Love Through a Lens

by imusuallyobsessed

Summary

Felicity Smoak and Oliver Queen — fashion model and famous photographer — both started their careers and began their friendship thanks to one edgy fashion designer, Sara Lance.

Five years later, a ghost from Felicity's past comes back to haunt her and Oliver will stop at nothing to protect his best friend and the woman he happens to be madly in love with. Telling her runs the risk of ruining their friendship, though, and Oliver refuses to take that chance.

Of course, he doesn't know Felicity's in love with him, too.

Notes

I did it, guys! This is more than just a oneshot now!

Chapter 2 is written and will be posted soon. I was only going to make this two chapters,
but then the story ran away from me!

See the end of the work for more notes.
Felicity walked into the studio, a smile already on her face. As soon as the Maneaddicts people told her who the photographer would be for the shoot, she hadn’t been able to drop the expression.

Tommy, her agent, have her shit for it.

She reassured him—for like the millionth time—that she did not have a crush on his best friend.

“Felicity!” a new voice exclaimed, making her smile even bigger.

“Oliver!” she said, barely able to get her arms open before a pair of strong arms wrapped her into a warm, solid hug that felt like she was surrounded by muscular, gorgeous muscles oh frack—

“I missed you,” he said, stepping back after a moment but keeping a hold on her arms. His bright blue eyes scanned her from head to toe, going back to her hair when he was done. He lifted a hand to her head and picked up a tendril. “You dyed it.”

Felicity bit her lip and grabbed at the pink strands. “Yeah, they wanted it this way for the shoot. I wanted to surprise you,” she said, feeling a little bashful.

When they met, she was sixteen and fresh out of high school. At a mall in Vegas, she’d been stopped by the famous, young, hip designer Sara Lance. The woman had started talking about Felicity’s “presence” and “aura” and how she just had to have her walk in her show for New York Fashion Week. The final dress had just been made for her, Sara declared.

Felicity was mostly dazzled by the fashionable young designer, but her mother had positively shrieked and said of course Felicity would walk, it was before classes at MIT started and they’d always wanted to go to the city, hadn’t they?

It wasn’t until later that Felicity realized how weird it was. Well, even weirder than a fashion designer walking up to her in a mall and insisting her walk in New York Fashion Week.

Felicity Smoak wasn’t even five and a half feet tall—well below the height of runway models. She was healthy and had a slim figure, but she wasn’t willowy and svelte like the women who graced fashion spreads. She also had no modeling experience and while she wasn’t awkward, she didn’t have an innate grace.

Sara had wanted her to take some pictures in the clothes before her runway show. That was the moment that truly changed Felicity Smoak’s life.

That was the day she met Oliver Queen.

He was Sara’s childhood friend—there was a sordid tale of cheating and sisters and best friends that she didn’t learn until later—and wanted to become a photographer. He was suffocating under his family’s legacy and had always felt more at home behind the camera than in front of it, despite his sordid history with the paparazzi.

Sara was giving Oliver a chance just like Felicity. She believed in his vision.

Felicity always believed that there had been more to the reason Sara put her and Oliver together. This was a high stakes shoot—Sara’s first line at NYFW, being looked at by huge designers—and
she was letting a nobody model her clothes and another nobody (at least in the fashion world) take pictures of them. Sara never admitted it, but Felicity thought that the designer knew what would happen.

The shoot was electric. Every single shot was perfect, and Oliver admitted later to having everything he needed within the first ten shots but using up more film because he’d wanted to spend more time with her. Felicity knew exactly what angles Oliver wanted, and he knew exactly how to capture Felicity’s personality on camera.

They’d talked throughout the entire shoot and even gone out for coffee after, quickly losing track of the hours. They’d been best friends ever since.

He’d been there for her through her newfound fame, she’d been there for him through becoming an established photographer and becoming more than his parent’s legacy.

He made her feel safe and comfortable in the new, bright, shiny world she’d unknowingly walked into when she accepted Sara’s offer. He was the only photographer she could really, truly be herself for. Part of it was because they were friends, but another part was just Oliver’s personality. He had a way about him that brought out the best in the people he worked with. That was why he was such a popular photographer.

There was also the small fact that she’d been crushing on him basically since they met.

“I love it,” he said, following her over to the hair and makeup table.

Felicity grinned, settling into her chair. “Maybe you’d have seen it sooner if you weren’t jet-setting all across the world. Didn’t your flight just land from Paris a couple hours ago? I still don’t understand why Isabel just had to meet you in Paris and couldn’t just—”

“It’s because she’s a heinous bitch and wants to get in Ollie’s pants,” a bright, cheerful voice announced.

Felicity turned in her chair with a huge smile, throwing her arms around Thea Queen, Oliver’s little sister. “Hey, Thea!” she said, squeezing the girl tight before releasing her. “I can’t believe that every female model wants to get in Oliver’s pants, though.”

“They don’t,” Thea said, moving behind Felicity and putting her hands on her shoulders. Both women ignored Oliver, who was suddenly blushing and shifting on his feet. “Every model wants to get in his pants. Not just the female ones. Well, almost every model.”

“Thea,” Oliver said sharply, making his little sister roll her eyes.

Felicity looked between the siblings with confusion, not following their exchange.

“Whatever. Anyway, I was thinking we could…”

Felicity got lost in the haze of makeup and hair, laughing with Thea over things that had happened since they last saw each other. Thea traveled much less than her brother or Felicity, but she was becoming a very in-demand image creator.

Once they got the hair done—starting with a pink, curly bob—the makeup—a neutral face with a pop of silver eyeshadow—and the outfit—black leather with a statement necklace—she was ready to go.

Felicity stepped into the white space, rolling her head. The first time she’d done this, the big, open white space, light boxes, and fans had been intimidating. Now, it just felt like home.
“Ready?” Felicity asked, grinning when she turned to look at Oliver doing his final setup behind the camera. There was a stand, but it was just a formality. Within minutes, he’d have the camera in his hand to move around and get the exact shots he wanted.

Felicity always thought he looked his most handsome right there: in the brief moments before a shoot started, when the air hummed with possibilities and his eyes looked so blue that she was afraid she might drown in them.

She really needed to get over her crush. And that was all it was, a crush. Obviously, he didn’t feel the same way. They were friends and he consistently topped People’s Hottest 30 Under 30 list. He saw her as a good friend, maybe even a sister like Thea. She needed to stop wanting to jump him so much.

He looked up at her with warmth, excitement, and something else in his eyes that Felicity couldn’t quite identify and said, “Ready when you are.”

Oliver Queen was in love with Felicity Smoak. In love with taking pictures of her—fuck, was there even a point of equivocating in his head? As long as he hadn’t come down with Felicity’s lack of filter, she’d never know.

From their first photoshoot five years before, he knew there was something about her. At the time, he chalked it up to her almost painfully bright personality and natural chemistry with the camera. She was sixteen, an early high-school graduate, and another person who’d been swept into the fashion world by Hurricane Sara. He was twenty-one and barely knew what he was doing himself. Sure, he’d been taking pictures his whole life—even won a few photography competitions—but being a professional fashion photographer was another story.

Felicity made it easy. She was joyful, funny, adorable, and had a way of letting the camera in to bask in some of her light.

Or maybe that was just how Oliver felt. Like she was drawing him in through the lens.

Whenever she turned her baby blue eyes to the camera, he was a little more lost. She had a way of looking at the camera like it was another person. She would tell it secrets, laugh with it, and connect with it on a level Oliver hadn’t seen in any other model, no matter how long they’d been working.

They’d been instant friends and he worked with her every chance he could. As they grew to prominence, it became easier. Who wouldn’t want a world-renowned photographer working on their campaign with the famous model Felicity Smoak?

By now, they were a duo. Rumors had been circulating for years that they were in a relationship, but they just laughed them off. At first, it was because she was too young. She hadn’t even been legal, and he wasn’t going to touch that situation with a ten-foot pole.

Then, their careers had taken off. It wouldn’t have been fair to start something when she was climbing so high. Sure, he was climbing too, but he didn’t want to add any more fuel to the rumors that she only became famous because of her work with him behind the camera.
Not many people said that anymore, but still. Felicity Smoak was an amazing woman, and she’d earned every single thing she’d ever gotten and more.

Oliver didn’t want to tarnish her reputation with his own. He hadn’t been a partying playboy for years now, but the tabloids seemed to be waiting for the moment he slipped up. He refused for that slip up to be Felicity.

She was so much more than that. She was *worth* so much more than that. She deserved *everything*.

Thea, Tommy, Roy, Digg, Sara, and basically all their friends thought he was an idiot for sitting around doing nothing. *If you love her*, they said, *tell her*.

But how could he tell her? He had no idea if she felt the same way, and while the Ollie of old wouldn’t have cared, Oliver Queen *definitely* cared what Felicity Smoak thought of him.

Sometimes he thought he might be too invested in her—he knew she had the power to break or build him up, even if she didn’t. Then he realized, any possible pain he might face at her hands was worth it.

Christ, Tommy would choke if he could hear Oliver’s thoughts right now.

He was a sap. He knew it. He was a sap for Felicity.

As per their tradition, he picked the music that pounded through the speakers and set the tone for the shoot. It was originally a way for them to connect—for Felicity to *feel*, not just hear, Oliver’s vision for the shoot. It became a way for him to make her smile and show her the new music he’d found in his travels, though he often stated she knew much more about that stuff than he did.

They went through four looks, but the last was his favorite. She was sitting, in a strappy black crop top and a red skirt, with her pink hair blown out in a way that looked like it did naturally. Except the pink part, of course.

She sat on the ground, looking down before cutting her soft blue eyes to the camera, mouth slightly open, and it took all of Oliver’s concentration to stay in the moment and not imagine if—with all the makeup scrubbed off so he could see her freckles and that outfit on his floor—this is what she’d look like in the morning, crowned in hazy sunlight and stretching out beside him.

*Get yourself under control, Queen,* he chastised himself. Thinking those thoughts led down a slippery slope, and Oliver refused to get into that kind of situation on a job. Especially a job with Felicity.

She was beautiful and had men fawning over her all the time. Oliver would know—they went out together a lot, especially after she turned twenty-one. He’d also coordinated with Tommy and recommended the Diggs for security when a few of her fans started getting a little…intense.

There was one guy—some lacrosse player—who was really starting to worry them.

Oliver threw all those thoughts out of his head and focused on the last few shots. As always, Felicity was magic on camera until the last shot.

Still, Oliver couldn’t help but love it even more when the shoot was over, she was back in her normal clothes, and brushing out her pink hair. She was babbling about some new tech invention she’d helped write code for, and even though it all went over Oliver’s head, he still hung on her every word.
“…and then I—Oliver, are you even listening?” she asked, turning to look at him with an attempted glare that he really couldn’t classify as anything other than a smothered smile.

“You ran into a problem with the cobalt-level encryption Ray wanted, but then you talked with Curtis and realized you could bypass the bugs with a beta code and a hardware enhancer,” he rattled off obediently, smiling a little at her surprised expression. “I always listen to you, Felicity.”

Her expression softened and Oliver really hoped she didn’t notice how he couldn’t help but caress her name as it came out of his mouth.

Just then, the door to the studio opened and the familiar sound of paws had Felicity shouting, “Ophie!”

Felicity was out of her chair and crouched in front of her dog in moments, running her hands over the whippet’s fur and saying, “Momma missed you! Did you miss me? Of course, you did…”

“Sure, just ignore me. It’s fine, I can take it,” said the man at the end of Ophelia’s leash: Felicity’s agent and Oliver’s best friend since birth: Tommy Merlyn.

“Hey, buddy,” Tommy said, dropping the leash to embrace Oliver for a moment before he stepped back. “How did it go?”

“Perfectly, as always,” Oliver said.

“I don’t know,” Felicity interjected, still petting Ophie but looking up at the two men. “I’m still a little unsure about those expressions during the one with the hair around my neck. You said they were perfect, but you say that about everything.”

“They were, Felicity. I promise,” Oliver reassured her, unable to keep a smile off his face.

Tommy rolled his eyes. The fact that Felicity hadn’t realized Oliver was in love with her constantly astounded her agent. Felicity was a genius, for Christ’s sake!

“If you say so,” she said in a tone that implied quite the opposite, but she was willing to let it go.

Thea finally came out of the back after packing everything up—her supplies were in two rolling cases, one in each hand.

“Food?” she asked, her green eyes wide and pleading as she looked at the group. “Craft services was awesome but Big Belly in NYC has the Manhattan Burger and I’ve been dreaming about it since the last time we ate there.”

“Second fiddle to a dog and a burger. I’m beginning to think you guys don’t want me around,” Tommy said, pouting for a moment before he pulled Thea in for a hug.

“You’ve discovered our evil plot to get rid of you. Darn it!” Felicity said, grabbing Ophie’s leash and getting to her feet.

Everyone laughed and got ready to leave. Oliver handed Felicity her purse from where he’d retrieved it by the makeup chair. They walked out behind Tommy and Thea, leaving security and the cleaning crew to lock up.

If his hand hovered a little too close to her back as they walked out and down the stairs, well, she didn’t notice and he wasn’t going to say anything.
Famous model Felicity Smoak and world-renowned photographer Oliver Queen have decided to take a month-long break to breathe, spend time with their friends, and live their lives at a slightly slower pace.

Not too much slower. It's still Starling City.

A week into this endeavor, news from Captain Lance shatters that peace.

Oliver was sitting in his penthouse apartment, drinking a beer and watching the Star City skyline through the floor-to-ceiling windows that made up the far wall. He’d been back in town for a week already, intent on taking at least a month off from work.

He needed to get his head together. He’d been in the fashion world for five years now, and it seemed like time to take stock of his life.

Things had never been better. He was free of his parents’ influence and working towards reconciliation with them. They were disappointed he didn’t follow the path they’d laid out for him, but as years went by and they realized photography wasn’t “just a phase” and he was getting more and more successful by the day, they decided to reach out. It was tentative and a little awkward, but Oliver was happy his parents wanted a relationship with him again. They were still a little mad about Thea’s career choices—implying that Oliver’s “rash decision” had led their second child and only daughter down a “pointless career path” toward “assured financial and personal ruin”—but brother and sister presented a united front and those conversations had mostly died down.

He travelled around the world, had amazing friends, a great relationship with his sister, and was approaching the wealth he’d known before his parents cut him off.

There was only one thing—or person—he didn’t have: Felicity Smoak.

Not that he could have her. She was person, and Thea had forced him to watch Breakfast at Tiffany’s enough times for him to know that “people don’t belong to each other.”

In his sappiest moments, though, he did believe that people belonged with each other.
God, if Tommy heard him now he’d probably burst out laughing before demanding he return his man card or something. Or admit he felt the same way about his longtime girlfriend, Laurel. Oliver wasn’t sure where his best friend drew the line of sappiness when it came to their mutual childhood friend.

It wasn’t that he didn’t have a relationship with Felicity, either. They were friends. They were best friends.

Oliver still considered Tommy his best friend and vice versa, but both men knew they had women just a few centimeters closer to their hearts.

Felicity had been unexpected: a bright ray of sunshine in what could be a dark, bitter business. Looking back, he couldn’t have asked for a better first subject. No other model had ever made him feel as completely at home behind the camera as Felicity. She was a bit guarded and built up walls—that was even more true after five years as a model—but in front of the camera, and in front of Oliver, she always let those defenses down and showed her true self.

Oliver never said so, but he liked to think he was the only photographer—the only person—to whom she would show her entire self. Oliver followed Felicity’s career as closely as she knew she followed his, and every shoot she did was gorgeous but he liked to think that her eyes sparkled a little more brightly and her smile was a little sincerer when he was behind the camera.

He was in love with her. Looking back, he might have been in love with her for a while. Maybe not since the beginning—when she was a fresh-faced teenager on her first set and he was a barely-reformed, cut off, playboy former-billionaire desperate for a break—but in the five years since they met Oliver Queen had fallen for Felicity Smoak, hard.

The problem was, he didn’t know if she felt the same way. Admitting his feelings and not having them reciprocated would not only crush him—even thinking about it made him feel like he needed to sit down—but it would ruin their friendship. Felicity was too important to him to be out of his life at all, let alone over something like his feelings.

Which might have been bigger and more intense than he ever anticipated, but nothing was worse losing Felicity over.

Just then, his phone rang.

At first, he was annoyed that someone was disturbing him from his thoughts—not brooding, like Thea always called it—but as soon as he saw the picture lighting up the screen he smiled.

It had been taken the week they met. They’d hung out every day of fashion week, unable to get enough of each other. Felicity was so easy to be around, so real in a world that was too often just a shiny veneer over darker truths, and he was the only other person she knew in the city besides Sara. They’d become fast friends.

One night, they were at a tiny, shitty diner after Sara’s show. Felicity was stuffing herself with pancakes, moaning about how all she’d eaten for the past weeks had been vegetables and cottage cheese.

“Sara said I looked fine the way I was and that the whole theme of her show was celebrating real women, but I just got so nervous! All these women I’ve seen are so tall and thin and I’m not fat or anything but I have a more athletic build and I’m so short! Of course, once I saw the other models this morning I felt way better but by then it’d already been three weeks of just fracking cottage cheese and—Oliver, are you laughing at me? Stop laughing at me!”
But she’d been laughing too, and that was the moment Oliver had captured: Felicity in leggings and his Harvard sweatshirt over her tank top with a pile of blueberry pancakes between them, pointing a fork threateningly at him but laughing her loud, happy laugh.

She was taking a month-long break, too, to hang out with friends and breathe a little. They’d hung out every single day so far, this being their first night apart. Sara, Laurel, and Thea had insisted on a girl’s night. He was happy she was taking a night to hang out with them, but he wasn’t going to lie: he missed her.

Oliver answered the phone with a light, “Hey, Felicity,” not wanting to sound too chipper or unexcited. There wasn’t any point of putting on airs, but Oliver found it hard not to overthink things like this more and more lately.

Instead of her usual responses, ranging from “Hey, Oliver!” to “do you have any mint chip in the freezer? I’m in the lobby”—which led to him always having a stock of her favorite foods when he was home—he heard a deep, gut-wrenching sob.

“Felicity? What’s wrong? Are you hurt? Where are you?” he asked, his tone instantly serious and harried. He barely took the time to put his beer down before he grabbed his keys. Then, he paused. He couldn’t go to her because he didn’t know where she was.

“Felicity?” he asked again, hearing only crying on the other end of the line. Oliver couldn’t even see her but the sounds made him feel simultaneously crushed and enraged. Whatever was going on, he would fix it. “Felicity, sweetheart, please answer me.”

The endearment slipped out without his permission, but she probably didn’t notice. He hoped she didn’t. Now wasn’t the time for his feelings.

“I—I just—I was out with everyone and—” she sobbed again, unable to get the words out. Oliver was starting to panic, but he tried to remain calm. Felicity was the priority. He had to help her.

Through the sound of her crying, he heard what he was almost sure was traffic. “Are you driving, Felicity?” he asked, keeping his voice even and firm.

Felicity made an affirmative noise and his heart leapt into his throat. She shouldn’t be driving like this.

“Okay, come to my apartment. I’ll meet you at the door downstairs. Can you do that for me, Felicity?” he asked, repeating her name to both calm himself down and ground her in the moment.

“Y—Yeah,” she sniffled, her voice thick with tears.

His phone was beeping several alerts at him, and a quick glance revealed calls from Sara, Thea, Laurel, and Captain Lance. Surely it had to do with Felicity, but he didn’t want to get off the phone with her just yet.

“Good. Do you want me to stay on the phone with you?”

“Please,” she gasped, so quickly that he barely had time to finish the sentence. He realized then that she wasn’t hurt or sad—or at least, not just those things. She was scared.

“Okay, I will. I’ll go downstairs and wait for you. I won’t hang up until you’re right in front of me. Just put your phone on speaker and concentrate on driving,” he said, not ordering or demanding but being the voice of reason in her emotional storm.

He went downstairs quickly, thanking every deity in existence that Felicity spent so much time at
this apartment that she’d boosted the entire building’s Wi-Fi and reception so the elevator ride didn’t disturb the connection.

Neither said anything, but they didn’t have to. Oliver stood in front of his building, giving the doorman, Brett, the briefest explanation he could.

After long moments that felt like hours but—after consulting his watch—was only eleven and a half minutes, Felicity’s familiar red Mini pulled up to the curb. Thankfully, the paparazzi must’ve had better things to do that night because she wasn’t followed.

Oliver could hear her sniffling over the phone, and when she got out he could see her pink hair was in disarray, her makeup was smudged down her face from tears, and her eyes were red. She looked beautiful, of course—even tear-stained—but his eyes barely even noticed her tight, black and red outfit before they went back to her face.

True to his word, he stayed on the phone until she rushed into his arms. Then, he hung up and wrapped them both around her tight. “Brett,” he said, gently taking Felicity’s keys and tossing them to the doorman. “Get someone to park that in the secure lot.”

Brett nodded, already used to the friendship between the famous model and photographer, and the two went into the lobby.

No one here would say anything to the press, thankfully. They were paid well for their discretion, and any peep to gossip rags or paparazzi was an immediate termination of employment with no severance. It was in the contracts they all signed before they started working.

