over to her destination, to the huge black glass tower. It's seemed almost see through, ghostly. "Merlyn Global Group. Got it."

Lance paced back and forth. He needed a plan and he needed it now. He looked to he device, to his watch, using his flash light to see what he was doing, back to the device. He had wasted eight minuets doing nothing. He had to start the process, get everything ready. That was a good way to use his time better, even when he had no idea what he should do.

He heard a ping, his phone buzzing in his jacket. He got a signal?

Lance ripped the phone out and found that he had an email. How was that possible? He opened it.

*Please tell me you have Skype*

*Slade Wilson*

Lance smiled like a fool.

*Yes, I do.*

He sent his message, before logging onto Skype, through the app. After about half a minuet, a chat box popped up.

*Hello*

*How many people called Slade do you think I know?*

*I'll call you, voices only.*

Lance snorted when his phone started to ring. Slade had found a way. He answered.

"How is this possible?"

"New subway runs right next door. I'm guessing it has WI-FI," Slade said, he sounded a bit fuzzy and a lot quieter than Lance would have liked. He could hear crunching in the background and Slade sounded like he was panting.

"I can't hear you too well," he picked up his voice, just in case it was the same for Slade. "Are you at the device?"

"Nearly. I may lose connection along the way. Did you start disarming it?"

"Just about to," Lance quickly cut in. He should have started before.

"It's fine. Tell me what you're doing as you go."

Lance nodded. "Right."
Oliver and Diggle made their way up the building in full military style; checking every corner with their weapons drawn. While Yao Fei and Shado made their way up the elevator, just like they had climbed the trees and cliffs back on the island. Dig and the Hood used stealth and quick actions to knock out the people they met, either before they saw them, or as they were just about to strike. Their path was an arduous one but they had to assume that when they lost contact, the devices were activated. They could not risk not believing so.

They stopped their journey to the roof, when they saw Malcolm's office, or more specifically, heard the pounding on the door.

"Let us out, damn it!" Tommy yelled. A sign that Malcolm may have not been long gone.

Oliver turned to Diggle, who nodded.

Oliver stepped back, watching from afar as John told them to step back so he could shoot the lock. He listened in as Dig entered, asking if they were both okay, breathing a sigh of relief when he heard his mother's voice.

"Oliver."

Oliver turned as Yao Fei landed beside him from the open elevator doors, landing into a crouch, followed by his daughter. The two had their hoods up, bows in hand, quivers on their backs.

"We have to go," Yao Fei said, his voice low as he had no way to discuss it.

Ollie took a breath and released it sharply. He had no time for this. He turned to the stairs and took a step forward, his pace growing as he became more determined. This was not the time to get emotional. He blocked out the anger, fear, betrayal and pain. He had to stick to the plan. His eyes turned dark green as the overhead lights flickered.

He had to end things.

The flash of an arrow, the sound of it being drawn, had Oliver throwing his arm back, moving his teacher and sister out of the firing range of the open door way.

Oliver drew his bow slowly, he then looked up to Yao Fei, who said that he would do it, in his native tongue. The blonde did not protest. The elder would only do it anyway, wanting to protect his children.

Yao Fei shot out from behind the door, firing an arrow at the dark archer. He backed down, only just missing being hit by an arrow, but it gave Oliver his chance. He jumped into the flight path and shot his bow. Malcolm dodged it, of course, but it gave Oliver and Shado their chance to fire, covering both themselves and the elder as they came out into the open.

There was nothing to hide behind, for either teams. Which left them standing three against one, weapons set on each other.

"You brought friends."

"I did," Oliver's identity was hidden by both his hood and speaker. "And this time, you won't win."

Slade heard Lance let out the breath he was holding, like he did with every move he made on the
device, not that the Aussie could blame him.

"Done," Lance hissed.

"Good," Slade said, eyeing his own problem. "Just a few more actions to go."

"How far are you?"

"Oh, I've made it," Slade groaned, rubbing a hand down his face, stopping at his chin. "We have a problem."

"What kind of problem?" Lance stayed surprisingly calm but that was not saying much as he was already on edge.

"You remember how I said it was strange that your device had inverted latches, that it looked like it was meant to have a cover of some sort?"

"Yes..."

Slade sighed. He looked at his device, completely encased in metal. "They may not have had time to finish yours but they did mine."

"Shit. Is there anything we can do?"

Slade's eyes fell shut. The only way they could do it was if Lance could get to the main circuit and sync the devices. They were built with timers inside, so that the message could be sent to and relayed back, to start building energy. Once they were active, the timers were no longer vital but they made a useful loophole. Syncing them meant that disarming one could stop the other from going off, however there was no real way to know if that was possible, without looking at the design by hand. Disarming at the same time was supposed to be the safe option. Slade would have looked into the back up plan, except his device would not let him in and there was no way he could direct Lance, too many variables to choice from and not enough light or signal to use the camera.