Oliver kept Felicity under one arm as he used the other to press the elevator button while she kept both her arms wrapped around him and her face buried in his shoulder. All he could see of her head was her light pink hair.

The elevator ride was silent except for Felicity’s occasional sniffles. He brought her back into his arms and rubbed her back, murmuring gentle words into her hair, until the elevator opened directly into his apartment—the only one on the top floor, thankfully.

Once inside, he led her to the big couch in front of the fireplace and sat her down, his hands on her shoulders, and crouched in front of her.

“Do you need anything?” he asked, tilting her face up to meet his eyes. They were red and swollen, but she’d mostly stopped crying.

“Can I… Hot cocoa?” she asked, her voice so small it broke his heart. Felicity was always bright, bubbly, and indomitable in the face of any odds. This small, scared woman in front of him was a phantom of his friend.

“Of course,” he murmured, rushing to the kitchen and making his signature hot chocolate: melted milk in the pan, her favorite chocolate, a dash of cinnamon, and a sprinkle of ground coffee. He finished and returned to his friend as fast as he could.

She accepted the mug—her favorite—with a smile so small it almost broke his heart.

Oliver sat next to her, trying not to hover, but after she’d taken a few sips he asked, “Felicity, what happened?”

To his horror, her face crumpled and a few tears spilled out of her beautiful blue eyes. “Hey, hey, hey,” he said, moving closer and rubbing her back soothingly. His other hand reached up and wiped her tears. “It’s alright. Take your time.”
After a few moments, she smiled tenuously at him and tried again. “We were out at Verdant—Tommy’s really doing a great job there, by the way—and it was so fun. I was having a great time. I mean, I missed you and Thea said I was moping but I wasn’t but then Sara and Laurel started picking on me too but I was still fun and then—”

She cut off then, taking a deep breath. Her expression had lightened during her ramble—just a little—and he’d found himself smiling softly at her return to herself. As soon as Felicity paused, though, the haunted expression crept back in and her small body tensed against his.

“Whatever it is, Felicity, we’ll deal with it. You just have to tell me,” he said, his voice gentle and soothing like the hand that was still rubbing circles on her back. Oliver had moved his other one to grasp hers, and she brought her second hand to his too, like she was afraid she’d fly away without him.

“I got a call. I wouldn’t have answered on a GNO, but it was Captain Lance,” she said, biting her lip and visibly struggling with the story but soldiering on. “I went outside to take the call because the club was so loud. He said… He said…”

“What did he say, Felicity?” he asked when she was silent for a few moments. He didn’t want to push, but he needed to know what happened so he could help.

“Cooper broke out of prison.”

Despite the suffocating fear, it felt good to finally tell someone what Captain Lance had told her. Felicity ran from Verdant in a daze as soon as she’d hung up on the captain, getting in her car and driving away without telling anyone. Her phone had blown up with messages from him and the girls she’d left at the club, but there was only one person Felicity had wanted to talk to: Oliver.

Of course, he’d been perfect. Assertive and calm, but not demanding. The moment she ran into his arms in front of his apartment complex, she’d felt like she could breathe again. If only for a moment.

The fear had come back, making her cry again and clogging her throat. Finally, she’d told Oliver what happened and a crushing weight felt like it was lifted off her chest. She was still scared, but she was with Oliver. She knew beyond any doubt that he would help her. Protect her. That’s why she loved him.

Like a friend, she mentally corrected herself. Now was not the time to talk about her more-than-platonic feelings for her best friend. Her evil ex had just broken out of prison!

“What?” Oliver shouted, but she knew his anger wasn’t directed at her so she didn’t flinch. He gripped her hand harder, and she did the same to his. “How could this happen? He was in a supermax! When did he break out? Why were you just told now?”

Felicity took a deep breath so as not to snap at Oliver. He was scared for her. She was scared, too.

“I… I don’t really know. After Captain Lance told me ‘I’m sorry sweetheart, but that bastard broke out of prison,’ my brain kind of went blank,” she admitted quietly, staring down at their hands: both of hers and one of his.
The hand that had been rubbing circles on her back went to his phone. She briefly saw the dozens of notifications on Oliver’s home screen before he pressed some buttons and put the phone to his ear.

“Captain Lance, yeah, she’s with me. We’re both fine. I’ll inform security as soon as I get off the phone with you,” he said, waiting a few moments before asking his questions to the man who hopefully had answers.

After several silent moments interspersed with “okay” and “I don’t understand” and “explain that,” Oliver said, “Felicity’s staying with me tonight. We’ll be in touch. I hope you catch him fast, captain.”

Oliver hung up and returned his free hand to her back. Felicity tried to smile up at him, and by the soft expression in his eyes she was moderately successful. “I didn’t know I was staying the night,” she half-teased, half-scolded. They’d had this talk multiple times. He wasn’t allowed to make decisions for her.

“You called me before you even went home. If you didn’t want to stay here, you would’ve gone home and then called me over. Besides, my apartment has better security. You really need to look into moving,” he said, adopting a much more casual tone to match her attempt at levity, but the reminder of their long-standing argument had him sounding a bit sharp again.

Damn him for being right. Felicity always felt safer with Oliver, and he had the most secure apartment in the most secure building in Starling City. Felicity took her safety seriously, but never as seriously as Oliver did. Ever since she’d gotten her apartment, he’d been telling her it wasn’t safe. That might’ve been true, but Felicity always assured him her apartment was safe enough and he shelved the argument for another day.

Tonight, though, it wasn’t the secure apartment she craved: it was Oliver. She had been scared, and her first thought had been to get to Oliver. On top of that, his space was suffused with his presence. She felt more at home here than anywhere else in the world, and she’d been to more than her fair share of places.

“I know I’ve been staying with you every night since we both got into town, but I do love my apartment. And the area—”

“—has character, I know,” he said, finishing the sentence she always used against him. “Character and charm are nice, but your safety should be your first priority, Felicity.”

Throughout their time sitting on the couch, he’d moved closer and closer. Now, they were pressed right up against each other from her shoulders down to their feet. The warmth of him penetrated her skin, which had been left chilled by her tiny dress and the unrelenting fear of the past hour. Now, next to him in his space, she could finally relax.

Felicity leaned against Oliver fully, still holding his hand, and he bore her weight like she knew he would. He was always there to support her.

“Come on, let’s get you to bed,” he said. She already had pajamas and extras of all her toiletries here. They both had rooms in the other’s apartments. Felicity had never been as thankful for that as she was tonight. Being alone tonight wasn’t an option.

Oliver went to get up, but Felicity gripped his hands tighter. He sat back down, looking at her with concern.

“Actually, I—” she stopped for a moment, feeling a little embarrassed. But this was Oliver. They
could tell each other anything. She bit her lip and gazed up at him from under her eyelashes. “Can I stay with you?”

Oliver’s face made a weird expression for a moment, surprise mixed with something, he got himself under control quickly and nodded. “Of course,” he said, standing again and bringing her with him.

He led her to the guest room, staying in the room while she changed and got ready in the bathroom without her having to ask. That’s why she loved him.

*Frack, brain, stop it!* she mentally scolded herself. If she thought like that too much, she was terrified it would slip out in one of her babbles. She loved Oliver, but she needed him in her life more than she needed to confess her feelings. What if he didn’t feel the same way? Knowing had deeper feelings he didn’t return would ruin their friendship, and that wasn’t an option.

Once she was in her favorite jammies—bright pink with cartoon cameras, a gift from Oliver, and she couldn’t remember when her favorite pajamas and her favorite mug had migrated to his apartment—she took Oliver’s hand again and let him lead her into his room.

She’d been in there a million times, but it felt different tonight. The walls were gray, but they were somehow a warm shade, bathed in moonlight. His dark green sheets were hidden under his navy comforter, which was impeccably made with hospital corners. There was no clutter, but he had tons of photos framed on the wall and standing on his dresser and the two nightstands. She featured in most of them, which always made her smile.

Oliver led Felicity to the bed and sat her down on the side he didn’t sleep on. He milled about the room, going through his nighttime routine.

Felicity tried to keep her heart from racing when he changed in front of her, but it was hard. She’d changed in front of him a million times before.

Then again, it had almost always affected her this way.

*Get yourself under control, Smoak.*

“What was that?” Oliver asked, making Felicity snap her head around to look at him. He was leaving the bathroom, obviously having finished his routine, and walking toward the bed.

Oliver was a *vision.* Felicity had always thought so, and made it a point to take as many pictures as possible of the camera-shy photographer. He always told her, ‘*I didn’t become a photographer to be in the pictures, Felicity,*’ but let her take as many as she wanted. It wasn’t until several months into their friendship that Felicity realized she was the only one Oliver let take pictures of him.

He was one of the most beautiful things Felicity had ever seen, and she’d been to every wonder of the world, almost every country, and worked with models.

Oliver stopped at the foot of the bed and cocked his head. “Felicity, this is me noticing you staring,” he said with a smile. It grew even wider when Felicity felt herself blush.

“S-Sorry,” she stammered, turning to sit in the bed and flailing her arms in an attempt to explain. “I just—I mean, come on, Oliver.” She watching him as he sat next to her in bed and pulled the covers over them. “You know you’re gorgeous.”

Oliver bit his lip and smiled, glancing down with an uncharacteristically shy look in his eyes. “I only believe it when you tell me, Felicity,” he said, looking back up at her. The sincerity in his
eyes felt like a punch to her tender, unrequited feelings of deep, passionate love for her best friend.

Felicity took a deep breath and laid down, deciding to try and move past her feelings to get a peaceful night’s sleep. Normally, she loved staying in Oliver’s guest room. He’d let her decorate it when she started staying over all the time, so it fit her preferences exactly. But the thought of sleeping alone in a room, all the way across the hall from Oliver, had made her panic.

They’d shared beds before, on especially drunken nights and in tiny European hotel rooms. This wouldn’t be any different.

Felicity could keep things platonic.

Oliver switched the lamp off, and they laid in the dark for several minutes. It was quiet except for the noises of the city and their breathing as they pretended to be asleep.

Felicity felt tense. Oliver had been her best friend since she was sixteen and they’d stayed together countless times. Normally, she could put aside her feelings and just enjoy being around Oliver, but it had been a stressful evening. Tensions were high and she wasn’t as in control of her emotions as usual. Well, just one emotion. Her unfortunately deep love for her best friend.

“Why is this awkward?” Felicity finally asked while she stared at the ceiling, not bothering to whisper.

Beside her, Oliver let out a low laugh. “I don’t know. It shouldn’t be, right? Remember that time we all went camping in the Cascades?” he asked. She heard him turn onto his side, facing her, and mirrored the movement.

“I’m going to pretend you didn’t say that in deference to our mutual agreement to never speak of that weekend again, but right. We’ve done this before. Like when our reservations got messed up in Dubai.”

“Exactly. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable?” he asked, his voice even lower than before. Felicity’s eyes had adjusted to the darkness, and she could see how intently he was gazing at her. Oliver was a compassionate and kind man, and he was always an amazing friend. He always did whatever he could to make easier the lives of the people he loved.

Felicity knew what she needed, but once again she felt embarrassed. Why was she suddenly so tongue-tied around Oliver?

“Felicity,” he said, drawing out her name in the way that always gave her goosebumps. This time was no different. “You know if it’s you asking, I’ll do it.”

“Can you just—just hold me?” she asked, her voice going a little quieter as if she spoke in a low tone he wouldn’t hear. She felt her face and body blush

Of course, he did. Without any hesitation, Oliver laid on his back and pulled Felicity onto his chest, wrapping both arms around her once she was settled.

“Better?”

“Better.”

Felicity decided it was both better because a) he was holding her and she finally, finally, after what felt like days, felt safe again and b) she got to rest her hand on Oliver’s chest. Which should be immortalized in marble and put in a museum. Or her living room. Or her bedroom…
“Go to sleep, Felicity,” he murmured, already sounding halfway there himself. Like being closer to her helped relax him, too.

“’Kay,” she replied, sighing and resting even more fully against his warm skin.

Her eyes were already closed, so she didn’t see the goosebumps appear across his chest where she’d sighed.

Oliver laid beneath Felicity, trying to act normal and not alert her to the fact that he hadn’t really been able to relax since she rested on him.

If it calmed her down and made her feel safe, it was worth it.

Even if he was practicing some meditative breathing techniques Sara taught him to try and avoid any potentially awkward situations.

Felicity had fallen asleep. Her breathing was even, fanning over his chest and meticulously beating at his self-control.

Maybe he should move away. Just a little. She’d already fallen asleep, and it wasn’t like he was going to leave. She’d asked to stay with him, and he’d never deny her anything, let alone a request like that.

He would stay forever, if she asked.

Oliver shifted slightly, beginning to slip out from under Felicity and on to his side of the bed, but his best friend made a soft, unhappy noise in her sleep and cuddled closer, going so far as to curl one of her legs over his and press her face against his shoulder.

He froze again, trying to think about where his totally awesome plan went wrong. As soon as he stopped moving, Felicity let out a soft, sweet sigh that had other parts of him he was really trying to ignore to attention. She settled back down, her leg staying locked over his, and Oliver resigned himself to the sweetest torment he thought he’d ever face.

Eventually, he did fall asleep, but not before trying his hardest to memorize every single play of light on her face, hitch in her breathing, and movement of her soft body against his. After all, he’d probably never get a chance like this again.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think?? I'm so excited to hear you guys' comments! Drop me a kudo and a comment here then head over to my Tumblr (same name) and chat with me! I'd love to hear from you guys.
Sharing a bed is exactly as amazing as Oliver and Felicity always dreamed, but the next morning isn't all sunshine and roses. Captain Lance comes over, and we learn what went down between Felicity and Cooper.

Woohoo! Here it is! I'm so excited with the response I've been getting with this story. I'm amazed, actually! Over 200 kudos and 2400 views??? You guys are amazing!

Here it is. What happened between Felicity and Cooper. Originally, it wasn't going to be as intense as I made it, but then I said he was in a maximum security prison and a reader pointed that out to me! I decided to go big or go home, so here's what happened.

There's nice little end caps of fluff, too. Enjoy the ride :)

Oliver’s eyes opened slowly. As soon as a sliver of morning sunlight registered, he shut them with a quiet groan and moved to turn over. He must’ve forgotten to close his blinds last night, which was rare. Even though he was a fully-reformed party boy, he still liked to sleep in sometimes.

Just as he shifted his body, he registered the warm weight laying on top of him and stiffened.

Fuck. Had he gone home with a random girl? It had been ages—years—since that had happened. Not since he realized—

The night before came rushing back.

Felicity. Cooper.

Oliver opened his eyes again, looking down and relaxing at the new-but-now-familiar sight of short, pink hair. Felicity’s chest was rising and falling slowly, her breath moving across his skin in a way that gave him almost constant goosebumps.

This was… God, this was everything he’d ever wanted.

Oliver had dreamed of a future full of mornings just like this. Whatever color hair she wanted fanned out across his chest, tickling his skin, with her limbs tossed over his body to keep him close. If he let himself fantasize for too long, it would move past that to her waking up with a lazy, happy smile, a kiss, sometimes more, and then the patter of little feet running down the hall—

He forced himself to stop thinking. It took considerable willpower, but he was a Queen and they were nothing if not stubborn. His sister could attest to that.
The thought of Thea was exactly what Oliver needed to get himself under control.

Breakfast. He should make her food. Captain Lance had said last night that he would come over today to go over Cooper’s original case, just to make sure everything from the past case was in order. Oliver had bristled when the captain said Felicity would have to relive one of the worst times in her life, but he understood that it was necessary to get Cooper faster.

Oliver hadn’t told Felicity last night, but not out of any purposeful deception. It sincerely slipped his mind until this moment. His focus had been entirely on making sure she was alright.

Felicity would take the news better over breakfast. Coffee—the strongest he could make it—bacon from the local farmer’s market, and white chocolate chip, coconut and banana pancakes. He could already predict what she’d say about the bacon. *I’ll settle up at Yom Kippur, Oliver, now hand over the bacon and no one gets hurt.*

When he moved to actually get up this time, Felicity clung tighter to him and made a little, dissatisfied noise in the back of her throat. It wasn’t quite a “no,” but if she’d been more awake it would’ve been.

Well, he obviously wasn’t getting out of bed without Felicity’s permission.

He tried really, really hard to ignore the warm, happy feeling in his chest that bloomed at that thought.

Changing tactics, he pulled her closer and moved down, reveling in the slide of her skin and clothes against his, until his lips found her ear.

“Felicity,” he said, quiet but still loud enough to wake her up.

“Felicity,” the husky, hot voice—metaphorically and literally—murmured, like she wasn’t already awake.

She definitely was. This was absolutely her reality. She was hot, almost uncomfortably so, laying in a gauzy white cabana on a beach in Bali while a super-hot masseuse who bore an extremely close resemblance to Oliver—but definitely wasn’t because having almost-sex-dreams about your best friend was weird—rubbed her feet. Shirtless. Maybe pants-less, too. In the American and British sense.

Wait a second.

Felicity opened her eyes, fighting her first instinct to shit them when she saw the bright morning sunlight. She always closed her blinds before she went to sleep…

Something hard and warm was under her skin. Like the massage table, but better. A thousand fracking times better.

She saw her pale hand on a muscular, tan chest she might’ve known a bit too well. Still not able to process so early in the morning—or before coffee—her eyes moved up the expanse of hot skin until she finally got to a small smile and a familiar pair of sparkling blue eyes.

“’liver?” she asked, her mind still half in her beach-masseuse-dream and the rest was trying to
catch up with what happened to get them to this point.

Captain Lance. Cooper. Oh, God…

“Hey, hey, it’s okay,” Oliver said, instantly soothing when Felicity tensed. He ran his hands up and down her arm and back. “I was trying to get up to make breakfast, but you didn’t seem to like that idea.”

It was then that Felicity looked down and noticed how she was twined around him, basically trapping him against her body.

A hot blush stained her cheeks and she instantly backed up and stammered, “Wow, I’m sorry! I mean, not really, because I slept better last night than I even thought possible after everything, but you can’t have been comfortable—”

“Felicity,” he interrupted, holding her tighter and refusing to continue until she looked up and met his eyes. He was smiling. “If I minded, I wouldn’t have said you could stay. It’s fine.”

She bit her lip and nodded, trying to tame her blush. That statement stirred all kinds of feelings she didn’t want to deal with at the moment, so she glanced at the clock.

“Why am I awake before eight a.m. on vacation?” she groaned, immediately collapsing back on to the bed and creating a little bit of distance between her and Oliver. She hated the sliver of space, but it felt necessary to get her emotions back under control.

Oliver sighed and sat up, running a hand over his head. Felicity let herself stare because he wasn’t looking.

For years, she’d lived off these stolen moments, hoarded them like a dragon’s treasure.

“I want to state for the record that the only reason I didn’t tell you this last night was because it legitimately slipped my mind. My first priority was making sure you were alright,” he said, turning back around with a slightly guilty look in his beautiful eyes.

Felicity was mid-stretch, feeling right at home in his bed—wasn’t that a thought—but stilled at his words. His eyes flickered quickly down her body before coming back to rest on her face.

She didn’t have to say anything for him to continue. “Captain Lance is coming over at ten to go over the original case. The police department wants to double check all the details, just to have everything properly on the record or whatever,” he said, instantly moving closer and placing a hand on Felicity’s calf when her breathing started to pick up. “I know you don’t want to talk about it, but any little detail confirmed might help them catch Cooper faster.”

The only thing that kept Felicity from flying off the bed and pacing around the room was Oliver’s thumb moving in soothing circles on her skin.

“I—Do I… Do I have to?” she asked, hating the tremble in her voice and fear that was undoubtedly in her eyes if Oliver’s soft, compassionate expression was any indication.

“Yeah, it’s to help them catch Cooper faster,” he said, softening his tone to match hers. “If you want, I’ll be right there the whole time. He’s coming to my place anyway, since you’re already here.”

“Please,” she said instantly, not caring that she was basically pleading. Her hands gripped the pillow beside her head and every muscle felt like it was locked tight.
Like he always said, if it was her asking, he’d do it. There was nothing she expected him to say but, “Of course.”

Felicity basked in the warmth he made her feel, but then she shot up with a gasp. “Oh my gosh, Ophie!” she exclaimed, clamoring for her phone and trying to put her dress back on at the same time. “I totally forgot about her! I’m the worst dog mom ever! She’s probably starving and peed all over the apartment and it’s not even her fault and—”

“Felicity, Captain Lance called Sara after he called me. I’m sure she went to take care of Ophie,” he soothed, but made the wise choice to stand still while she rushed around the room.

It was then that Felicity finally unlocked her phone and saw all the unread messages and phone calls. She focused on the newest ones from Sara—the rest could wait—and sighed in relief when she read, Dad called. Nyssa and I are taking Ophie for the night. We’ll bring her and her things to Oliver’s tomorrow after my dad goes to see you. Love you, Liss! Sleep tight.

Felicity sighed and collapsed onto the bed with closed eyes, ignoring the pull of her dress over the pajamas she hadn’t managed to take off in her rush. “Poor Ophie. I’m such a terrible dog mom,” she said.

A warm hand gripped her arm and she cracked one eye open to see Oliver looking down at her with that soft, content smile. “You’re a great dog mom, Felicity. I’m sure Ophie will understand you were a little… scattered last night. Besides, she loves staying with Sara and Nyssa. They spoil her rotten,” he said, standing in front of her bent legs and holding out his hands.

She grasped them and let him pull her up so she could follow him into the kitchen. “Like you’re so innocent. Whenever she stays with you, you feed her like twenty treats a day,” she said, unable to keep a smile off her face as she slid onto a barstool and propped her elbows on the island.

Oliver bustled around his huge, sleek, well-loved kitchen and was pouring her a cup of coffee in moments. “Yeah, but they’re organic, grain-free, homemade dog treats. They’re practically good for her,” he argued, beginning breakfast prep.

Felicity shook her head, dressed her coffee with enough creamer and sugar to make Oliver wrinkle his nose in disgust, and took a sip. Delicious, as always. His love for her dog was a little ridiculous sometimes, but it was too adorable to see tall, mysterious, handsome photographer Oliver Queen brought low by the whims of a tiny whippet.

They talked while Oliver prepared breakfast. Whenever her coffee cup was almost empty, Oliver would be there filling it up before she could ever fully shift her weight to get up.

Felicity told him the good parts about last night, catching up with Thea and the rest of the girls. He listened, asking questions where it was appropriate, and laughing along. He didn’t have too much to contribute to the conversation since they hadn’t been apart any longer than her girl’s night since they’d taken their breaks from work. If they weren’t at Oliver’s apartment, they were at hers, or getting food, or reacquainting themselves with the parts of Starling City that had changed since they’d been gone. Felicity was also getting a lot more coding done for some of her side projects. SmoakScreen had been wildly successful since its release two and a half years before, but there were always improvements to make as tech changed.

She had missed spending so much time with Oliver. In their early careers, it had been easier because they hadn’t been as popular. Their careers had only snowballed, though.

While they talked, Felicity also scrolled through her social media accounts. They were flooded with well-wishes and hopes that Cooper would be caught soon. Everyone was thinking about her,
praying for her, or sending good vibes her way.

Well, not everyone, but after five years as a model Felicity had learned how to ignore the haters.

“Everyone’s so nice,” she said with a smile, typing out a tweet thanking everyone for their kindness. “You really should get more social media. Like Snapchat! I know you’re pretty loyal to Instagram, but snaps are visual, too.”

It was an old argument. Felicity loved social media, how it connected the world, and let her fans know a more personal side of her. Oliver was extremely private and only used his Instagram to showcase his professional work, and only then because his publicist—Tommy as well—insisted on it. He did respond to a lot of comments, though. ‘They take the time out of their day to talk to me, Felicity,’ he would say. ‘I should at least respond.’

He also still got snail mail from fans and tried to answer every single one, which melted Felicity’s heart.

“Have you seen how much more speculation there is about us dating just from the past week?” he asked, raising an eyebrow as he put a plate with three pancakes and three strips of perfectly cooked bacon in front of her.

“People have definitely noticed we’ve spent every day of our breaks together. Not that I want to stop doing that, of course, because I—you’re my best friend, and… Is your babbling contagious?” he asked with a little exasperated laugh as he sat on the stool next to her.

Felicity laughed and started digging into her pancakes. “You love it,” she insisted, not caring that her mouth was full.

Oliver was meticulously cutting his stack of pancakes into little squares on which he would evenly put the proper serving size of syrup. He paused, turned to look at her with those intense eyes and that same something she’d seen in his eyes before but couldn’t identify, and said, “I do.”

Felicity froze, her mouth full of pancake, and stared at Oliver. Logically, she knew he was responding to her comment about the babbling, but… The way he said it made it sound like so much more.

In classic Felicity fashion, she started babbling. “Well, that’s good, since we’ve been friends for five years it probably would’ve been pretty unbearable if you thought I was super annoying. I’ve mostly gotten the hang of it on a job, but it’s like as soon as I step off set I just open my mouth and it won’t stop… babbling, that it. Not that my mouth is doing anything else. Oh my gosh, we talked about this! You’re supposed to stop me!” she exclaimed, lightly smacking Oliver when he started laughing at her.

“Never,” he said, going back to his food. “It’s good to see you acting normal again. You had me worried last night.”

At the mention of that, Felicity sighed and her feeling turned darker. She was angry, scared, and confused. She thought they would’ve kept a closer eye on a computer genius who wasn’t only a white collar criminal, but also attempted—

No, Felicity refused to let her thoughts go there. Knowing she had to relive the worst experience of her life when Captain Lance got there meant she didn’t want to head down that road now.

“Hey,” Oliver said, putting a hand on her thigh and pulling gently until she turned to face him. “I’m here, okay? I’m not going anywhere. I’ll be with you the whole time. You know Captain Lance will let me stay,” he said.
It was true. When everything had happened the first time, Felicity had been too traumatized to give her statement to the police by herself. Her mother had been away in Vegas, and she needed a familiar face. Captain Lance had let Oliver sit with her while she gave her statement, barely able to stammer out more than a few words at a time and shaking like a leaf in his arms. Giving her statement in court a few weeks later had been harrowing, but she did it.

Felicity nodded and sat up a little straighter, refusing to bow under the weight of her worst nightmare coming back to life. “I can do it. Not that I don’t want you to stay—I do—but I can do it,” she said, tilting her head up a little higher. If she caved, if she broke, then Cooper won. As if she’d give that bastard the satisfaction.

Oliver smiled and tilted his head. “How did you get to be so strong?” he asked, and Felicity had to force herself not to melt at the pure pride in his voice.

“I’ve always been strong,” she said, sitting up even straighter and smiling when he let out a little laugh. After a moment, she relaxed again and put her hand over his on her thigh. “But, lately, I think I’ve been taking my lead from you.”

As soon as Oliver opened the door to reveal Captain Lance, he made a beeline for Felicity and hugged her. She sighed, relaxing into his arms, and closed her eyes. Hugging Lance always felt like hugging a father. Not hers, of course. She hadn’t seen him since she was seven. But, like hugging the idealized version of a father Felicity always imagined having. Lance wasn’t very physically affectionate, either, which made his hugs even more special.

He stepped back, holding her arms and meeting her eyes. “I’m sorry this happened, sweetheart. As soon as I find out which dumbass prison guard let him near a computer, he’s getting fired without severance,” he said, his voice rough while his eyes were concerned.

“I’m just happy you’re on the case, even though this is probably way below your pay grade since —”

“Sweetheart, you’re practically family. Nothing concerning you is below my pay grade,” he said, squeezing her arm gently before turning to Oliver.

“Queen.”

“Captain.”

The men did a weird bro handshake/nod thing that made Felicity roll her eyes. Quentin and Oliver had never really gotten along. It probably stemmed from Oliver cheating on his first daughter with his second, and now being the best friend of his unofficial third. Laurel was understandably angry and hurt for a while, but the fallout led her right into Tommy Merlyn’s arms, and the two had been married for a little over a year now. Sara had told Felicity that sleeping with Oliver was her final test to herself about possibly being bisexual, and it led her to embrace her feelings for her now-girlfriend Nyssa. Sometimes, Felicity wondered if she slept with Oliver, would she find her true love?

But thinking about sleeping with Oliver wasn’t an appropriate thought to have around her sort-of father figure, so she pushed that aside.
Suddenly, despite all her talk of strength and I can do this, she felt terrified. Her heart was in her throat and it was pounding so hard she was surprised no one else in the room was commenting on hearing a heart beating in the walls and wondering if they’d murdered anyone before going insane.

Okay, bring it back, Smoak.

“Do you want something to drink?” Felicity asked, wringing her hands together and moving through the open apartment toward the kitchen. “Oliver has, like, everything, even this fancy imported pineapple juice from Paraguay because he tried it there on location once at a Carolina Herrera shoot and now nothing else is good enough, apparently, and—”

“I’ll have some coffee, if it isn’t any trouble,” Lance said, easily side-stepping her babbling and allowing her to stall a little bit longer. He moved toward the kitchen but didn’t take a seat.

“Oh, of course not, we still have some leftover from breakfast and it’s still warm because Oliver has this super fancy coffee machine he bought after I complained about his old one.”

During her babble, Oliver had stepped into the kitchen with her, poured a cup of coffee, and placed it in front of the captain.

Without a task, Felicity felt a little bereft.

Also, it still grossed her out that he drank his coffee black. There were too many delightful creamers in the world to drink coffee black.

“I don’t want to rush you, but I’m on the clock, kid. Where do you wanna do this?” Lance asked.

Felicity appreciated his brusque but compassionate tone. He was trying to treat this like a routine, which made her feel like she had a little more control over the situation. Also, he was letting her pick where they talked, which helped calm her down even more.

It was fine. This was a routine interview. Her life wasn’t falling apart around her.

Oliver was a strong, silent presence beside her, his hand resting on her lower back while she thought.

“Um… The living room,” she finally said, moving through the apartment with the other two men in her wake.

The whole apartment was pretty modern, which wasn’t usually Felicity’s taste, but there were just enough touches of Oliver in the space to make it feel more like a place someone lived. Blown-up pictures of their friend group adorned the walls, most of them candid shots that had never seen the inside of a magazine or tabloid. Oliver liked to keep his personal space personal. There were very few pictures of him, but there was one on the mantle of him in high school, his mom and dad on either side and a little Thea in one of his arms as he held the National Archery in the Schools Program first place trophy. The smile on his face was one of the biggest, brightest, and cheesiest she’d ever seen.

Felicity sat down on the soft grey sofa and Oliver sat next to her. There were a few inches of space between them, which he’d given her in case she needed it. She left the space—for now—but reached over a took his hand. Her nerves were making her hands shake, and holding his was the only way to make them stop. Lance sat down in a chair across the glass coffee table from them and pulled out a case file.

“Last night at approximately 11:07 p.m., there was a widespread system malfunction at Iron
Heights. It took forty minutes to get everything back online and under control, and during roll call they discovered Cooper Seldon—convicted of stalking, multiple counts of grand larceny, kidnapping, assault with a deadly weapon, conspiracy to commit murder, attempted murder, and six counts of murder in the first degree—was missing,” Lance said, keeping his voice even and professional. “We contacted you at 11:53 p.m., seven minutes after his escape was realized and Iron Heights administration contacted us.”

Oliver squeezed her hands tighter, and it was only then that Felicity realized she’d started shaking. This wasn’t the first time she’d heard all this, but she thought this part of her life was over. The day he’d been convicted, she put all thoughts of Cooper Seldon firmly in her past. The media still wanted to ask her a million questions about it, but Tommy made sure all her contracts stated that she had the right to walk out of any interview without consequences if the reporter brought up anything involving Cooper without her and Tommy’s prior consent.

“We’re putting as much manpower as we can into catching him,” Lance said, his dark eyes sympathetic. “This is just an informational interview to re-confirm everything you’ve already told us, sweetheart.”

Felicity nodded and stood up straighter, clenching her jaw. Lance was treating this like a run-of-the-mill interview to make it easier on her, and she was damn sure going to get through this.

“Where do you want me to start?” Felicity asked, and she was proud her voice barely trembled despite how dry it suddenly felt.

As if he read her mind, Oliver quickly went to the kitchen and came back with a tall glass of water before resuming his place by her side.

Frack, she loved—

Not the time.

“We met just after I turned twenty,” she said, keeping iron-clad control on her body. Her fingers were strained white where they gripped Oliver’s so hard. “A little over a year ago. I went to a modeling event at Hargrove Square. Tommy convinced me to go, because I really didn’t want to.”

She never liked those modeling events, with all the fake smiles and sneers from on high since she was a head shorter than everyone else.

Felicity didn’t feel the need to mention that Tommy felt guilty for months after everything went down. *If I hadn’t made you go, Felicity, none of this would have happened.*

*It’s not your fault. No one makes me do anything. Tommy.*

Felicity forced her mind out of the past, clinging even tighter to Oliver’s hands, and took a deep breath. “We dated for a few months. It was… gosh, it sounds like such a cliché, but it was a whirlwind romance. I fell in love with him, hard and fast,” she said, sneering at her past self for being so stupid and naïve. None of her friends had really liked Cooper, but she hadn’t listened.

God, she wishes she had listened.

“I noticed he started to get…weird. Clingy and possessive and… angry,” she said, shifting in her seat and clenching her jaw to try and control the sudden surge of anger, crushing disappointment, and residual fear.

“At first, I… I just didn’t think about it. Some guys are just like that, you know? I loved him. I thought it was just a phase or something.”
Felicity bit down on her lip, staring hard at Lance’s hands as she told her story and fought the rising storm within her. The captain’s hands were clenched around the file, but she appreciated he was trying to contain his emotions for her sake.

She’d heard it all at the time. She knew the truth now. Real men didn’t act like that.

“Then, everything kind of went to shit. After we were dating for five months, he demanded I stop seeing Oliver and should fire Tommy and get a female agent. Around that time, I realized he’d reverse-engineered one of my codes to steal money from me. He’d been doing it almost since the beginning of our relationship. I did a little… online activity to get the money back from the Caymans and turned him over to the cops. It seemed like everything was over,” she said, tensing as soon as the last word left her mouth, as well as everyone else in the room.

Oliver had been moving progressively closer the tighter Felicity squeezed his hands. Now, he was pressed against her from their shoulders to their feet with his arm around her waist, practically engulfing her.

Instead of feeling stifled, she felt comfortable, warm and safe. With the horrifying echoes of what happened next reverberating through her mind, she leaned into his warmth and strength.

“Everything was over. I was happy, but still sad because… god, is it pathetic to say I still loved him?” she asked with a harsh laugh, making Oliver rub soothing circles on her hands holding his.

“Anyway, I wanted to be alone that night. About half an hour after I sent everyone away, probably a little before midnight, I heard a knock at the door. I didn’t even think, I just opened it,” Felicity said, unable to stop the tears from spilling over. “I don’t know how he got in. He just did. Then he—”

Her words got caught on a sob, and in an instant she was wrapped in Oliver’s arms with her face pressed into his shoulder while she cried. He was murmuring soothing words to her, both his strong hands rubbing her back. Lance’s “take your time, sweetheart” gave her a little more strength to stop the tears and turn back to the police captain, though she didn’t leave Oliver’s arms.

“I didn’t even think to put my facial recognition program on the security feed, since he’d been caught. I didn’t find out until after everything that he killed the doorman, security, and the front-desk clerk. He drugged me and knocked me out. I don’t really remember a lot of what happened, but he kept talking about how much better for me he was than Oliver and he deserved to be the one I loved and my genius was wasted on some stupid modeling career and—”

Felicity paused again, swallowing thickly, only just realizing that her entire body was trembling.

“Anyway, the police finally found us. He tried to strangle me and kill himself in the standoff, saying we could be together forever, but everything got settled and I went home and Cooper went to Iron Heights,” she rushed, wanting to finish her story and get everything out.

Now that the interview was technically over, she felt exhausted. Felicity slumped, her muscles and bones feeling like too weak a frame to hold her up.

Lance had been there when it all went down, barely leaving his unofficial third daughter’s side. The drugs were flushed from her system and she’d been dehydrated, had lacerations on her wrists and ankles, and signs of strangulation from when Cooper had tried to “make them one.” To her eternal gratefulness, there had been no signs of sexual assault.

“Everything matches up,” Lance said, his business-like tone infused with compassion and kindness. “That’ll be all. I assume you’re handling your own security?”
Felicity nodded, already knowing that Lyla would be on her like glue until all this was over. They hadn’t formally discussed it, but they didn’t have to.

“I’m staying here until he gets caught,” she said, looking up at Oliver when she heard him laugh a little. “What?”

He turned toward her, and his smile instantly warmed her. “You almost bit my head off last night when I said you were staying here without asking you first,” he reminded her, and she frowned a little.

“Are you saying I can’t stay?” she asked, doing her best to sound hurt despite the fact that she knew Oliver would never say she wasn’t welcome in his apartment.

“You have a key, Felicity. You can stay as often and as long as you want.”

Felicity grinned, feeling vindicated, and turned back to Lance.

The older man shook his head, running his hand over his short hair like he’d seen too much that day. “I swear, you two will be the death a me,” he said.

Felicity tilted her head, confused, but the captain just shook his head again. “I’m going back down to the station to submit this and touch base with the task force assigned to catching Cooper. And I’m gonna call your mom,” he said, fixing a look on Felicity. “I barely managed to keep her at bay last night, so you better let her come see you before she explodes.”

Felicity sighed and nodded, leaning her head against Oliver’s shoulder. She loved her mother, of course. They’d been there for each other when no one else was. Despite that, her mother was… a lot. And she was tired.

Oliver turned his head and pressed his lips against her temple. “You can sleep,” he said into her skin, running his hand up and down her arm. “Everyone else can wait until you’re up to seeing them.”

“I’m not tired,” she insisted, but the yawn she let out a moment later undermined her argument. She’d only been up for a few hours, but the emotional stress of the interview left her drained as if she’d attempted to run a marathon.

“Sure, Sleepy,” he murmured, standing up and tugging her hand to bring her with him. They walked Lance to the door, ignoring his pointed looks and rolled eyes and did Felicity hear him say just date already?

The mistress of misdirection, Felicity decided to think about something else.

After Oliver and Lance did another bro-handshake/nod, she threw her arms around her almost (hopefully soon-to-be) stepfather’s neck. Gently. Sort of. He did have a heart condition, though Felicity had no idea if firm hugs and heart failure were connected.

He hugged her back tightly, so probably not.

“Thank you, Quentin,” she said. For lending her strength. For helping her find her own. For being there when she insisted she needed to be alone but really just wanted to be surrounded by the people she loved.

“You never have to thank me, sweetheart,” he said quietly into her hair, just for her to hear. Felicity could feel Oliver hovering several feet behind them, giving them space but staying close.
“That’s what people do for family.”

Gosh, if only she’d had this kind of family from the beginning. Maybe she wouldn’t have been messed up enough to keep forgiving Cooper, even when she knew he was crossing lines. She had excused the many times he’d scared her, rationalizing it because he hadn’t actually done anything.

Telling Oliver the truth about she and Cooper’s relationship had been one of the hardest things she’d ever done. Second only to telling her mother.

Women got into situations like this all the time, she knew. There wasn’t a “type” of person this happened to.

She just never thought she’d be one of them.

Lance left and before Felicity knew it, Oliver was gently ushering her back to the bedroom.

“But I don’t want to sleep,” Felicity pouted, sticking out her bottom lip and looking up at Oliver with a pleading expression.

“You’re exhausted,” he countered, tossing her pajamas. They landed on her lap where she was sitting on the bed, and she began changing without protest. She really was tired, she just liked to give Oliver a hard time when he thought he could tell her what to do, which he knew, which was why he wasn’t pushing any harder.

After she changed into her pjs and settled back under the covers, she sighed, “I suppose I’ll consent to a brief nap. Just to rest my eyes.”

“Of course, Miss Smoak,” Oliver said as he sat by her and smiled, gripping her arm over the bedsheets. Every time he looked at her like that, it was like Felicity was being warmed from the inside out. Like sipping warm coffee on a cold winter day beside a fireplace with Ophie laying in front of her.

Felicity shivered at the way he said Miss Smoak, rolling off his tongue like honey.

Now was a very inconvenient time for her feelings to show up. Her stranglehold on them seemed to be weakening, and she needed to get them back under control before she did something she probably wouldn’t regret until it ruined their friendship forever.

“Sleep,” Oliver said, his eyes turning intense but his voice soothing and low.

“Stay?”

“Always.”

Chapter End Notes

What did you think? I’m really proud of this chapter! Drop me a comment and kudo here, then head over to my Tumblr, give me a follow, and chat with me! I love hearing from you guys over there.
Felicity woke up slowly, feeling rested and warm but with an overwhelming sense of déjà vu. She was in Oliver's bed again.

Slowly, everything came back to her. She was napping. Felicity had dropped off seconds after Oliver said he'd stay with her, but he must've only meant until she fell asleep because she couldn’t see him. He had drawn the curtains before he left, though, meaning the room was dark with a muted strip of light under the door.

Then, she heard voices coming from the rest of the apartment. Plural. They were quiet, but she could still pick out the tones.

Seemed like the whole gang was here.

Slowly, Felicity sat up and threw on some yoga pants and a tshirt. These people were her family and she didn’t have to put up any pretenses around them. After a quick glance in the mirror to make sure everything was in order—no wild hair or drool—she walked out of the room.

The living area was at the end of a short hallway lined with other doors, so she got a moment to take in the scene before anyone saw her.

Oliver was being the immaculate host, of course, standing near the kitchen. He’d obviously put snacks on the island and coffee table, of which there wasn’t much left. Oliver was basically a master chef.

Tommy and Laurel were sitting on one couch with Sara, Nyssa and Thea opposite them. Digg and Lyla were in chairs and Roy was standing beside Thea. Donna was seated in another chair. Everyone looked casual and serious, like they’d come straight here as soon as Oliver had given
them the go-ahead.

Of course, Felicity couldn’t stay hidden long. Ophie got up from where she was laying by Oliver’s feet and rushed over to Felicity with her tail wagging a mile a minute.