Unless he could get in.

Slade took one of his swords from his back. "I'll figure something out," With only ten minuets left, he was willing to try anything at this point.

Malcolm laughed. "Not when I have this," He took a small black box from his belt. The remote detonator. "And there's something you don't know about this," he pressed the button, smirking at the way the archers stiffened. "I don't have to wait. The moment they're ready, they will go off. Unless I choose to stop them, which I won't."

Oliver stared at the box Malcolm let fall to the pebbled floor. "How is that-"

"A friend. He even gave me a lovely little way of making the devices impossible to disarm. Don't worry. He doesn't want you, nor Starling, I'm not sure what he's after really, aside from a fair amount reward money."

They did not have time for this. "Is that really what you want?" Oliver asked. "To kill all those people? It won't bring her back. It won't change anything."

"Yes. It will," Malcolm threw his hood back. "It will get rid of the rotten flesh clinging on, killing the rest of us."
"But you still have people down there," Oliver yelled. "Laurel and Lance. Tommy will never forgive you for that, and although he is not down there," he swallowed around the lump in his throat. "You still have family down there."

"What are you talking about?" Merlyn gave the youngest archer a funny look. "What game are you trying to play?"

"I'm not," Oliver's hand tightened around his bow, feeling comforted by its presence. "After you're wife died, you sort comfort in Moira Queen."

Malcolm's lip twitched, as if he was holding back a snarl like a wolf.

"Moira Queen has blonde hair and green eyes. Robert Queen had blonde hair and green eyes," Ollie's hands squeezed further, his knuckled turning white and cracking softly, his breathing fast, his temper furious. "Oliver Queen-" he turned off his voice modifier, tearing his hood back. "Has blonde hair and green eyes."

Malcolm could not look away, his vision frozen in place, looking into those dark green eyes, like the shadows between a cluster of rich green leaves. They showed hate and rage, frenzied yet controlled.

"Thea Queen has dark hair and blue eyes. She looks like Tommy. She looks like you."

"Come... On... You... Fucker..." Slade grunted, teeth grinding together as he tried to force the exposure of more wiring with the metal hand rail. He needed more to work with, even if he still had no idea what he could do, as of yet.

"I found the wire. Things don't sound good on your end."

Slade sighed. He had barely enough to work with, Lance was ready to finish things, and there were only minuets left and no way of knowing if Oliver was close to stopping it. The best plan of action was to disarm the devices, regardless. But Slade could not do it!

Slade pulled down, putting all his weight and strength into it. "Working... On... It..." He pulled until his arms started to tremble, before they gave out, causing him to stumble back. "God, damn it!" He slumped down on to his behind. "We are so fucked," he groaned.

"What do you mean?" The phone on the floor spoke up. "What happened?"

"I can't get it open any more," Slade held an arm out at the device, "And we have..." he crawled over to his phone, ignoring the pain his knees sustained. "Four minuets. Jesus Christ."

"Maybe Oliver can stop this?"

"There isn't time," They had tried getting in contact with others via email but they either they were not checking their messages or they were not getting them. Slade stood. He was breathing heavily and sweat was dripping down his forehead. He picked up his abandoned touch, shining a beam of light into the device. "Malcolm could be out of the city by now. We have to end this-" It was then that Slade saw the wiring system. He could wire it... Link the timers... So when Lance clips the wire... "At any cost," he said softly. He dived his hands into the device. "I have a plan. It'll take me a few minuets," He stuck the touch into his mouth, ignoring the taste of dirt and dust in favour of grabbing a switchblade from his pocket, flipping it open so he could cut apart the plastic and metal.

Malcolm stared into Oliver's eyes. "Sh-she can't be."
"She is," Oliver said, "As much as I hate it. She is. My mother knew and a DNA test does not lie," he pointed a finger at the man. "And she is down there at the police station. The love of Tommy's life since he was seventeen is down there," It was the reason he always regretted starting anything with Laurel, knowing how Tommy felt about her. "And her father, Thea's boyfriend is down there, and my partner, Slade, who Thea loves like a bother!" his voice ended in a yell. "Even if only one of them dies. You're children, Tommy and Thea, will never forgive you. But that's if, because they all will die!"

Malcolm looked out to the city, he could almost make out the police department where his contact said Thea was.

"But you can save her. You can save all those you care for and all they care for. Just stop this," Oliver begged. "Please!"

"Okay," Slade said as he worked in the last wire. As a light flashed to say that it had connected, his expression changed. He smiled but it was weak, his face solemn. "It's set."