Everyone turned to look at her, their faces a mixture of concern, anger, and compassion, but Felicity chose to ignore them for the moment and crouched down to pet Ophie. “Hey, baby. I’m so sorry I’m a terrible dog mom,” she said, her voice high pitched as she petted Ophie and the dog went wild with the attention, shaking her tail so hard that her entire body wiggled.

“She understood,” Sara said, grinning from her place on the couch. “Besides, she loves sleeping over.”

“Did you feed her treats all night?” Felicity asked, mock-glaring at her friend.

Nyssa smiled, somehow always looking like she had a secret. “They were Oliver’s treats. They’re practically healthy,” she repeated the mantra they all so often heard.

“Baby girl,” Donna said, her voice thick with emotion she wasn’t able to hold back anymore. The woman rushed across the room, a flurry of a tight, pink dress and big, blonde hair.

Felicity stood up from her crouch, opening her arms just in time to hug her mother.

“I’m fine, mom,” she said, hugging Donna just as tightly as the other woman hugged her.

Everyone made a face or noise of protest at her words. Oliver looked legitimately pained. Her mother spoke, though, “Don’t say that, baby!” Donna stepped back, but held on to her daughter’s arms. The woman looked scandalized that Felicity would dare say anything like that. “We all know how big a deal this is, honey. We’re all here for you. Quentin would be here too, but he’s on the case you know and he’s just working so hard to catch that bastard—”

“I know, Mom,” she said with a little smile. When Donna Smoak got on a roll, she didn’t stop. “He stopped by earlier.”

Felicity moved further into the room with Donna at her side and Ophie at her heels.

“How’d you sleep?” Oliver asked, taking a few steps closer to her but giving her room to embrace Thea. The younger woman had moved off the couch and into her arms as if she couldn’t bear to wait any longer.

“Really good,” Felicity said, hugging the teenager tight.

Thea was grinning when she stepped back. “Yeah, he barely even let us talk above a whisper. And he made Laurel take her heels off!” the teenager said, gesturing to the assistant district attorney sitting on her couch. The woman in question smiled and wiggled her red-painted toes.

“Oliver,” Felicity said, her tone chastising as she moved to embrace Roy. Thea’s boyfriend wasn’t usually open with his affection for other, but he and Felicity shared a special friendship. And if these weren’t extenuating circumstances, she didn’t know what was.

“You needed the rest,” he insisted, unapologetic.

Felicity hugged everyone else, her heart warm at the thought that her friends dropped what they were doing to come be there for her.

Digg and Lyla were warm and comforting, with Lyla declaring that she was personally handling
Felicity’s security with her private firm, Harbinger Protective Services. She said it like it was a given, and Felicity knew it was. Digg’s hug was like wrapping up in a favorite blanket.

Tommy was teasing, but there was rare seriousness in his eyes. Laurel was assertive and strong, telling Felicity she was going to use all her legal prowess and pull in the district attorney’s office to nail Cooper’s ass to the wall. Sara and Nyssa hugged her hard, the latter promising bodily harm if she got her hands on Cooper.

Everyone settled again, Thea moving to sit next to Tommy so Felicity could sit next to Sara and Nyssa. Ophie sat on the floor between her legs, shoving her head under Felicity’s hands so the woman wouldn’t stop petting her. Oliver moved closer, hovering but not sitting down. He could barely keep his eyes off Felicity for more than a few seconds, like he was afraid something would happen if he wasn’t watching.

“I’m so happy you guys are here,” she said, biting her lip and looking at everyone in turn, “but you really didn’t—”

“Don’t start,” Tommy said, rolling his eyes and shaking his head. “Lyla, Digg and Sara are their own bosses, Oliver’s on hiatus from life, the DA remembers the case and practically shoved Laurel out the door, Nyssa closed her shop for a few hours, Roy had some vacation time, and Thea doesn’t have any clients today. There’s no place else we’d be right now, Felicity.” His blue eyes were serious despite the teasing nature of his words.

Felicity smiled, biting her lip and glancing down at Ophie’s head while she petted it. “I’m really happy you’re all here,” she said quietly, looking up at everyone gathered there—for her. “ Seriously. I wouldn’t have been able to do this without you guys the first time.”

“And you won’t have to this time,” Sara declared, scooting closer to Felicity and taking the other woman’s hand.

Everyone was quiet for a few moments, taking in the events of the past twelve-ish hours and processing. Then, they talked a bit about what had happened, trying to walk the line between curious and concerned but compassionate, not wanting to push Felicity further than she was comfortable. Oliver bustled around the kitchen like an insecure butterfly, not entirely sure what to do with himself.

Eventually, Thea shook her head at some thought she’d had while looking at her brother and turned her bright smile on to Felicity. “I know it’s kind of late, but we’re going to lunch. I just decided,” the teenager announced. “You need to get out of this apartment. Not that it isn’t great, bro.”

Felicity stiffened as soon as Thea mentioned leaving the apartment. It occurred to her she hadn’t left since she found out the news. To be honest, she didn’t want to.

As if he was reading her mind, Oliver took a step away from his pride and joy (the kitchen) and started, “Thea, that’s probably not—”

“Felicity,” Thea said, leaning forward, ignoring her brother, “have you stepped foot outside since you found out Cooper escaped? Leaving the club doesn’t count!”

Felicity had been about to say just that, but she shut her mouth when Thea beat her to it. It was silent for a few moments, and Thea smiled again, a little smug but also understanding.

“I told you! Come on, let’s all go get lunch,” she said, tilting her head.

Everyone had an opinion, but after a moment they all deferred to Felicity.
She bit her lip, glancing down at Ophie. It wasn’t like she thought Cooper was going to track her down in the middle of the day, surrounded by people, but… she was scared. She’d been safe knowing Cooper was locked up in prison where he couldn’t hurt anyone ever again. Now, he was out and no one where he was or what he wanted. Except that he was probably looking for her.

She was scared. Inside, with Oliver, she was safe. Out there, anything could happen.

“Felicity, you don’t have to if you don’t want,” Oliver said, moving away from the kitchen to stand by her side. He was simultaneously trying not to crowd her but getting close enough to lend her strength if she needed it.

Felicity met his eyes and they had a silent conversation. She was scared, but she wanted to try. For Thea. For herself. Oliver would be there for her no matter what she chose.

She turned to Thea, ignoring the knowing glint in her green eyes and everyone else’s exasperated expressions. “Let’s go.”

It wasn’t as simple as all that, of course. Now that everyone had seen her with their own eyes, there was work to be done. Lyla ran back to the office to coordinate everything to protect Felicity, leaving her in the capable hands of Digg. Digg had a military background and currently owned a wildly successful gym chain that implemented military training tactics, so he was the CEO and could not show up if he wanted. Laurel had to get back to the DA’s office to work on the Cooper case. Sara had a last minute design crisis, and after Felicity said it was okay a million times, she left. Nyssa had to go open her store for the afternoon, so she left after a fierce hug. Ophie was happily staying in the spare bed she had at Oliver’s. Donna had to leave as well, making a few vague statements about asking a few old friends about Cooper’s whereabouts and bringing Quentin lunch.

Donna often served mobsters as a cocktail waitress, and they liked her, so that wasn’t exactly comforting. Felicity decided not to ask.

So, Digg Tommy, Thea, Roy, Oliver and Felicity all went to Big Belly Burger in Digg’s gigantic, bulletproof SUV. They’d loved the restaurant before they became high-profile, and the staff treated them exactly the same as they always had.

“So, how are you dealing with all this really?” Thea asked from her place across from Felicity and between Roy and Tommy. Oliver sat beside her, by the window, with Digg on her other side. Normally Felicity liked the window seat, but it felt good to be surrounded by her friends. Especially her big, muscular, retired-military best friend on one side and the one he trained multiple times a week on the other. Oliver and Digg’s eyes scanned the room every so often, having strategically put their backs to a wall.

Oliver had become increasingly more aware and cautious in his fame, hence the fact that he lived in the safest apartment in the city. Since becoming friends with the Diggles, he’d been training with John. He wasn’t vigilante level or anything, but he could definitely hold his own. He could hold his own again Digg in a fight. Felicity had seen it—and tried not to drool over it. Not Digg, he was attractive but married. Oliver. Oliver was definitely drool-worthy post-sparring.

Felicity knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that they’d use all their skills to protect her.
“Honestly, I’m scared. Cooper’s out, we have no idea where he is, what he wants, or what assets he’s already managed to accumulate to make that happen,” she said, folding her hands together to keep her fingers from fidgeting. With a smile grin, she looked back up at Thea and said, “At least I’ve fully developed SmoakScreen so he can’t see my nudes or anything.”

The men at the table coughed on their drinks, but Thea just smiled.

“Something you’re hiding from your agent, Smoak?” Tommy asked once he got his coughing back under control and had taken a long sip of Coke.

With a perfectly serious expression, she turned to her agent and said, “Nothing I don’t hide from you every day, Merlyn.”

That made everyone laugh, and though Oliver seemed flustered, he was smiling.

This was exactly what she wanted. She’d told the truth—she was scared—but she didn’t want that to be the focus of lunch. This outing was about facing her fears with her friends, and she didn’t want to dwell on how the only reason she hadn’t had nightmares yet was her proximity to Oliver.

They ordered with Carly, their usual waitress who’d known Tommy, Oliver and Thea since they were troublesome teens looking for a thrill in the Glades. Well, Thea was still a bit of a troublesome teen, but she was straightening herself out. She’d caused far less trouble since dropping out of high school, getting her GED, and becoming a celebrity makeup artist. The real world had a way of straightening people out. Carly always shared looks with Digg—her sort-of ex-brother-in-law she’d kind of dated for a while but they didn’t really talk about it—like they were these long-suffering adults having to wrangle some youths.

“Oh, Mom wants us to have another ‘family dinner,’” Thea announced to the table in general, but really Oliver and Tommy, with dramatic finger quotes and an eye roll. Truly a Queen, Thea was.

“I don’t see how I get roped into these. I’m not even Moira’s son!” Tommy moaned.

“You’re my half-brother, and that’s enough for her, I guess,” Thea sassed back with an angelic smile, her tone clearly indicating that Tommy needed to quit whining because he was going whether he wanted to or not.

“I don’t blame him. One Queen Family Dinner was enough for me,” Felicity said, sitting back and watching the hodge-podge family banter.

Roy nodded. “Oh, yeah. I’ve been to meet Moira and Walter, and that was plenty. I haven’t had the privilege of being invited since,” he said with a smirk, winking at Felicity when Thea smacked his arm.

Roy was from the Glades. With a father he hadn’t ever met, a drug-addicted mother he barely saw, a GED, and a job as a mechanic with dreams of attending the police academy, he wasn’t exactly the poster child for the kind of man Moira probably imagined marrying her only daughter. Nor Malcolm either, Felicity was sure, but the man was rotting in a supermax across the country for domestic terrorism, corporate espionage, attempted murder, and a laundry list of other charges. Neither Tommy nor Thea had ever gone to see him, or even expressed an interest in doing so.

“Like me!” Felicity exclaimed with a grin. This was one subject she was truly comfortable and secure in: Moira’s distaste for her. She was fine with it. If she needed everyone’s approval to get on, she would’ve failed at being a model a long time ago. “No dad, cocktail waitress mom, and a model to boot. Who cares about my masters from MIT, multiple patents, and genius-level intellect?” Felicity grinned at Roy. They both found great amusement in Moira Queen’s obvious
dislike for them.

“That one time Moira invited Lyla and I over to find out ‘where her son has been wasting all his time’ was really enlightening,” Digg added, smiling at Felicity and Roy.

“Nice to know I’m in good company,” Roy said, holding up his fists. Felicity bumped one, Digg the other.

Oliver sighed and shook his head, but he was smiling. Before the dinner from hell, where Moira had accused Felicity of being a gold-digger or a corporate spy or whatever, he’d assured her that his mother would love her. Oliver couldn’t imagine a world where anyone wouldn’t fall in love with Felicity Smoak. Platonically, of course. Because they were just friends.

He’d obviously severely underestimated his mother.

Walter loved Felicity. QC and Starling National Bank, his and his wife’s companies, used her programs to increase server security and do a host of other helpful computer things. She’d even gone in there to do hands-on system work. Walter offered her a job almost every time they spoke, but now it was more teasing than serious. He knew Felicity loved freelancing and her true passion was still modeling—telling stories.

“I still can’t believe she accused you of being a corporate spy,” Oliver said, rolling his eyes. “I don’t even work for QC. I haven’t stepped foot in the building in years.”

“You should resign yourself to it, Oliver,” Tommy said with an easy, mischievous grin as he leaned forward and rested his elbows on the table. “Your mother is never going to like anyone you bring home. The only one she ever approved of is currently married to me and that isn’t going to change.”

“I don’t know,” Digg mused, tilting his head. “Laurel’s a smart girl. I have to think she’ll wise up eventually.”

Everyone laughed at that, even Tommy, though it was much more sarcastic than everyone else’s.

“What does she want to talk about?” Oliver asked, turning his attention back to Thea.

That was how Moira Queen worked. She didn’t just talk to her children—even her pseudo-son Tommy she’d taken in after his own mother’s death—about something. She invited everyone over to eat and trapped them at a too-big, antique dinner table with Raisa’s delicious food and good manners that had been drilled into them since birth. Then she talked about whatever her latest disappointment was.

“Of course, you know she says it’s just because she misses us, but I’m pretty sure she’s going to try to convince me to go back to school. Again. And probably try to convince you, Oliver, to take a role in QC. Again. Tommy, she might even offer you a job there,” Thea said, dramatically rolling her eyes.

There was a lot of dramatic eye-rolling at the table in general, especially when Oliver, Tommy and Thea were together.

“A Merlyn at QC? She really must be desperate,” Tommy joked. He was kidding, but there was truth behind his teasing. His father wasn’t in prison for no reason, after all. Tommy and Thea managed to avoid getting their reputations ruined and assets seized, but Malcolm’s trial had been a tense time in Starling City.

Thea shrugged and continued, “Walter will be there, though, so that’s a good buffer. He wants
you to come, Felicity, probably to offer you a job, but he knows better than to push Mom. He always says, ‘Oh, Miss Smoak is such wonderful company,’ and then he fawns over that vintage tea set you got him for Christmas a few years ago.”

Felicity blushed and bit her lip. Walter Steele was her mentor, basically. They weren’t in the same industry by any means, but she kept him up on the latest tech news and he gave her encouragement, life advice, and a shrewd, intelligent mind to use as a sounding board for her freelancing. His advice encouraged her to finally put SmoakScreen and her other programs on the market after everything with Cooper. Now, she didn’t even need her wild success in modeling to maintain her lifestyle. She just loved doing it.

After a few more minutes of chatting, their food came. Felicity, as usual, got the spiciest menu item—the Boo Belly Burger with ghost peppers, among other spicy ingredients. Everyone made the usual jokes about their eyes burning before they tucked in to eat.

It was the perfect afternoon. The sun was shining, the food was delicious, and the company was great. Felicity was entirely relaxed in her booth, sandwiched between Oliver and Digg, and she was so happy Thea made her leave the apartment.

Tommy, Oliver and Digg were throwing all the trash away when Felicity’s phone rang. She was laughing at a story Roy was telling about one of his clients who’d hit a bird and driven in hysterically crying with a cracked windshield, so she didn’t even check the screen before she answered, “Felicity Smoak speaking.”

“That blue shirt really brings out your eyes.”

Felicity froze, every muscle in her body locking and refusing to comply to commands. Not that she was commanding them. Her brain was just as frozen as her body. Thick, choking, horrifyingly familiar fear crawled up her throat and depressed her tongue, silencing her.

Roy and Thea were asking her something, but she couldn’t hear anyone except the voice on the other end of the phone.

Cooper.

And he could see her.

Felicity’s head whipped to the windows, now an uninhibited sightline since Oliver had left the booth, and she wildly searched the area.

Cooper laughed, the low, mocking sound making her stomach curl. “Oh, baby, you can’t see me. But I can see you. You know your ass looks amazing in yoga pants. Did you wear them to tease me?” he asked with a disgusting lilt in his voice, and Felicity could see his familiar sneer in her mind’s eye.

People were crowding the street, traffic was moderate but there were still a lot of cars around, and buildings with bright, reflective windows surrounded Big Belly. Cooper could be anywhere. She couldn’t see him.

Thea and Roy were reaching for her now, but she didn’t react until she felt a warm, familiar hand turning her around. Bright, concerned blue eyes stared into her own and the fear lifted just enough for her to say, “Cooper.”

Oliver’s face turned from shocked to thunderous in an instant. Felicity hadn’t seen him look like this since Cooper’s trial over two years ago.
“Oh, your playboy is back. You must have told him I’m here. I can tell by the look on his face. Is he—”

Suddenly, Oliver took the phone from her and put it to his own ear. His hands were exceedingly gentle on hers, but his jaw was clenched and his eyes screamed.

“You stay the fuck away from her, you piece of shit,” he growled, like an angry lion had replaced her best friend. Despite the rage in his tone, Felicity knew none of that anger was a threat to her and it never would be. Instead, she felt the slightest bit safer with Oliver beside her.

He was silent for a few moments, probably listening to Cooper, before continuing. “You better pray the police find you before I do, because if they don’t, you’re not going back to prison. You’ll go somewhere much more permanent,” he snarled, his entire body tense as his eyes scanned the area outside Big Belly. He had a hand on her shoulder, pulling her close, and his body was hovering protectively over hers. Thea, Tommy, Digg and Roy had closed rank as well, surrounding Felicity. Their protectiveness and love washed over her like sunshine, making her feel a tiny bit safer in the booth.

After a few more moments, Oliver hung up, helped Felicity out of the booth, and ushered her to the car. They’d all ridden together, so it only took moments for Felicity to find herself snugly sat in the middle of the backseat of Digg’s SUV, with Oliver and Tommy on either side of her, Roy riding shotgun, and Thea behind her. Between her two friends, she already felt more in control of her limbs. She couldn’t really move unless someone directed her—a symptom of shock, her brain logically told her. You suck, brain, she told it. Why couldn’t it do anything more helpful than tell her the symptoms of shock? At least it wasn’t just white noise anymore. Better than nothing.

“Tommy, call Lance. Tell him to meet us at Oliver’s place,” Digg said, his voice as hard as his eyes.

The other billionaire nodded and pulled out his phone, swiftly dialing the familiar number. The police captain picked up on the first ring and Felicity distantly heard Tommy explain what happened. Less white noise. Getting better. Oliver’s warm, callused hand on hers was probably helping with that.

Tommy held her other hand, a silent, solid presence on her right. Thea had reached over the seat to rest her hand on Felicity’s shoulder.

Through the choking fear and paralyzing terror, Felicity managed to thank the universe once again for putting these amazing people in her life.

Oliver was a man of singular focus. When he had a task, that was the only thing he could think about until it was done. On a shoot, it was an awesome skill to have. He had a subject and a job to do, and he would work until the goal was accomplished. It also helped him become such a good cook.

Felicity excelled as a model because her brain could run in a thousand different directions. She could focus on her face, eyes, body, the clothes, her hair, the lighting, the set… It was amazing to watch his blonde hurricane work a photoshoot.

In this case, though, it meant that Oliver could only focus on one thing: protect Felicity. She was
in imminent danger and Lyla wasn’t there. That made her life his responsibility, and he took it very seriously.

Digg drove quickly through the streets, using every pattern he’d taught Oliver to escape a possible tail. A photographer wasn’t normally so recognizable, but he had been a famous billionaire before his new career and people were still interested in what he did.

Felicity was quiet, which worried him. She was hardly ever quiet.

Her eyes had lost that dead look, though. Thankfully. When he’d gone to throw away their trash, he, Diggle and Tommy had started chatting with Carly while she cleaned the counter. She cut off in the middle of a story about AJ’s school play when she glanced back at their table, then back to them, and asked if anything was wrong with Felicity.

He’d seen her, tense and obviously terrified, staring out the window. She was totally oblivious to Roy and Thea trying to get her attention. When he’d gone over there, turned her around, and seen the glassy, terrified look in her eyes, his stomach dropped.

Fear turned to rage with one word: Cooper. The small, breathy voice she’d used when she said her psycho ex’s name had made Oliver’s stomach clench. Felicity was never supposed to have to deal with this again. She was never supposed to be this afraid again.

Cooper was taunting Felicity, scaring her, and the thought of that man so close to her made him burn. For all his sparring with Digg and enhanced training regimen to protect himself from aggressive paparazzi and stalker super-fans, and to appease his own cautious personality, he didn’t enjoy violence. But in that moment, Oliver wanted to track Cooper down and rip the other man’s head from his scrawny shoulders with his bare hands.

They made it back to the apartment safely, and Oliver was so relieved residents had private, gated parking underneath the building. He’d cleared everything for Digg’s SUV with security when everyone arrived to visit. Felicity’s Mini was still where Brett parked it the night before—had it only been last night all this happened? It felt like he’d been living with this rage for years.

Maybe he had.

When Felicity finally dumped Cooper, she told Oliver the truth about their relationship. Oliver had never really liked the other man, but he couldn’t tell if it was his instincts or the fact that the love of his life was dating another man.

He never wanted to be that guy, but he regretted not saying something about it to this day.

Realizing that Cooper had been scaring Felicity—being possessive, mean, angry—had crushed him. He couldn’t imagine anyone treating Felicity as anything less than the wonderfully. Cooper was lucky to be in Felicity’s life, to be the one she wanted to be with. How could he not realize what an amazing woman he was dating?

Then, he’d been angry. At Cooper, at himself for not noticing, at Tommy for putting her in a situation to meet the asshole, and even a little at Felicity. How could she not tell him? They were best friends. Did she not trust him?

Then, she’d explained. She was in denial about what was happening with Cooper, and a little embarrassed. Even though she knew logically there was nothing to be embarrassed about, she hadn’t been thinking clearly—obviously—when it came to him. Once he calmed down and made it a point to really listen to what Felicity was saying about her relationship with Cooper, he understood. There weren’t any bruises on her skin—Cooper wouldn’t have lived long enough to
get arrested if that had been the case—but he’d infiltrated her mind. Her beautiful, astounding, genius mind. Cooper had poisoned her belief in herself, and it had taken a long time to get that back.

Money could be returned and the injuries from the kidnapping had faded, but Oliver knew Felicity would remember the emotional scars forever. She had healed since everything happened. She was one of the strongest people Oliver knew. Despite that, no one was perfect, and she still had moments where the darkness would creep back in. Normally, she brought the light, but during that time he tried to shine as brightly as he could to lead her out of the dark.

Somewhere between the car and the penthouse, Felicity transformed. He saw it and felt it in her body because his hand was laying solidly on the small of her back, somehow unable to sacrifice the feeling of her safe, here, with him.

He felt her tense beneath him, her muscles coming back to life after the shock and fear had taken them offline. Her chin tilted up until she stared defiantly at the mirrored elevator doors, not meeting anyone’s eyes. She clenched her jaw and glared at her reflection and Oliver could practically hear her giving herself a mental pep-talk.

As soon as they entered the penthouse, Ophie dancing around their feet and wagging her tail, she announced, “I need my computer. I texted Lyla to get it, she should be here within the hour. If Cooper’s stalking me, I don’t want to risk him breaking in to my apartment and stealing it. He’s taken enough.”

Oliver nodded. Felicity stood in his living room, arms crossed, feet planted, staring out at the Starling City skyline like she could will Cooper’s location to appear. She was standing as tense and tall as she could. In what had become a familiar feeling over the course of their friendship, Oliver was in awe of the woman in front of him. Every single thing she did—such as putting herself back together in the span of an elevator ride after her worst nightmare came true—made him love her all the more.

In what was becoming a familiar mantra, he had to remind himself that now was not the time for his feelings. Felicity was going through an emotional crisis. He was going to be there for her—as her friend.

“Do you need anything?” he asked, stepping closer and putting his hand on her shoulder.

She stiffened even further, but he knew what was going through her head. He knew her. If she stayed strong, didn’t accept any comfort, and forged ahead to catch Cooper and not handle her feelings, then she could pretend this wasn’t happening. Oliver knew Felicity wanted nothing more than to pretend none of this was happening.

“I’m fine,” she answered. Her tone, so flat and hard, scared him a little.

“I’m going to go talk to Laurel about what happened,” Tommy spoke up from behind them, and it was only then that Oliver remembered that they had witnesses to this moment.

Felicity’s only reaction was to turn around with a plastic smile, so Oliver knew she hadn’t forgotten for a second. “Of course, Tommy,” she said, walking over to him and hugging him tight. “I’m really happy you came to lunch with us. Don’t let Laurel work herself into the ground, okay? There’s only so much she can do until her dad catches Cooper.”

Tommy nodded, but when he pulled back he was smiling. It was a shadow of his usual big, bright grin, but Oliver knew it was all the other man could muster at the moment. His own face felt frozen between shock, anger, and devastation for Felicity.
“You know Laurel. Always trying to save the world. I’m surprised she’s not out there in all black trying to catch Cooper herself through sheer force of will,” he said, and in that moment Oliver was beyond grateful for his jokester childhood friend, because he transformed Felicity’s smile from fake to genuine.

“I’m surprised we’re not all out there, honestly. I can mastermind the whole thing from up here and you guys can hit the streets. We’ll be like the Justice League for asshole ex-boyfriends,” Felicity teased back, making everyone in the room laugh—even Oliver.

“Do you see this face, Smoak?” he asked, gesturing to the face in question. “I can’t risk it. This is the moneymaker.”

“Only if it’s a pity kickstarter for plastic surgery, bro,” Thea said, moving forward to embrace Thea and ignoring Tommy’s dramatically wounded expression.

“Right to the heart. Make a note: Thea Queen never pulls her punches.”

“Don’t I know it,” Roy said, also moving forward to embrace Felicity once Thea stepped back. “We’re gonna go get settled. I’ll go rattle a few cages in the Glades and see what comes up.”

Felicity looked concerned and stepped back to hold Roy at arm’s length. “Nothing dangerous, Roy William Harper Jr., or I will wreak so much technological havoc on your life that you’ll be too busy untangling it to do anything stupid,” she warned, narrowing her eyes when he laughed.

Oliver knew his friend. She wasn’t kidding.

Roy knew that too, but he also knew something else. “It’s not stupid if it’s for you, Felicity,” he said.

Felicity smiled at his words like she was caught between laughing and crying. Roy wasn’t much for feelings, but when he chose to express them he got it just right. Thea was usually on the receiving end of his declarations, but Oliver had gotten a very emotional speech after the younger man had been dating Thea for a while about how Oliver was like a mentor to him. They both stoically swore to pretend their eyes hadn’t been misty. And Oliver still reserved the right to punch Roy if he ever hurt Thea. Right after Thea punched him herself, of course.

Felicity tilted her head and sighed. “Just don’t do anything too stupid, I guess. You’re applying for the police academy in a few months,” she said, biting back the emotion that rose in her at the overwhelming love around her.

Roy laughed and took a few steps back to Thea. “I know you’ve got my back, Felicity. You’ll take care of things, won’t you?” he asked, gently leading Thea to the door with a shit-eating grin on his face.

“Are you suggesting I hack something? Moi? I don’t even know the meaning of the word!” she called back, and Oliver relaxed even more seeing the genuine smile on her face.

Everyone laughed. Tommy laughed so hard he had to lean back and exclaimed, “Careful, Smoak! Your nose is growing.”

Felicity stuck her nose out at Tommy and everyone laughed again, even Oliver. It had been hard to let himself feel normal since he found out everything was going on, but watching Felicity laugh and twirl around to face Tommy, her beautiful hair glowing gold in the afternoon sun, couldn’t do anything but bring a smile to his face.

Roy and Thea said their goodbyes, passing around hugs and declarations that they would come
over tomorrow, and then there were four.

“I don’t want to keep you, Tommy. You can go talk to Laurel and stuff. I know Oliver and I aren’t your only clients. You too, Digg. I mean, you’re a CEO and all and Spartan Fitness isn’t going to run itself,” Felicity said, moving toward the kitchen with Ophie at her heels to pour herself a glass of water.

“Felicity,” Tommy said, following her with Oliver and Digg just a step behind. He could tell, even without seeing his friends face, that Tommy was fighting down some slight annoyance at their blonde friend. Felicity had a hard time remembering that everyone wanted to be there for her. “You were my friend before you were my client.”

“Barely,” she said, but she was smiling as she took a sip of her water and leaned against the counter.

Tommy smiled and leaned against the island. “Yeah, barely, but it still matters to me. I’m your friend before I’m anything else. I’ll still do my job—handle the press and all that bullshit you don’t need to worry about right now—but I’m also here for you. A hundred percent. Whatever you need,” he said, his smile fading into a serious expression as he spoke until his grave blue eyes were fixed on Felicity’s.

“Me too, Felicity,” Digg said, his arms crossed and his voice low and serious. “You’re family. Hell, you and Oliver are Andrea’s godparents. Spartan can run itself for a while. That’s why I hired good employees. And don’t think for a second I wouldn’t be here even if that wasn’t the case.”

Oliver stayed a few steps back, watching the three friends interact. They needed this moment, he knew. Sometimes he wasn’t the most emotionally sensitive, but it would take an idiot not to see the deep bonds between the people in front of him. True, he could occasionally be considered an idiot, but not today. Oliver knew that a small part of Felicity worried that she would be abandoned by the people in her life, which was why she constantly gave them opportunities to leave framed in a way that she pretended wouldn’t hurt.

Felicity walked around the island and hugged Tommy, pressing her face into his shoulder as he hugged back, resting his cheek on the crown of her head. “We’re all here for you, Felicity,” he murmured, rubbing her back a few times before Felicity stepped back and nodded before taking a few steps to hug Digg. The man rubbed her back, his big hands spanning almost the whole thing, and Oliver saw his mouth move but couldn’t hear what he said. It was for Felicity’s ears only.

Things were way less tense after that, but Oliver watched Felicity retreat into herself a little more. She was slower to smile, but she still laughed even if it was less loud and bright. Last time, after she was rescued, it was weeks before Felicity laughed.

Whatever it took, he was going to make sure she didn’t have to go through anything like that ever again.

After almost an hour of watching whatever was on TV, playing with Ophie, and talking about whatever crossed their minds—Tommy had only mentioned all the requests for interviews with Felicity about Cooper he’d been fielding once before a pointed glare from Oliver made him drop the subject—before Lyla showed up with Felicity’s laptop.

That’s when Oliver got nervous.

Felicity had done amazing work that day, leaving the apartment despite her fear. Since then, though, she hadn’t dealt with the overwhelming rush of terror that he’d seen in her eyes during the
call from Cooper. She was repressing her feelings, pouring herself into her work, and he knew she’d crash eventually.

Tommy left after Felicity had been locked in the guest room hacking for over an hour. He had a wife to get home to and press vultures to yell at. The paparazzi was swarming Oliver’s penthouse, obviously knowing he and Felicity were there, but the police and building security were doing a good job of keeping them scattered. Oliver was thankful once again that he lived in the most secure building in the city. What extra he paid for security was keeping Felicity safe, and that was all he could ask for.

Digg left too, at Lyla’s insistence. Harbinger was her company and she was contracted to protect Felicity. They had a toddler to pick up from daycare and Digg was the only one for the job. He left after another hug and a firm, “call me if you need anything. Anything. I mean it.”

When Felicity didn’t come out for dinner, he got worried. She always came to the kitchen when Oliver cooked, led by her nose, usually with loud exclamations of how delicious everything smelled and that he would singlehandedly keep her from booking jobs because she was going to gain twenty pounds.

Oliver always assured her she was beautiful and if no one booked her, they were all idiots.

Not wanting to eat without her—it was never the same and he’d gotten used to it since they both went on vacation—he took a plate with everything on it into her guest room.

The lights were off, which wasn’t a good sign, and Felicity was hunkered over her laptop with her back to the door, so intent on her work that she didn’t even hear him come in. Or react to the smell of his secret-recipe barbecue chicken and macaroni and cheese. Ophie did, raising her head from where she was lying down in her dog bed beside Felicity’s desk, but the woman herself didn’t react.

That’s how he knew it was serious.

“Felicity?”

No answer. Her fingers kept flying over the keys, intent on her work.

“Felicity?” he asked again, moved closer and gently lying a hand on her shoulder.

Felicity started badly, jerking so hard that it took all of Oliver’s considerable agility to keep from spilling anything.

She whirled around, a hand at her throat, and let out a harsh laugh when she saw Oliver standing there stunned, having just regained his balance, with a surprised look on his face.

“Gosh, Oliver, don’t do that!” she exclaimed with a small smile on her face, taking a moment to pause her work and look at him. She looked exhausted despite her nap earlier in the day, and he could tell by her body language and facial expression that she was intending to hack until she found Cooper.

“Sorry,” he said, but not entirely meaning it. He was sorry to have scared her, but not to have seen her smile. It was getting rarer and rarer the longer Cooper went without being caught, and he didn’t like it.

“You need to eat,” he said, taking a step back when she reached for the plate. “And maybe take a break? I know your shoulders are hurting. You’re hunching.”
Felicity immediately straightened her back and her jaw set. “I have work to do, Oliver. I trust the SCPD, but I want to be doing everything I can to find Cooper,” she said, and he noticed the small shiver that went down her spine when she mentioned the psycho.

“Felicity,” he said, daring to step closer, “I understand that, but you have to take care of yourself. You’re no use to anyone if you run yourself into the ground.”

“I’m fine.”

“No you’re not.”

“Don’t tell me what I am.”

“You haven’t been fine since all this started, and definitely not since the call this afternoon.”

“Can’t you take a hint?” she exploded, turning around and standing up to her full height in one movement that had Oliver setting the plate on her bed and taking a step back. She was backlit by the computer—still the only light source in the room—but he could see the fierce expression on her face that he knew hid the fear. “I don’t want to talk about it! I just want to find him!”

“Felicity, I—”

“I know you mean well and you’re letting me stay here and being generally amazing but can’t you leave me alone for five minutes?”

Oliver felt like he’d been punched. As someone who’d actually been socked in the gut several times, he was unfortunately familiar with the feeling. His tongue felt too thick for his mouth and his body felt tight, like it wanted nothing more than to be out of Felicity’s line of sight. It was a feeling he’d never had around her before. He wanted to point out that he’d left her alone for several hours, but it wouldn’t be a productive avenue of discussion. Felicity didn’t want to talk when she was like this.

Ophie whined from her place on the floor, her ears back and her eyes darting between the fighting humans like she couldn’t understand why her parents were fighting.

“I’m gonna… give you some space. I’ll be here when you want to talk,” he said, choosing to concede the battle to hopefully win the war. Felicity couldn’t go on like this indefinitely, and he intended to be there when she needed him.

Oliver left the food and Felicity, walking down the hall to check in on Lyla in his other guest room, trying to get a handle on the sick feeling in his stomach that came from Felicity yelling at him. He hated when they fought. He never felt right until they reconciled. It was like missing a vital part of himself that his body needed to function.

Lyla had the door open and was bustling around setting up her things, including a family photo of her, Digg, and Andrea when she was still a baby and not the shockingly solemn but generally happy toddler she’d grown into.

“She just needs space,” the woman assured him, sending a knowing glance his way. “She hasn’t dealt with any of this, and once she does she’s going to need you.”

Oliver heard the slight warning in Lyla’s tone—and you better be there when she does—but he had no intention of needing it.

“I know. She always says I can be a mother hen, especially when I’m worried. This isn’t the first time she’s snapped at my hovering,” he said, smiling as he leaned against the doorjamb. “Will you
brief me on what’s being done for Felicity’s safety? I’m sure she’ll ask you herself tomorrow, if she looks up from her laptop by then. I just… I just need to know.”

Lyla nodded and motioned for Oliver to enter. He sat at the desk chair and Lyla sat across from him on the edge of the bed.

“When she’s here, she’s as safe as she can be. Your building has top-of-the-line security, alarms go straight to the police, and you have practically un-hackable security cameras with facial recognition into which we’ve already put Cooper’s details. I know Felicity also made a few improvements when you moved in,” she said. Oliver couldn’t help but smile when she referred to the two days Felicity had spent holed up in his apartment, sitting on the floor or kitchen counter because he didn’t have furniture yet, yanking wires out of his walls, typing furiously on her laptop, and Downing Mountain Dew Code Red when he cut off her coffee. Her rants about the caffeine echoed in his head even now: It’s gamer juice, Oliver. I need it since you won’t let me have more than two pots of coffee. Not that I’m gaming here, I’m upgrading you’re already pretty impressive security system. But it’s the principle of the thing. Don’t you want to be safe? Stop laughing! This is serious business, mister!

She’d done the same thing to all her friends’ apartments. Even Curtis and Paul’s. You’re in R&D Curtis, not cyber security. I got my masters in this. Trust me. And buy me some Code Red.

Felicity even made special baby monitors for Lyla and Digg once Andrea was born. Unhackable video and audio monitoring with infrared options among other special features the ex-military couple loved. She was thinking about partnering with a developer to mass-produce, but she was worried people would think she was pregnant.

Oliver tried not to talk about that idea (BabyScreen. SmoakBaby? BabySmoakScreen? Are those terrible names, Oliver? Is it narcissistic to want my last name in it?) too much with her. The thought of Felicity pregnant… made him feel some type of way.

“I’m going to stay for the first few days since Cooper just called and the threat level is high. Then, my people and I will reassess the situation. If you both feel comfortable and we think the threat level has decreased, we’ll only monitor you two when you leave the apartment. Police are going to be stationed outside around the clock, along with some of my people,” she continued, and Oliver nodded before something Lyla said caught his attention and his brow furrowed.

“Both? You’re monitoring both of us?” he asked, immediately confused and a little resistant. He didn’t need protection. Felicity needed everyone available to be focused on her, not him.

“Yes, and before you argue,” she said, continuing as soon as Oliver opened his mouth to do just that, “my agency did a full risk assessment and we deemed you to be a target, too. You were Cooper’s main point of contention before aside from Felicity’s job choices, and I don’t think two years in jail is going to have endeared him to either of you.”

“You did a full risk assessment while we got lunch? I don’t want—”

“We work fast, Queen. Now listen. We’re not protecting Felicity any less by protecting you, too. Besides, as soon as she takes time to think about what’s happening, she’ll come to the same conclusion. I can’t have either of you unfocused because you’re worried about the other,” she said in her firm, no-nonsense voice that Oliver was sure made soldiers in Afghanistan fall in line instantly.

Oliver didn’t fall in instantly, but after taking the time to think he recognized the wisdom of Lyla’s actions. He didn’t want Felicity worried about his safety. She only needed to worry about herself.
He sighed, running his hand over his face before looking back at Lyla, and he smiled just a little at her expectant expression.

“You’re right,” he admitted, and she sat back with a satisfied smile.

“Of course I am. Now, I’m going to do a sweep and then go to bed.”

“You know I check everything before I go to sleep, right?” he asked, watching Lyla as she got up and checked her sidearm.

She rolled her eyes and nodded. “Johnny told me. I told him not to train you like we’re in a combat zone, but does he ever listen? I swear, I think he’s turned you into the most paranoid civilian I’ve ever met aside from those doomsday preppers,” she said, but her tone was affectionate.

At least, Oliver was going to pretend it was.

He shrugged. “Better paranoid than dead.”

Lyla shook her head. “Now I know Johnny’s rubbing off on you too much. That’s his saying,” she said. “I’m going to do my job and if you want to double check behind me, you’re more than welcome. It’s your house. Just don’t you or Felicity leave without telling me so I can arrange security.”

Oliver nodded and Lyla went to sweep his expansive penthouse.

After a few moments, Oliver got up and left the guest room. A quick peek into Felicity’s room found her still hunched over her laptop, fingers flying furiously, food still untouched. Oliver sighed and backed away, wanting to give her space until she indicated she wanted his company.

After being together almost nonstop since their vacation started, it was hard to keep his distance. He could do it, though. For her.

Oliver went to his room and opened his journal, but aside from changing into pajamas—aka: sweatpants—and sitting on his bed, he didn’t get ready to go to sleep. There was no way he’d be able to rest knowing Felicity was working herself into exhaustion in the next room, too absorbed in her crisis to even eat. So, he started writing, ordering his thoughts like always, and settled in for a long night of waiting.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think? Ensemble scenes are hard for me! This chapter required a lot of editing. I literally forgot about certain characters in some of the scenes and had to go back and add them. If there's any inconsistencies, that's why and I'm very sorry!

Drop me a comment and kudo if you're so inclined, then head over to my Tumblr and give me a follow! I love to chat with you guys over there.
Felicity knew she needed to apologize to Oliver. It's all very mature and adult. There's talk about abs, too.

Chapter Notes

I KNOW, I KNOW. This took forever! I'm sorry, but I was on vacation with my family. We were in Paris and London for 10 days, so I've had very little time for writing! I did manage to finish and edit this chapter, though, and I'm sitting in the airport about to post this! Hopefully I'll land back home to lots of comments and kudos :) I love hearing from you guys!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Felicity knew she needed to apologize to Oliver.

She wasn’t immune to her flaws. She babbled (though Oliver always said it was charming and not the fatal flaw she thought it was), she had been a workaholic until her month-long vacation, and she had a hard time trusting people. A psychiatrist would say it was because the intrinsic trust a child has with their parent had been broken when her father left, but Felicity made it a point to never talk to psychiatrists. What did they know, anyway? Besides, just because they signed doctor-patient confidentiality forms didn’t mean she trusted them.

Well… maybe they would’ve had a point.

Either way, Felicity knew that when she was angry, she lashed out. It was one of her flaws. That, and things that were an indulged annoyance on an ordinary day bothered her exponentially more when she was already in a bad mood.

The example being: Oliver’s hovering.

She hated calling it hovering, but there wasn’t really another word for it. It was one of his flaws. Few people were in his inner circle – he didn’t trust easily either – but once someone made it to that level of trust and care, they never left. Oliver was loyal to a fault and would do absolutely anything for his family.
And if someone made it to that level of trust, they were family. Blood or not.

Felicity always felt like she and Oliver had something different, though. Digg, Tommy, Sara and the rest of their group all counted as “family” in Oliver Queen’s mind, just as much as Thea did. Felicity knew Oliver would do anything for her, but she always felt like there was something a bit different between them than was between, say, Oliver and Sara.

And it wasn’t just because they’d had sex and she and Oliver hadn’t. Though, that was a fair assumption to make.