"So when I cut the wire, both machines will be disarmed?"

No. "Yes," One will be disarmed, while the other will be triggered to implode.

"And no lives will be lost."

Slade could practically hear the smile in Lance's voice. "No one will die," Except for me. Slade shook his head, he could feel the warmth in the corners of his eyes start to build. He did not want to die, to never see Oliver or Thea again, to leave them behind, but if this could save their lives, then he had to do it.

Malcolm stared down at the detonator for a whole minuet of silence, his mind racing. All that he had planned... No. He could not let this happen. He could not let his daughter die. He picked it up and started to type in the code, first to stop them going off automatically and then completely.

"Oliver," Slade swallowed. "And Thea, are my life, and I plan-" he held his hand over his mouth to hide the sound of his feverish breath. "To spend everyday, of the rest of my life, doing all I can to keep them safe," The he chuckled softly, hoping that Lance would not hear how poor it sounded. "All I want for them, for Oliver is to be happy," his eye lids fell shut as he thought about the first time he had seen Oliver sleep, curled up in brown Henley shirt Slade had given him because his own clothes were still damp. And after, when they had missed their plane, Slade left the shirt for him, saying it was too small for him, which was kind of true. He did this both to say that there were no hard feelings, and because it must have been difficult sleeping in a dead man's clothes.

Slade thought back to the time he first saw Thea. She had yelled out to him in the club, Slade had looked over, curious to how this dark-haired girl knew his name. Thea had brought them together again. He remembered how the two had chatted the first time Slade visited the Queen manor, later that night.

Slade's chest felt warm as he remembered all the kisses and soft touches he had shared with Oliver, and all the laughter he and Thea had. He thought about Oliver's warm eyes, scared to get to close again but doing so anyway. The way the blonde always leaned into his touches, always spreading his legs or exposing his neck for Slade. Their long sessions of kissing and sex. Holding each other as they fell asleep and in those early mornings when they had the time, even when they did not.
It was all over. There would never be another moment but remembering all those times, kept him strong, kept his mouth speaking.

"I know that sounds a bit depressing but nearly dying puts things into perspective."

"I guess so."

"On my mark," Slade said, his hand lay on the henna tattoo, his dark eyes envisioning Oliver. "Five..." He would never forget him. "Four..." He would always love him. "Three-" His vision went blurry as he felt a sudden thump over the back of his head, before everything went black.

A man wearing all black, including a balaclava, lowered an unconscious Slade Wilson to the floor gently before he stepped over to the phone. "No need to panic. Your archer friends have everything covered. Oh, and Slade rigged this device to explode, just a heads up," He hung up. Then yanked out the wire that connected the devices for good measure.

He smirked as he turned back to the man he once knew. "You were really going to kill yourself to save them," he crouched down to the Aussie, supporting himself on his toes with his legs spread, his elbows seated on his thighs so he could rest his chin on his gloved hands. "Weren't you? Not that I can blame you, this Oliver must mean a lot to you," he rolled up his disguise to reveal his badly scarred jaw and nose, covered in burns, even his lips were so dry and wounded that the line between his lips and skin was barely visible. He lower his head, placing a kiss to Slade's forehead. "I will return soon, big brother."

In the background, the device powered down.

The woman watched hidden in the shadows of the door way from the roof top of Merlyn Global Group, her long light hair the only thing that was visible. She turned and walked away, tapping her ear piece to get back in contact with Wade, when she heard Oliver speak up.

"You will never be part of Thea's life."

She turned to see him draw his bow and let the arrow fly, hearing Malcolm cry out at it hit him, coming out of the other end.

To be continued in Beyond Sense and Experience.

Chapter End Notes

Summary: Set five months after the Glades were almost level, where by the police force joined with the Hood, the Queen and Yao family, and a former marine, by the name of Slade Wilson. Moira Queen is facing trail as an accomplice for the terrorism attack. With Malcolm dead, Tommy has also been given the blame for his father's acts. Not only that but then S.T.A.R. Labs in Central City underwent an experiment that caused the particle accelerator to explode. Creating some interesting after marks.

Slade and Oliver planned to get married, they even found a new apartment, both to live in a nicer area and so that Thea could stay, who still refuses to return home. So, Slade has a new job in the Starling S.W.A.T unit, a new apartment, visits his mother in law in prison and drinks with his new cop buddies, but the one thing he never expected, was
for someone he believed deceased to show up, very much alive, and to pretty much demand he and Oliver look after a child... And that's not even the crazy part.

End Notes

The title is my way of saying that I could not think of one but then I realised that a lot of things for these characters would be beyond description, feeling wise: the Island, generally what is happening, how to adjust when Oliver goes home (for the both of them) and so on. So yeah if any one asks the title was planned.

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