Felicity was family, but she felt like she was on a different level than everyone else. Not more important, just… different. When discussing this phenomenon with Thea after several years of friendship with the Queens, Felicity had mentioned how all of Oliver’s friends were like family. Thea had said, “Yeah, except you. I mean, you’re not too much like family, that is. That would be gross.”

At first, Felicity had been offended and hurt. Seeing the hurt feelings she’d caused, Thea rushed in to correct herself. Oliver loved Felicity, of course, but it was just… different with her. Did that make sense? You know what, just forget I said anything.

No amount of prodding, begging or threatening could get Thea to reveal the meaning of that statement, though. Felicity was cared for like family, but not? What did that mean?

She’d never admit that, for a brief moment, she’d been relieved. Having sexual fantasies about a man who thought of you as a sister would’ve been awk-ward. As soon as the thought came, though, she banished it. The more she dwelled on her feelings for Oliver, the harder they were to contain.

Like they were now, even under her guilt for snapping at him. Oliver worried. It was basically an unchangeable facet of his personality. She’d come to him when everything exploded, asking for his help through her actions, and he’d opened his home to her with no caveats just like he always did. He’d been there when she needed him in exactly the way she needed him. Until now.

At the time, it felt ridiculous. Stop? Take a break? Even for Oliver’s famous mac and cheese, it felt impossible. Cooper was out there. Hunting her. Trying to get to her when she was at her most vulnerable. There was no way he didn’t know she was staying at Oliver’s; it was all over gossip news and their friendship was well-documented.
Felicity was a better hacker than him. Better with computers than him. If she sat down and did the
damn thing, she’d find him. She knew it. And Oliver wanted her to rest?

Now, of course, she felt like a major asshole.

After another hour and a half of working, the conversation replayed in her mind without the filter
of anger. He’d tried to take care of her, like she’d asked-without-asking him to do when she
showed up at his penthouse a sobbing mess, and she’d yelled at him for it.

Ophie’s judgmental eyes were staring her down from her dog bed beside the desk.

“Yeah, yeah, I know. I was a total bitch,” she mumbled, finally noticing the plate of food Oliver
had left on her bed. Ophie, saint she was, hadn’t touched it.

“Good girl,” she murmured, petting her dog before grabbing the plate and wolfing down the food.
She was way hungrier than she originally thought.

The problem with her hack was, she had no idea what she was looking for. Cooper hadn’t shown
up on any CCTV cameras, hadn’t used any cards or identification, and was generally staying off
the radar. For a boy just as techy as her, it was freaky how good he was at going old school.

“Great, I’m complimenting his stalking now,” she grumbled, talking with food in her mouth
because no one was around and she felt like it.

She’d run a back trace on the phone he’d used to call her at Big Belly, which was a burner, of
course, that could’ve been bought at any drugstore or gas station. She was still running a program
through every one of those stores cameras, in Starling City and the surrounding suburbs. It was a
huge job, and she was being broad. Any inexplicable computer or camera failure or shutdown,
anyone who never showed their face to the cameras, and his facial recognition, of course, were
subject to her scrutiny. She also flagged stores that didn’t have cameras.

The stores numbered in the several hundred, and the job would take hours. Felicity really didn’t
need to be awake while it ran. She’d set up an alert on her phone to go off if her programs found
anything.
There was no avoiding it now. No more busywork to take up her time.

She needed to apologize to Oliver.

Ophie sighed at Felicity’s feet, staring up at the woman in what could be encouragement but was probably desire for the little bit of chicken left on her plate.

“Don’t tell Oliver I fed you people food,” she whispered, taking the small piece of chicken and feeding it to her dog. Ophie took it from Felicity’s fingers gently, like she’d been trained, before snapping it into her mouth and swallowing in seconds.

“Good girl,” she praised, rubbing Ophie’s head for a few more moments before she set her plate on her desk with a sigh. Oliver would be annoyed when he found it, but she deemed apologizing more important than putting her dishes in the sink.

Felicity stood up and stretched. She was sore from sitting at her desk for several hours straight without moving, and it also gave her a few more moments to stall. She wasn’t sure what she was going to say to Oliver yet.

Ophie stayed in her bed, thumping her tail against the ground when Felicity looked down at her. After a few moments, it became clear the dog was staying put.

“Traitor,” Felicity murmured, but she crouched down and rubbed her dog a little more. Ophie was very particular about her sleep, and Felicity had already kept the dog up way past her self-imposed bedtime. Unlike Felicity, who went on coding binges that could last days or would stay up on long-haul flights across the world, Ophie liked to be in bed promptly at ten p.m. And then she liked to wake her grouchy owner at six a.m. to go outside.

Felicity stood. She couldn’t hide behind Ophie or coding anymore. She took a deep breath and left her room.

Oliver’s bedroom was right across the hall from hers, and her heart lurched when she saw his door was cracked and light was coming from inside. It was after midnight and he was still awake. Oliver, much like Ophie, was much stricter about his sleep habits than Felicity. He never stayed up this late unless Felicity made him. Which meant he’d stayed up for her.

Standing in the hall, Felicity took a few moments to bolster her courage and then knocked gently
on the bedroom door. Just in case he was actually asleep. She didn’t want to wake him.

“Come in,” his soft voice said, and Felicity mentally cursed. Why couldn’t he be asleep? Did she have to do this now? She wanted to apologize – she was in the wrong – but at the same time she didn’t want to face Oliver being mad at her. She hated when they were mad at each other.

Felicity gently opened the door and poked her head in with a quiet, “Hey.” Oliver was laid out across his bed, shirtless, wearing a pair of low-slung sweatpants. She fought not to let her eyes linger on all the gorgeous skin on display.

His face was guarded but gentle, not the beaming smile Felicity usually got from him when she walked into the room. A familiar green journal was in his lap, closed on a pen like he’d just stopped writing when she knocked.

Felicity didn’t know why, but something about the fact that Oliver kept a journal always made her melt. He’d kept one since before she knew him.

“Sorry, did I interrupt?” she asked, gesturing to the journal from where she hovered in the doorway.

He shook his head and smiled a little. “Never,” he assured her, putting the journal on his bedside table and sitting up more fully. She knew he knew she wanted to say something, but he was sitting there patiently, letting her rally herself and collect her thoughts.

“I’m sorry,” she blurted, trying to quiet her racing thoughts of how she should apologize, what she should say, or if she should stay where she was or go to him. She knew it didn’t matter if her apology had finesse or fancy window dressings. Oliver wouldn’t care. He wasn’t even mad, which she should’ve known. He’d only really been mad at her once – after everything with Cooper came to light. She just needed to apologize.

“Come here,” Oliver said, patting the bed.

Like all her strings had been cut, Felicity could finally move. She climbed onto the bed beside Oliver and sat as close to him as she could while still facing him. She wanted to look into his eyes and let him see her sincerity.
Felicity saw nothing but warmth and acceptance in Oliver’s eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she repeated, rushing on when Oliver opened his mouth as if to interrupt, “Don’t say I don’t have anything to apologize for. This situation is awful, but that’s no excuse to snap at you. I know you were only trying to help. I shouldn’t have yelled at you. I just… I know you know this is how I am when I’m stressed. And I know you worry.”

Oliver smiled, just a little, and took one of her hands in his. “I’m sorry, too,” he said, and just like Felicity had, he rushed on before she could interrupt. “I knew you were stressed and scared, especially after that phone call, and I shouldn’t have pushed.”

Telling him he had nothing to apologize for was pointless. They’d be in an endless apology cycle forever. So, they stared at each other for a few moments, reading the sincerity in each other’s eyes, before Felicity grinned and dove against his side, pressing against him with a sigh.

“We’re so mature, apologizing like adults,” she said, staring at her hands on her yoga pants. She’s still in her outfit from the ill-fated Big Belly trip.

“I know. Is this what growing up feels like?” Oliver teases back.

“Next thing you know we’ll be discussing stock portfolios over heart-healthy and sensible dinners.”

“I know for a fact you have a stock portfolio, Felicity, and you might have to actually be dead to eat a healthy meal without complaining.”

She lightly smacked his leg and stuck her tongue out at him. “Next thing you know, you’ll turn in your fancy cars for a hybrid and turn your workout room into a study or smoking room or something,” she teased, poking him in the stomach. And not just to feel his gorgeous abs. Though that was part of it.

Oliver grimaced. They both donated considerable checks every year to the promotion of green energy and saving the planet, but Oliver had a very, very soft spot for nice, foreign, diesel cars. Felicity proudly drove a bright red, electric-powered Mini. BMW said it was the least they could do after she’d fixed their little coding problem with their new electric cars. That, and a small percentage of every electric car purchase.
“You’d miss my abs,” Oliver insisted, looking down at where her hand rested on his stomach. She stared at her hand like it wasn’t attached to her arm.

“It must’ve just stayed there without my permission after I smacked you,” Felicity defended with a scowl at the offending appendage. “But yes, I would be one among millions to mourn the loss of your abs.”

Oliver laughed so hard Felicity got a little concerned. She glanced up and saw him wiping tears from the corner of his eye. “I doubt here are millions of people who would mourn my abs. Maybe just thousands,” he said with a mischievous expression. Then, he picked up the hand that had been laying on his abs and examined it closely before looking back at her. “Without your permission, you say? That sounds like a very shaky alibi, Miss Smoak.”

Felicity gasped, putting her hand over her heart. “Try all day, Queen, but I’m not playing police with you!” she insisted, and then her brain actually caught up to her mouth. “I mean, not that you were implying… Or that it meant anything sexual! We were having fun, you were joking around, it’s normal to get carried away! Not like that kind of carried away, but the normal kind – ”

Oliver was really laughing now, not even trying to help Felicity stop babbling, and once she got out a few more innuendos she finally managed to get her mouth under control. Her cheeks were on fire, which meant her entire face was probably tomato red, and she scowled at Oliver.

“You’re supposed to stop me! It’s why we’re friends.”

“Really? I thought it was my abs.”

“They’re just bonus perks! I mean, in the way that… You know what? If you can’t be bothered to stop me, I’m not even going to try and correct myself,” she grumbled, crossing her arms and half-glaring at Oliver as she tried not to smile in the face of his laughter. She felt like she hadn’t seen him smile since this whole thing started and it felt good to see him happy.

Oliver Queen was as handsome as Starling City was rainy, but when he smiled lesser beings had to avert their eyes.

Finally, the duo settled down and Oliver looked down at her, a bit more serious but lacking the stoic frowniness of their afternoon after The Big Belly Incident.
“Do you want to change?” he asked.

She looked down at her t-shirt and yoga pants, debating. This was perfectly acceptable sleep attire, but she’d been in the clothes all day and they had been witness to The Incident. They felt tainted. Plus, Lyla had brought clothes – including pajamas – from Felicity’s apartment.

“Yeah. These have Cooper taint on them,” she said, sneering at the clothes like they were the man himself. “Be right back. Lyla brought my favorite jammies from home.”

After a quick visit back to her room – with only a small detour to pet Ophie some more – Felicity returned to Oliver’s room. When she re-entered the room, he scanned her from head to toe and the little frowny line appeared between his eyebrows.

“I thought your favorite pajamas were the camera ones I got you,” Oliver said as she climbed into bed. He laid down with her, settling in for the night like they’d done this their entire lives.

It felt amazing, which was why Felicity decided to ignore it completely. If she pretended this could last forever, she wouldn’t have to deal with the emotional fallout of the realization that her undying love for Oliver was unrequited.

“Are you…” Felicity trailed off and rolled onto her side to fully face Oliver, taking in the lines of his beautiful face and his bright blue eyes in the lamplight. “Oh my gosh, you are. You’re pouting.”

“I am not,” he insisted, but Felicity saw it. She saw the slightest protrusion of his extremely beautiful lower pillow mountain bottom lip and the widening of his eyes. A slow smile crept across her face. She didn’t know why she was enjoying this so much, but she was.

“You are. You’re pouting because of my pajamas,” she said, and Oliver scowled but there was no heat in it.

“Am not,” he said, glancing down her body at her pajamas. The t-shirt was red with the word “Khaleesi” in black on the front and “Fire and Blood” on the back. The bottoms were red with cartoon dragons. “It’s just that… you said the camera pajamas were your favorite and…”

Felicity could see this admission was physically paining her friend, so she took pity on him. “Of
course they are, Oliver. They were one of the first gifts you gave me and I keep them here so I always know I have something comfortable when I stay. They were one of the first gifts you gave me after seeing my extremely extensive pajama collection way too early in our friendship than can be considered normal. These are just my favorite pajamas from home,” she explained before glancing down at them and adding in an almost whisper, “Plus they make me feel like the Khaleesi of the internet.”

At that, Oliver finally laughed. Sure, it took her admitting that she sat around in Game of Thrones pajamas shouting at fourteen-year-old noobs that she was the master of the web, but it was worth it. Seeing Oliver smile was always worth it.

Oliver scooted closer and Felicity met him in the middle, turning on to her other side so he could wrap himself around her like he had the night before. They didn’t talk about it, but Felicity didn’t think they had to. All she knew was that she didn’t want to give up the feel of his heartbeat against her back. She wondered if his arm could feel how fast hers was beating from where it was wrapped around her.

Thoughts of dragons and heartbeats followed her into sleep, where she hoped Oliver’s presence would keep the nightmares away.

Oliver had hoped that his presence would be enough to keep Felicity’s nightmares away, but things didn’t work like that in real life and the day’s events proved to be too much for her resting mind to handle.

He’d been sleeping, sort of. It was a light haze between true sleep and wakefulness, because as soon as Felicity’s breathing changed he noticed and fully awoke.

Her body stayed still but her breathing picked up, coming shallower and shallower in her lungs. Her body soon followed the distress. She began to twitch and move, making low sounds under her breath he couldn’t decipher. Oliver felt his heart swell with simultaneous heartbreak and rage when he finally made out, “Please don’t hurt me.”

He’d never wanted to hurt anyone more than he wanted to hurt Cooper, even Thea’s shitty, drug-dealing exes. Cooper had fractured Felicity’s trust in herself and her faith in others, but she was in a good place now. Then, with one phone call, Cooper ruined it.
It seemed to be his specialty.

“Felicity,” Oliver murmured, holding her tighter to him and putting his mouth near her ear. He didn’t shout, knowing that would only scare her unconscious mind more.

Felicity moaned in her sleep, but it wasn’t the kind of moan Oliver had dreamed about it vivid, bright, high-definition detail. It was a moan of pain and fear.

“Felicity, wake up,” he tried again, holding her even tighter in an attempt to stop her thrashing before it started. That was how she usually woke herself up, but Oliver would rather she came to consciousness a bit more peacefully.

Pulling her closer only made her fight harder to get away. She began thrashing, clawing at Oliver’s arms and begging and pleading in a broken voice for Cooper just to let her go and please don’t hurt her.

Obviously, his presence wasn’t helping.

As much as it pained him, he stood up and walked to her side of the bed, crouching down to her level but staying just out of arm’s reach. “Felicity!” he called, trying to find a balance between waking Felicity and not waking Lyla. Watching her like this scared him. He hated seeing Felicity in any kind of pain, but it hadn’t set his heart pounding like this since he got the phone call that they’d found Felicity and she was being rushed to the hospital. “Felicity, wake up!”

In a flash, Felicity sat up with a gasp, her blue eyes huge and racing across every corner of the room as if searching out a threat. After a few moments, she finally caught sight of Oliver and focused on him, taking a little bit of time to calm her breathing before she let out a huge sigh and most of the tension in her shoulders went with it.

“Nightmare,” she said, and he nodded even though she didn’t really need the confirmation. His racing heart was slowing down as well and the sweat was cooling on his skin. Seeing Felicity in such a heightened state of distress had made his adrenaline spike and he was just starting to come down from it.

Felicity started to shake as soon as she spoke, and before Oliver answered he grabbed a throw blanket and put it around her shoulders.
“Yeah,” he agreed, hating the slight waver in his voice as he tentatively sat on the edge of the bed. He wanted to be near her but didn’t know if his presence would be welcomed. Without anything to do, his fingers started to fidget.

In a move that made his heart simultaneously soar and ache, Felicity crawled over and practically melted into his side with a sigh. “Not fun,” she said, and he relaxed when he felt her weight settling against him even more as she pulled the throw blanket tighter around her shoulders. He knew she was falling asleep even as she tried to keep up conversation.

“Nope,” he said, putting his arm around her and pulling her closer. He wanted to lay her down, but he knew the nightmare was too close for her to be comfortable with that.

“I feel like a baby complaining to you about it, but – ”

“Hey,” he interrupted, looking down at her face and meeting her wide blue eyes. “Don’t do that. You be as afraid as you want. Or not. Never feel like you can’t tell me about it.”

Oliver had night terrors. It was one of his most-guarded secrets. He’d had them his whole life and they’d only started to get better later in his life. They were rare now, but they still happened. He and Felicity stayed at each other’s apartments often enough that she’d been witness to several, but he didn’t want that to be a reason she didn’t confide in him. His night terrors were just an imbalance in his brain – they didn’t come from any trauma. They were terrible and left him drained for days after, but Felicity’s nightmares were borne of real fear. If he could help her through them somehow, he would.

Felicity sighed and looked back down, relaxing against him even more. He gloried in the feeling of her warm weight against him. “’Kay,” she murmured, trying and failing to stay awake.

He wrapped his arm tighter around her and kissed her temple. “Go to sleep, Felicity. I’ll be right here,” he reassured, smiling when he felt her sigh against his skin. Her warm breath raised goosebumps everywhere it touched. Not now, Queen.

Not even five minutes later, Felicity was dead weight against his side. Slowly and carefully, as not to wake her, Oliver maneuvered her to lay down beside him. She didn’t make a sound except for the little snuffling snore sounds she swore up and down she didn’t make and he thought were insanely adorable. Her snoring. Oliver thought Felicity’s snoring was adorable. He could practically hear the voice of his younger self telling him how whipped he was and they weren’t even dating.
But then, Felicity pressed even closer against him in her sleep and not a single part of him could care.

Chapter End Notes

I couldn't let them fight for too long! They need each other and they're best friends. I haven't had a serious fight with my best friend since sixth grade, which was like 10 years ago now.

I'll try to write a little more while I'm waiting for my flight or on layover, but no promises as to when the next chapter will go up. Quicker than this one, unless something unforeseen pops up!

Drop me a comment and kudo, then head over to my Tumblr (same name) to chat with me there! I've not been as busy over there in the past 10 days, but I've been on vacation after all. Normal programming will resume when I get home.
Noise

Chapter Summary

Laurel and Tommy have an important dinner, but unfortunately, it doesn't go as planned. With Cooper still on the loose, anything can happen.

Chapter Notes

Finally posting another chapter! Woohoo! Sorry it's taken so long. I've totally lacked motivation. I had to force myself to stay inside and sit and put my fingers on the keyboard to get this baby done.

But, I was too lazy to edit. Not gonna lie. And I have no beta. So... this is just me. It was a cursory read-through, but there might still be mistakes.

Warning, the language gets a bit intense at the end. I borrowed a few insults from the tweets Scottish citizens sent to Donald Trump after his idiotic Brexit tweet. They were so inspiring.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next morning, Felicity somehow woke up before Oliver. Probably because she’d kept him up past his self-imposed bedtime the night before and he needed to recuperate like some kind of grandpa.

Much more used to erratic sleep schedules, Felicity was up and ready to go before nine a.m. The nightmare had spurred her on, and she decided she wasn’t going to let Cooper rule her life any more than he already had. She gathered all her fear and paranoia and uncertainty and locked them inside a steel box in her head. Once Cooper was back in prison, she’d let herself think about those feelings. For now, she had a job to do.

Lyla was still working on security details. She was seated quietly in the living room on one of the chairs. So, Felicity took the couch, grabbed her laptop and cell phone, and got to work.

Tommy had already taken care of most of her modeling obligations and everyone was extremely understanding, but there were a few charities that really needed her pictures to roll out their campaigns and she needed to make final approval on their chosen shots. That, and make a large, anonymous donated to the Starling City Women’s Shelter. She was blessed to have an amazing support system when everything blew up with Cooper, but so many women weren't as lucky.

When Oliver finally woke up, Felicity was going through the pictures for the ASPCA’s new promotional campaign with Ophie sprawled on the couch beside her, also glancing at the photos, as if shocked to see herself. The dog really wasn’t used to modeling along with her owner.

“I remember that day,” he said, and Felicity could hear the smile in his voice. She glanced over her shoulder to where he was leaning on the back of the couch behind her with a smile and then back at the pictures.
“Ophie was a nightmare until you got there. She wouldn’t stop growling at the poor man trying to take our picture!” Felicity said, affectionately rubbing her dog for a few moments before scrolling through the pictures again.

“I like that one,” he said, leaning on to the back of the couch.

Felicity had stopped on the shot of Ophie licking her face. Her eyes were almost all the way shut, just a bright sliver of blue showing to connect with the viewer. She was leaning back a little, but obviously laughing. It was one of her favorites, too, but…

“Are you sure it doesn’t look like I have a double chin?” she asked, scrunching her nose as she looked over her shoulder.

Oliver’s very serious eyes met hers and he pursed his lips. “Of course not, Felicity. You look beautiful,” he said, his voice ringing with sincerity.

Felicity smiled – who wouldn’t when one of the most gorgeous men in the world called them beautiful? – but shook her head. “You always say that,” she complained.

Oliver shrugged. “It’s always true.”

Now he wasn’t playing fair. Felicity’s face was on fire, which meant she was probably as red as her Khaleesi tank-top.

Felicity turned back to her laptop to hide her blush, though she was sure Oliver saw it anyway if the smirk she could see reflected on her laptop screen was any indication.

“If you two are done flirting with each other, we can talk about your plans for the day,” Lyla said, effectively bursting the bubble of contentment and warmth that always seemed to form whenever she was around Oliver.

Felicity jumped a little, having forgotten Lyla was even there. “Right, right, of course,” she said without thinking, then backtracked. “I mean, we weren’t flirting. Not really. Oliver was just… being nice. He’s very kind. And encouraging. You should’ve seen him with this new model fresh on the scene from Arkansas at the Resort 2014 shoot for Hermes. She was so nervous and he – ”

“Sure, sure,” Lyla interrupted with a smirk, her eyes darting from Felicity to Oliver.

When Felicity looked over her shoulder to see what Lyla was looking at, Oliver’s expression had been schooled into one of polite blandness.

“I don’t know what our plans are, Lyla. Felicity?” he asked, looking from the woman on the opposite couch to Felicity sitting below him.

“I don’t know what our plans are, Lyla. Felicity?” he asked, looking from the woman on the opposite couch to Felicity sitting below him.

“I wasn’t planning on it. I think Tommy and Laurel want to have everyone over for dinner tonight, but Laurel told texted me yesterday that I didn’t have to come if I wasn’t feeling up to it,” she said, a little hesitant, hoping one of them would jump in to fill the silence and tell her it was too dangerous or something.

Neither Lyla nor Oliver spoke. Obviously, they were waiting for her to make a decision.

She wanted to go. She really did. Especially since she knew the happily married couple wanted to get everyone together to make a very special announcement. They hadn’t told anyone else yet, not even Quentin or Dinah, but her friends always seemed to confide in her before anyone else.
On the other hand, she was terrified. Cooper had managed to find her on an unplanned trip to Big Belly and used his superior knowledge in that moment to terrify her. In those moments when he talked to her on the phone, she felt like she was back in her apartment after he’d attacked her, helpless to stop him. She wasn’t that woman anymore, but her mind and heart had a harder time forgetting the wounds that had long healed on her body.

But, in light of her morning resolution, she refused to let fear rule her.

“I want to go,” she said, blinking away the dark thoughts and looking back at Oliver. When she found him beaming at her, she couldn’t help but smile in return.

Lyla nodded, a much more understated but equally proud expression on her face. “Okay. I’ll inform my staff. John and I are going too, so we’ll drive you and Oliver while a smaller car follows. My men will case the area and the house – Laurel has already said it’s okay, I asked her when she invited us to dinner – and they’ll stay outside, under the radar, while we enjoy the evening. I’ll let Javier and Ramos know,” she said, closing her laptop before she walked out the door to the loft.

“I hope Maritza and Nicholas don’t mind,” Felicity murmured, staring after Lyla and biting her lip.

Oliver finally moved around the couch and sat beside her, taking one of the hands she’d been wringing together and patiently waiting until she looked at him.

“Maritza and Nicholas?”

Felicity nodded. “Maritza is Ramos’ wife and Nicholas is Javier’s boyfriend. It’s funny, though, because Ramos is actually Ramos’ last name so she’s Maritza Ramos, married to Ramos, and I imagine that could lead to potentially awkward introductions, but maybe they’re used to it. I know Maritza and Nicholas knew what they were getting into, starting a relationship with a bodyguard, but I still feel bad pulling them away from… Oliver, stop laughing at me!”

She hit him with a pillow, unable to keep back a smile when he let out a dramatized, “Ow!”

“Oh, please. If you even felt it through your brick wall muscles, I’d be impressed. You’re supposed to be my friend and stop me when I babble!”

“Never,” he said, gazing at Felicity with a smile on his face. “You know I love it too much.”

Why did this keep happening? How did seemingly innocent conversations develop this… tone Felicity had no idea what to do with? She couldn’t just up and confess her feelings. Especially not with Cooper on the loose! If she said anything now, would he think it was just because of the heightened adrenaline and emotions from the past several days? Would he even care? Did he even feel the same way?

Usually, this is the time when Felicity would go out and have a girl’s night. She always pretended they weren’t about her feelings for Oliver and she never told anyone, but she had the feeling that at least some of her friends – namely the incredibly perceptive Sara – saw right through her.

Unfortunately, with Cooper on the loose and Felicity barely feeling safe enough to hang out at Laurel and Tommy’s with bodyguards in tow, a girl’s night would have to be put on hold.

As if sensing her indecision, Oliver changed the subject and said, “I’ll bet you haven’t eaten yet.”

Felicity looked at him gratefully and nodded. “You’d win that bet,” she said, and Oliver got to his feet and entered the kitchen.
Felicity quickly sent the confirmation email to the ASPCA, turned around, and leaned on the arm of the couch to watch Oliver in his natural habitat. The only time she’d ever seen him look so at home was behind a camera.

“What do you want?” he asked, his back still turned.

“Eggs benedict and banana crepes with homemade whipped cream?” she asked, unable to bite back a grin when he turned around and gave her a look.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you’re using me for my cooking skills, Miss Smoak.”

“What makes you think you know any better?”

Oliver almost managed to glare, but it broke off into a smile much too quickly. “I should’ve known,” he said with a chuckle as he shook his head before turning back to his work.

Ophie obviously had enough of not being near the food or Oliver, so she jumped off the couch and trotted into the kitchen to sit at Oliver’s feet.

“Oh, I’m so sorry. Are you feeling neglected?” Oliver asked, pausing his prep work to bend over and pet the dog. As if in response, Ophie barked and Oliver laughed. “I’ll take that as a yes.” He opened a cabinet, pulled out a bag, and fed Ophie one of his homemade dog treats.

While Ophie was happily chewing on the floor, Felicity laughed and shook her head. “You spoil her so much worse than I do,” she said. “I hardly ever give her treats.”

Oliver shook his head, his back to her, but Felicity could tell he was smiling. “Yeah, but your ‘treats’ consist of fried food and all that sugary peanut butter you eat. At least my treats are all natural and good for her,” he said, glancing down at Ophie again before returning his attention to the stove.

The rest of the morning passed easily. Being with Oliver let her forget everything that was going on outside. She stayed with him so frequently that it wasn’t totally out of the ordinary.

Lyla assured Felicity that Maritza and Nicholas hadn’t had any special plans with her bodyguards and reminded her friend that even if they had, it was their job to be available to protect Felicity when she needed them.

Felicity knew that, but sometimes it was hard to be an inconvenience, even when people were literally getting paid for it.

Thankfully, Lyla brought a few sets of real clothes when she raided Felicity’s apartment, so she walked out of Oliver’s guest room in a casual but cute romper, sandals, and her hair in a respectable messy bun right as they were supposed to leave.

“Perfect timing,” Lyla said from her place lounging beside the elevator door. “John’s doing a final sweep of the garage and getting the car.”

Footsteps made Felicity look over her shoulder with a smile. In his youth, Oliver was never on time. These days, he could always be punctual for his friends, family, and photo shoots.

Oliver wore jeans and a grey henley that hugged his body in all the right places that Felicity really didn’t have time to deal with right now on top of everything else. He also had a bottle of wine tucked under one arm.

Felicity had tried to talk him out of the wine and suggested he bring his insanely delicious (even
though there was spinach in it) potatoes au gratin, but it was Laurel’s favorite and she couldn’t insist too vehemently without giving away the surprise. So, Oliver was bringing wine. And would probably get dagger-eyes in return.

“You look nice,” Oliver said, stopping beside Felicity and looking down at her with a smile.

She rolled her eyes, but smiled in return. “It’s nice to be in real clothes. Yoga pants are great, but there’s something to be said about a real bra,” she said, glancing down at her boobs – which her bra was supporting very nicely – then back up at Oliver.

He was almost as red as the wine and couldn’t seem to settle on something to say.

“Alright, kids, let’s go,” Lyla interrupted the moment with a clap and pressed the elevator button. In moments, it was open and ready. “Let’s not keep the happy couple waiting.”

Felicity went in first and shot a glance to Lyla, but she couldn’t tell if the other woman knew what tonight was really about or not. Felicity was almost positive Lyla did black ops when she was in the military because she had the poker face (and unusually blacked-out military record) to back up the claim.

Without any further ado, they were off.

The ride was uneventful. Mostly, they caught up with the Diggles and chatted about Andrea – who was with a sitter that night since both her parents were on Crazy Cooper Watch. Felicity even managed to keep herself distracted enough not to worry herself sick about leaving the apartment again after the Big Belly Incident. Oliver managed to jump in and fill any silences, which was an odd task for the usually reticent photographer. Felicity knew he was only doing it for her sake and that made her smile a little brighter.

They arrived at the house Laurel and Tommy shared. It looked more like it belonged on Cape Cod than the northern half of the western seaboard, but the white wood, big porch, and bright red shutters were warm and inviting in a way she knew appealed to Tommy and Laurel. The former had grown up in a distant, cold mansion and the latter in an apartment.

Felicity was hesitant to call it a cottage because of its size, but that was the technical term for this type of house. Laurel hadn’t wanted to go too overboard, but buying a house of substantial size close to the city center came with a hefty price tag. Eventually, she’d relented. She wanted the six-bedroom house just as much as Tommy.

Javier and Ramos swept the area before giving Lyla the all clear. After that, the four of them made their way to the front door and Oliver rang the bell.

“Hey!” Laurel exclaimed as soon as she opened the door, a massive smile on her face and a happy sparkle in her eyes. “I’m so happy you came.” Laurel stepped outside and wrapped Felicity in a hug. The ADA wasn’t normally this bubbly or outwardly affectionate, but she knew the past several days had been hard on her friend.

“Wouldn’t miss it,” Felicity said, hugging Laurel back. She wanted to say something quippy about not missing this for anything, but she didn’t want to reveal the secret before the couple.

“Ollie,” Laurel said, stepping back and giving him a smile.
Which dimmed considerably when she saw the wine Oliver held out to her. “Oh, my favorite,” she said, trying her best to maintain the jovial persona she’d had moments ago.

“Yeah,” Oliver said, his brows furrowed. “Is something wrong? This is still your favorite, right?”

Laurel shook her head – but more in a head clearing way and not a no way – and smiled again. “It is. Thanks, Ollie. Now let’s all get inside,” she said, stepping back in and gesturing with the arm that wasn’t holding the wine for everyone to file in.

Everyone else was inside. Roy, Thea, Quentin, Donna, Dinah, Sara and Nyssa had already arrived. Sara and Oliver were in an unofficial competition as to which of them was the latest – since neither had a reputation for punctuality – so immediately Sara started not-so-gently ribbing Oliver for getting there after her.

Sara dating Nyssa helped. The other woman was a stickler for decorum, of which punctuality was a part.

Felicity wandered into the kitchen after Laurel, grinning when she saw Tommy putting the finishing touches on some steak. “Tommy Merlyn, cooking? Well, I never,” she said, grinning when Tommy looked up at her with a smile.

“I contain multitudes, Smoaky,” he said, his blue eyes sparkling with mischief and unbridles happiness. They were both so bubbly tonight – though Tommy was normally a happy person – Felicity wondered if anyone else didn’t suspect why they’d actually been called to have a “family dinner.”

“And by that, he means I left him very detailed instructions,” Laurel said, setting the wine down and kissing her husband before pointedly looking down at the bottle.

Tommy looked mildly alarmed before he returned his gaze to Laurel. “Babe, you’re not gonna cry again, are you?” he asked, quiet but just loud enough that Felicity could hear it. “Not that I mind. You’re allowed to feel however you want. I just need to know if I should go grab the tissues.”

Laurel let out a suspicious sniffle but shook her head. “No. No, I am not going to cry over a bottle of wine,” she said, but it sounded an awful lot like she was trying to convince herself.

“Well, no more of that, then,” Felicity said, sweeping further into the kitchen, grabbing the wine bottle, and putting it on the highest shelf she could reach. Which admittedly, wasn’t very high.

One of the few things she’d inherited from the Smoak side of her family – being vertically challenged.

After the brief wine mishap, Felicity chatted with her friends for a few moments before rejoining the rest of the group in the living room.

Oliver looked up as soon as she re-entered the space, as if he’d just been waiting for her to come back. His smile would’ve knocked her right off her feet if she hadn’t somehow been expecting it. Since when was she ready for Oliver to smile at her every time she entered a room?

Donna was loud and worried, but Felicity calmed her down and talked about how wonderful and capable Lyla was and how nice it was to stay with Oliver. Quentin grudgingly admitted they hadn’t gotten too far on finding Cooper yet, not that Felicity expected much. If she couldn’t find him, then the underfunded, overworked SCPD definitely couldn’t.

Laurel and Tommy quickly announced dinner so everyone filed into the dining room.
One of the main fixtures Felicity loved about the house was the massive, circular dining room table. It just felt so much more homey and approachable than a big, imposing, rectangular thing with heads and whatnot. Of course, Felicity had grown up eating on a fold-out table that only fit in the kitchen if you weren’t actually trying to do anything in there, but she knew the symbolism was important to Tommy.

Dinner was wonderful. Everyone was smiling and happy, even Felicity. Her nervousness about leaving the apartment had faded on the ride over and was now almost completely gone. Though, that could be due to the amazing food and Oliver holding her hand under the table.

Yeah, he’d just grabbed it. And it was so warm and big and reassuring, who was she to push him away?

“Laurel, why aren’t you drinking the wine? I didn’t get the wrong one, did I? I swore that was the right one,” Oliver finally said when dinner was winding down, his brows drawn together and a frown on his face.

Felicity thought it was ironic that he was a better friend to Laurel years after the explosive end to their relationship than he’d ever been a boyfriend when they were actually dating. Only years later did he remember his friend’s favorite wines and was concerned if he didn’t remember correctly.

Laurel and Tommy shared a glance and Felicity squeezed Oliver’s hand just a little tighter in excitement. He squeezed hers back, almost like a reflex, but didn’t look away from Laurel.

“No, no, you got it right,” Laurel said, still gazing at Tommy and unable to keep the massive smile from taking over her face.

Tommy was smiling too, so big his face looked like it might split in half. Finally, he looked out at the assembled group and said, “Laurel and I called you all here for a reason. We have an announcement to make.”

Oliver squeezed Felicity’s hand again, but this time there was intent behind it. He knew what was coming now, but like a good friend he kept silent.

“I’m pregnant,” Laurel finally said, looking away from Tommy and toward everyone around the table with a massive, beaming smile and tears misting her eyes.

Sara jumped up and hollered, “I knew it!” before running over to her sister and giving her a hug. That made everyone laugh, and then everyone stood and started the chorus of hugs and congratulations.

“You knew,” Oliver said. He was standing behind her, still holding her hand, and leaned over to whisper in her ear. “That’s why you tried to talk me out of bringing the wine. I should’ve known something was up when you suggested not bringing wine.”

Felicity grinned over her shoulder and nudged him a little in the torso with her elbow. It was like nudging a rock. She probably had a bruised elbow now.

“You make it sound like I have a problem, which I don’t. I just appreciate a good red.”

“And a mediocre red, and a bad red…”

Felicity full on elbowed Oliver this time, but it must have felt like a feather for all he reacted.

The atmosphere was bright, happy, and joyous. With Cooper out there, Felicity should’ve known it wouldn’t last.
Our of nowhere, the doorbell rang.

And everyone froze.

That wasn’t the group’s normal reaction to a doorbell ringing, but everyone knew what was going on. That, and everyone that would’ve come over unannounced was already in the house. Lyla and John were tense and frowning at their cellphones, obviously not having gotten any kind of word from Javier or Ramos that someone was approaching the house. Everyone else knew that Crazy Cooper was out there and actively looking for Felicity, so they were just as on edge.

“I armed the security system when I let you in,” Laurel said, glancing at Felicity and then to Lyla. “It’s linked directly to the police department. If the perimeter is breached after this specific type of activation, it’ll automatically alarm the police.”

Lyla opened her mouth to say something, but things just went from bad to worse.

The power went out.

Everyone was still for what felt like eons and seconds before Oliver, Digg and Lyla leapt into action. Felicity felt like her feet were cemented to the floor while her brain was flying too quickly out of control.

“Tommy, Laurel, if you have any weapons in the house, get them. Then take everyone to the most interior room on the ground floor,” Lyla said, and the familiar metallic sounds told Felicity that she and Digg were checking their sidearms. How they could see in the dark was beyond her.

Laurel let out a short, humorless laugh. "I'm the daughter of a cop. Of course, I have weapons in the house," she said, prompting Tommy into action.

"I, too, prefer to be prepared," Nyssa cool voice said, following by the schwick of what had to be a switchblade opening. What the frack? Felicity was coming to the realization that Nyssa was probably a lot more than a fitness-nut gym owner.

Oliver had moved closer to Felicity as soon as the room went dark, turning her into his arms and pressing her into his body like he could shield her from anything. It cut back a little on the fear that overwhelmed her along with the oppressive darkness.

Suddenly, Felicity felt different arms on her and flinched away from them before she realized they belonged to Laurel.

“Hey,” her friend said, moving closer to Felicity since Oliver didn’t seem willing to let her out of his embrace. Laurel put her hand on Felicity’s face and for a moment, she felt more grounded. “Whatever you’re thinking, this isn’t your fault. There’s nothing to be sorry about.”

It was only then that Felicity realized she was chanting “I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry” over and over under her breath.

Everyone chimed their agreement, some with more colorful threats to Cooper’s health than others, and Felicity couldn’t fight the smile. Even though she couldn’t even see at the moment, all her friends were around her and there for her.

“I forgive your drama for overshadowing our news, Smoaky,” Tommy’s voice said in an obvious attempt to make light of the situation, which it did for a moment.

“However will I make it up to you?” she asked, a little breathier than she’d like but still sarcastic.
Tommy let out a sharp laugh and she could practically see him shaking his head. “Let’s just get through this. That’s all the repayment I need,” he said.

Felicity was getting sick and tired of things happened “suddenly,” because just then the house phone rang.

Felicity had made fun of Laurel and Tommy for even having a house phone at all, but for some reason they insisted it was necessary. If Felicity wasn’t sure who was responsible for this before, she was now.

Laurel and Tommy didn’t really have any close neighbors -- perks of being rich in the suburbs -- so it was hard to tell if the power outage was isolated or not. Felicity would’ve bet good money that it was isolated to just this house. Now, who did she know with the ability to cut all power to one particular house except the phone lines, but obviously wasn’t good enough to hack the ridiculous firewalls on her cellphone?

And the night had been going so well.

“It’s Cooper,” Felicity said, her voice breaking through the bustle of everyone trying to do as Lyla said.

Oliver tightened his arms around her and said, “Felicity, we don’t know for sure – ”

“I do. It’s him. He’s calling right now,” she said, nodding toward the phone even though no one would be able to see her in the dark.

No one knew what to say for a moment, so Felicity moved to answer the phone.

Oliver tightened his grip on her and she barely even moved an inch.

“Oliver, he’s going to want to talk to me – ”

“He’s insane, Felicity. You shouldn’t have to talk to him.”

“Yeah, sweetheart. Let me answer it,” Quentin said, and she heard him moving around, presumably to answer the phone.

"Oh, let me answer it," Donna growled.

“Guys?” Digg called, his voice getting closer like he was moving back into the space. Felicity wasn’t even aware he’d left. “There was a package on the front porch. Javi and Ramos are unconscious. I tried to call 911, but there’s a signal jammer and I have no idea how big a radius it covers.”

“What’s in the package?” Thea asked, moving closer to Digg. She pulled out her cellphone, turned on the flashlight, and the space was finally illuminated, even if only a little.

The younger Queen’s actions prompted everyone else to do the same, and soon they were all lit up with phone lights. “I can’t believe I didn’t think of this,” Felicity grumbled, still clinging to Oliver with the hand that wasn’t holding her phone. Something about being the in the circle of his arms kept the fear from rising too high or blocking her throat. Unlike in Big Belly, she was able to talk and make full sentences. Even if she was still quaking like a leaf.

“You have other things on your mind,” Thea said, smiling softly at her friend before returning her attention to the mysterious package.
The phone stopped ringing, but started up again before anyone could finish their sighs of relief.

“Open it,” Felicity said, her eyes trained on the plain brown paper.

Digg shook his head. “No way. We have no idea what’s in here.”

Felicity was shaking her head before he was done talking. “Cooper doesn’t want to hurt or kill me. There’s nothing deadly in that box. He wants to scare me and let me know he’s getting closer and closer and that he was this close tonight. Whatever’s in there will be creepy, but it isn’t deadly,” Felicity said, totally confident. Cooper was insane, but when she was able to dissect his actions with a logical mind, he made a sick sort of sense. From a psychotic standpoint, of course.

Everyone looked between each other, but Felicity knew the final decision was with Lyla and Digg. It wasn’t like she could overpower them if they didn’t want to open the package.

The phone stopped ringing. Then started again. Felicity knew Cooper wasn’t going to give up until he got what he wanted. He was tenacious when he wanted something, and wouldn’t let anything stand in his way.

After a few moments of silent communication, Lyla nodded. “Okay. If you’re sure, open it up,” she said, leading everyone to a side table in the hall. The living room and kitchen had too many windows.

Normally, Felicity didn’t think like this. She didn’t think with strategy or safety in mind. The fear was heightening everything, but instead of slowing her brain down, it was speeding up. She able to think faster and more clearly. It was almost like when she was on a coding binge and living entirely off Mountain Dew and coffee.

Everyone gathered around Felicity, letting her have access to the package but staying close. Instead of feeling suffocated by everyone around her, she felt emboldened by their presence. Everyone had her back, literally and figuratively. Whatever was in the package, she could handle it.

The phone was still ringing.

Felicity opened the package and froze. Everything was silent except for the sound of blood roaring in her ears.

Inside the package was her favorite mug from home, just as she’d left it before going to the club that fateful night – with lipstick still on the edge. Her favorite tube of lipstick, the bullet worn about halfway down. There were polaroid pictures of her apartment, just as she remembered it before she ran to Oliver’s. The things in the box featured in the pictures, along with parts of Cooper’s body – but never his face.

The next thing had everyone reacting differently – gasping, clenching teeth, or generally shooting eye daggers. It was a pair of her sexiest underwear, obviously from her drawer, with a note pinned to them that said, “Wear these for me.” Felicity recognized Cooper’s handwriting.

Felicity’s fear had hit critical mass. She couldn’t feel her heart pounding or her hands shaking. She was totally unaware that she was taking quick, frantic breaths.

There was only one more thing in the box: a folded piece of paper.

Felicity opened it with trembling hands. All it said was, “Pick up the phone.”

Some people started talking, others were stunned into silence, but Felicity knew there was only
one choice. She was terrified, so close to freezing in her panic and fear, but the warmth of her friends around her kept the chill at bay just enough to give her the strength to part the group, walk to the phone, and answer it.

“What the *fuck* do you want?” Felicity snapped, her voice measured and lethal. She was scared, but like before, she refused to let that fear rule her. Cooper was messing with her, somehow staying off the grid, and she was so *done* letting this psycho rule her life. She wished she could convince Lyla and John to abandon protocol and search the area. Cooper *had* to be close.

As if he could read her mind, Roy appeared at her side and handed Felicity her tablet. Other voices were trying to convince her to hang up or give them the phone, but Felicity tightened her grip on the receiver with one hand and started a search on her tablet with the other. Cooper was good, but she was better.

The electricity was only out at the house, which meant the CCTV cameras were running. When she encountered ones that were malfunctioning, that’s how she knew where to look.

“Your curses have grown up, babe. I’m proud,” Cooper said, his tone just as light and mocking as it was at Big Belly. This time, though, Felicity refused to freeze.

“I don’t know what sick fantasy you’ve concocted, but I’m going to find you and you’ll be lucky if the police get there first and all you have to face is the rest of your life in prison,” she growled. “Our state still has the death penalty, after all.”

Cooper laughed like nails scraping down a chalk board. “Promises, promises, babe. You haven’t been able to find me yet. Did you like my gift? I had to get someone else to drop it off and take care of your little bodyguards, but I’m not too far away if you want to thank me in person,” he said, the leer in his voice unmistakable.

“Not so fast, you weaselheaded fucknugget,” Felicity said, baring her teeth in the closest thing she could come to a smile at the moment. In the wake of her fear, she felt rage rise.

Then, results came in on her tablet. She would’ve fist pumped if her hands weren’t otherwise occupied. She sent the coordinates and surveillance photos from the CCTV cameras to Digg and Lyla, grinning at the flurry of action behind her.

“Hope you kept up on your fitness in prison, you bloviating flesh bag,” she sneered, ignoring Cooper when he tried to speak again and dramatically slamming the phone back into its cradle.

She turned back to the group, slightly breathless with residual fear, rage, and adrenaline drop.

John was gone, Lyla was at the edge of the group talking a mile a minute on her cell phone, and the rest of the assembly was staring at her with their mouths slightly open.

“I don’t think I’ve ever hear insults quite like that,” Oliver said, his blue eyes a mix of fading fear and awe.

Roy laughed a little, shaking his head. “I may have to use a few of those. I’ve definitely got some customers that fit the description,” he said, laughing again when Thea smacked his arm.

Sara nodded, her blue eyes glowing with laughter. “I’ve heard a lot of insults in multiple languages, and those were pretty creative, Smoak,” she said.

“Is that judgment I’m hearing?” Felicity asked, glancing from the group to Oliver.

“Never,” Oliver said with a shake of his head and a huge smile on his face. “Pride.”
“I always knew you had it in you,” Thea said, grinning in a way that was more like a baring of teeth than a real smile. “Maybe John will get to him in time and this will finally be over.”

Everyone relaxed a little, but Felicity couldn’t quite join in the more jovial atmosphere. Tonight had been a win, but she also knew Cooper.

This wasn’t over yet.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think?? Drop me a comment and kudo, then head over to my Tumblr! I have the same name over there and I love hearing from you guys!
Felicity had enough of police stations to last a lifetime, but apparently they weren’t done with her.

Quentin, despite being a witness, was also the police commissioner so he got to both recount his version of events and be one of the two officers to take statements. Truthfully, Felicity was kind of happy he was there and was taking statements now. Quentin’s presence was strong and solid in a world that had been thrown off its axis by one phone call. The strongest presence, though, was Oliver by her side. He hadn’t let go of her hand since she’d hung up on Cooper.

They were sitting in a conference room, another deference to Quentin’s status and her and Oliver’s fame. As much as she hated getting special treatment because she was famous, she had to admit she was happy they had as much comfort and privacy the police station could give.

“By the time Mr. Diggle got to the location, Cooper was gone. You saw signs that he’d been there, but no indication of where to went,” Quentin repeated Digg’s statement back to him, glancing up momentarily to see the bodyguard’s nod of confirmation. He was the only other person in there with Oliver and Felicity. It wasn’t protocol to keep them together, but having the police commissioner for a stepfather had its perks. Felicity was happy because she wasn’t sure she’d be doing this so calmly if it wasn’t for Oliver holding her hand.

“Then, Felicity got the power back on and I called the police,” he said, finishing up the retelling of the evening’s events. Everyone nodded.

Quentin sighed and rubbed his forehead. “I was there and I can hardly believe it. This is some real Criminal Minds shit,” he said, looking at the solemn group around him before focusing on Felicity. “I hate to tell you sweetheart, but they’re going to want you to go into protective custody.”

Felicity knew something like this was coming, but Oliver turned stiff as a board beside her. Before she could even open her mouth, he interjected, “How can the SCPD think that’s a good idea? Every time she’s left home, Cooper came after her. The only time she’s ever been safe since this started is when she’s at home with me.”
While Felicity had several objections to that, she couldn’t formulate words for a moment. Which was pretty rare. Oliver had just said *home. With him.* As in, she and him, living in the loft together, was like home to him. Her heart was threatening to leap out of her throat and her stomach didn’t seem far behind.

Of all the times for him to say stuff like that, did it have to be now?

Quentin was gearing up for a fight, unable not to come to the SCPD’s defense, when Felicity jumped in. “Slow down, boys. Let’s talk about what I think,” she said, raising her free hand in a gesture to get them to stop and pay attention.

Oliver turned to look at her, his blue eyes wide like she’d just kicked a puppy. “You want to go into protective custody?” he asked, sounding frustrated and somehow hurt.

She turned to glare at him, but just a little. It was hard when he was looking at her with those eyes. “I didn’t say that. Let me finish,” she said, turning back to Lance. “I would’ve said this initially, but I agree with Oliver. His apartment is the only place I’ve been safe this whole time, and it’s not like I’m not taking precautions. Lyla is staying with us and two bodyguards are always around. I’d rather be there than some safe house in the middle of nowhere with people I don’t know,” she said, tilting her head with a small smile and trying to make Quentin understand. He wanted her to be safe, but she knew the safest place for her was with Oliver.

Quentin looked apprehensive, but before anyone else could jump in – namely Oliver, who was looking more and more agitated – Felicity continued. “I know you just want me to be safe, but that’s what I want, too. I’m not taking any unnecessary risks. With all the extra security, Oliver’s apartment is the safest place in the city. You can send a couple extra patrol cars by if it makes you feel better, but I’m safe with Oliver,” she said, her brain finally catching up with her mouth and adding, “and Lyla, of course. And Ramos and Javier. And whoever else she brings in to relieve them. I haven’t actually met them yet, but – ”

“Felicity,” Oliver said, squeezing her hand. She turned to look at him and couldn’t help but smile when she saw the relaxed, happy expression on his face. He’d been tense since the power went out at Laurel and Tommy’s so it was good to see something other than sour-lemon face.

Though, he had good reason for being tense. And Felicity doubted he was anywhere near as tense as she was. It was hard to relax knowing her psycho, escaped-prison-ex was out there willing to torment her and her friends to get whatever it was he wanted.

She sighed and squeezed Oliver’s hand back. “Thanks for actually stopping me this time,” she said, smiling up at him before she looked back at Quentin.

The police commissioner looked back at her quickly, obviously having just shared a look with Digg. Felicity glanced at the man on her other side, but he was as impassive as her stepfather. Maybe with a bit more of a smirk than usual.

Quentin shook his head before speaking again. “Okay, fine. I can’t force you into protective custody, and you’ve obviously made up your mind,” he said. It was hard to tell if he didn’t agree with Felicity about her being safe or if he still had an old grudge against Oliver that led to his sour attitude.

Well, Felicity knew he still liked to give Oliver a hard time, but it was usually a bit more good-natured. Being married to Donna had done him good.

Quentin sighed and stood with the rest of them following suit. Oliver squeezed Felicity’s hand and Digg stepped a little closer, a solid presence on her other side. She felt stronger than she had since
this entire situation started, but she was still beyond grateful to have two of her best friends at her side.

“Alright, get outta here while I process all this. Your friends are clogging up my station,” he said, ushering the three of them to the door. He put a hand on Felicity, making her pause for a moment. “Stay safe, Felicity. I’m sure me or your mom will drop by tomorrow.”

Felicity nodded, gripping Quentin’s hand for a moment before walking out with Oliver and Digg.

Everyone was in the waiting area of the police station. They immediately surrounded the trio, asking them how the questioning went even though they’d just gone through it themselves. Oliver kept holding her hand. Felicity did her best to ignore the pointed looks and raised eyebrows from Sara and Thea.

“Everything was fine. Quentin wanted me to go into protective custody, but we talked about it and decided I’m safer where I am,” she said, reassuring the group. A few of them nodded, but Donna looked concerned.

“Baby, are you sure?” she asked, stepping forward to take her daughter’s free hand. It was a testament to how serious the situation was that she didn’t mention Oliver still holding Felicity’s other hand. “This is their job, and if they think they can protect you…”

Felicity shook her head and squeezed her mom’s hand, thankful that Oliver was just standing silently at her side and not jumping into the conversation. “Trust me, mom. I know what I’m doing. Lyla’s a professional and she’s not going to let anything happen to me. I’m as safe as I can be,” she said, doing her best to reassure her mom.

Oliver stepped forward, his eyes serious. “Donna, Lyla’s the best in the business. Nothing is going to happen to Felicity on her watch. Or mine,” he said, squeezing Felicity’s hand without looking away from her mother.

Donna’s eyes went a bit misty at that and she hugged the two. “Take care of each other,” she said after a ferocious hug, stepping back and putting a hand on each of their cheeks.

She looked between them for a moment, pointedly not mentioning their clasped hands, then took a step back. “I’m going to talk to Quentin. My contacts in Vegas needed a little time to work, but I should have heard something by now. I love you, baby,” she said, kissing Felicity on the cheek before she walked away with a “see you tomorrow” thrown over her shoulder.

Not a single innuendo or sexual joke. Cooper had always brought out the serious side of Donna Smoak.

Everyone else started talking as they left the police station, things having gotten slightly more normal since the horror-movie evening they’d shared. Everyone asked any and all questions about the baby. Oliver still didn’t let go of her hand.

Sara sidled up to her, linking their arms and leaning in to whisper, “So what’s all that about?” Her pointed look between Felicity and Oliver left nothing to the imagination.

Felicity rolled her eyes. “It’s nothing,” she whispered back. “At least, not right now. Can you imagine what would happen if we tried anything now? With everything going on? It would be a disaster.”

“Says who?” Sara asked, tilting her head. Her blue eyes were wide and serious. Felicity opened her mouth to protest, but Sara continued, “Seriously. Yeah, things are crazy right now, but life is crazy. Especially both of your lives. Besides, Cooper has ruined enough things. He shouldn’t get
Felicity tried to answer, but nothing came out of her mouth. Sara nodded, squeezing her arm. “Just something to think about,” she said before letting go and rejoining Nyssa who was in a serious discussion with Tommy about nursery decorations.

She glanced at Oliver, who was not-quite-joking with Thea about not making him an uncle too soon, and Sara’s question rang in her head like a bell.

Why not now?

They finally got back to the loft at about one a.m. Everything was finally hitting Felicity – the terror of the past days compounding on the events of the evening.

While she stumbled around in a bleary haze taking care of Ophie – after lots of cuddles and apologies for being gone so long – Oliver whipped up a quick dinner of leftovers. Felicity felt tired to her bones, but Oliver’s gentle insistence and encouraging eyes meant she finished her entire plate. That and, even in her exhausted bubble, Oliver’s food was still the most delicious thing ever.

Lyla went out to coordinate with the bodyguards for the night, presumably debriefing the whole team on new potential security risks. Felicity barely even noticed. She changed into her pajamas and collapsed into bed – Oliver’s bed – and finally settled when he laid down beside her.

Then, of course, her mind went into overdrive.

Why not now?

Well, there was the obvious reason of Cooper. Felicity bristled at calling the situation an excuse, but Sara was right about one thing: their lives were constantly hectic. They saw each other often because they made a point of it, not because it was convenient. They were both famous and travelled internationally all the time. Her psycho ex escaping prison was actually keeping them together physically, in the same space, much more than usual.

So, it wasn’t much of a reason. It really was just an excuse.

Felicity tried and tried to think of other reasons, but aside from their current situation there was only one.

What if he didn’t feel the same way?

Okay, that reason was also getting a little flimsy. As crazy as it was to Felicity, she was starting to think Oliver really, actually liked her. As more than a friend. All her friends were supportive and amazing, but Oliver consistently went the extra mile to make Felicity feel safe. That, and there was the hand holding, bed sharing, meal cooking, and general amazingness that was her time with Oliver Queen for the past several days.

So, maybe Felicity wasn’t necessarily scared he didn’t feel the same way, but what if they tried something, it went wrong, and they ruined their friendship?

Felicity could practically see Sara Lance rolling her eyes from across town.

Felicity couldn’t know their relationship would end badly. Truthfully, she couldn’t even know if their relationship would end.
Oh, frack. What a thought.

“I can feel you thinking,” Oliver said, his lips right against the back of her neck. He was spooned behind her, his hand that was previously on her stomach now crawling up her torso to rest over her eyes and forehead. “Go to sleep. You’re exhausted.”

“So are you,” she returned. “Why aren’t you asleep?”

Oliver sighed, obviously sensing neither of them were going to sleep anytime soon. “I told you, I could feel you thinking. It kept me awake,” he said.

Felicity turned in his arms so she could look into his heavy, sleepy eyes. For a moment, she saw clear into the future. This could be every night. She could go to sleep in Oliver’s arms, keeping him awake with whatever crazy thought she had this time, and watch his gorgeous, sleepy eyes blink at her as he couldn’t help but smile.

Frack.

“Well, there’s a lot to think about,” she said, looking into his eyes as she rested her hands on his bare chest.

Oliver sighed at the contact, scooting a little bit closer. Yeah, the whole ‘he might not be attracted to her’ excuse was wearing very thin, very fast. His hands on her back started rubbing her tense muscles and she felt her body turn to goo beneath them.

“Felicity,” he said, staring into her eyes with a tiny, helpless smile. “Lyla is outside debriefing the two bodyguards that will be stationed at our door, the other two that will be patrolling the floor, the one that will be in the parking garage, and the other two that will be throughout the building. Quentin is sending cruisers by whenever there isn’t a call. And I’m here, with you, and as long as there is a breath in my body I won’t ever let anything happen to you.”

His smile faded, but the intensity of the moment burned hotter. His hands were still massaging her back and Felicity was sure her eyes were the size of dinner plates. Her excuses were blowing away like leaves.

“The rest can keep until tomorrow,” he finished, moving forward to lean his forehead against hers. Oh, she liked this. Very much. An up close, unobstructed view of his beautiful eyes was exactly what she needed. “Okay?”

Felicity nodded – somehow her body was still capable of responding to his commands – and he grinned. “Good,” he said, his hands still massaging her back and frack it was so relaxing. “Come here.”

With that, he laid back and pulled Felicity on to his chest, his hands resuming their massaging once she was settled.

It was perfect. He was warm, safe, home. She didn’t know what he could do for her that Lyla couldn’t, but when Oliver said she was safe, she actually felt it.

Felicity relaxed against his body, practically melting into his beautiful, hard chest. Sleep finally started pulling at her, relaxing her even further. When she was close to sleep, she couldn’t help but open her mouth and murmur, “Thanks, ‘liver. Love you.”

Felicity’s eyes flew open and she froze.

Beneath her, Oliver went rigid.
“What?” he asked, sounding incredulous.

Oh, frack.

Felicity and her big mouth had just ruined everything.

Love you.

Love you.

Felicity Smoak had just told him, Oliver Queen, that she loved him.

It occurred to him after a moment she could’ve meant it platonically, but he’d already asked her what she meant. They’d both gone rigid at her words. After everything they’d been through, the years of being her friend to lay the groundwork for something more, had all led to this moment. Oliver would be in Felicity’s life in any capacity she’d have him, but he had jumped on her words and ran. They had to mean something.

They had to.

“I mean… Uh…” Felicity sat up and as soon as she was off his chest, he turned on the light and sat up, too. This wasn’t a conversation to be had laying down.

Felicity’s face was bright red and her eyes were darting around the room, trying to settle on something besides his face. His eyes were on her, intent and burning.

God, he felt like he was burning from the inside out.

After a moment, Felicity seemed to come to a decision. She took a deep breath, sat up straight, and met his eyes head on. “I’m in love with you, Oliver,” she said, and damn if that wasn’t the most beautiful sentence he’d ever heard in his entire fucking life. “I think I’ve been in love with you for a while. You probably don’t feel the same way and I don’t want to ruin our friendship, but I think Sara was right and I just said it so—”

Oliver’s muscles finally came back under his command. The first thing he did was lean forward and kiss Felicity. Because she’d said she loved him and somehow, in her big, beautiful, genius brain, had the idea that he didn’t feel the same way or this wasn’t the right moment. Maybe it wasn’t perfect timing, but Oliver thought any moment was perfect as long as Felicity was in it.

The kiss was simple, just a press of his lips against hers. They weren’t even touching besides that. He didn’t want to coerce her or influence her, but she didn’t seem to mind.

Felicity grabbed his hair with both hands and moved herself closer while simultaneously dragging him toward her. He moaned when she pulled his hair and she licked into his mouth, tasting like the sweetest thing he’d ever had. Without thinking, he tangled his tongue with hers and she made the softest little noise in the back of her throat that immediately had him rock hard in his sweatpants.

On instinct, he pulled her down on top of him and started kissing down her chin and throat, laughing with her when his stubble tickled her.

“How long?” he asked, barely taking the time to move his lips off her skin enough to ask. His hands were running across her back and arms and hair, unable to settle anywhere now that he could touch whatever he wanted. Her weight was delicious on top of him, and he couldn’t help
but shift his hips under her body.

She gasped, arching into him, and clenched her hands in the bedsheets beside his head. “What?” she asked breathlessly, her hips beginning to move, just a little, against his.

He growled and purposefully rubbed his scruff against her neck to get her attention. She shrieked, “Oliver, that tickles!”

“How long have you loved me?” he clarified, returning his lips to the sweet, smooth expanse of her neck. It was greedy, but he had to know. Oliver felt like he would die if he didn’t know.

Felicity pulled back, though, putting her hands on his shoulders and pushing up. He made a disgruntled noise at being removed him his task, which made Felicity laugh. Her laugh made him smile, a little, but come on! He’d been on a mission.

Her lower body was fully flush with his, making heat coil in his stomach. Oliver’s hands had been forced to abandoned her back and shoulders—much to his disappointment—but he found her hips to be an equally wonderful place to put them.

Felicity was gazing down at him with joy and love, something that tugged at his heart and made him smile. He knew he was looking at her the same way.

She looked like she had something to say, and though he was a bit sad they couldn’t continue with their previous activities, Oliver made it a point to always listen when Felicity spoke.

“I feel like I’ve loved you forever,” she said, and he realized she was answering his question. “I don’t remember when it happened. By the time I realized it, I was already there.”

Oliver couldn’t help but smile at that. He starting circling her hip bones with his thumbs.

“I knew I loved you at your eighteenth birthday party. It just hit me all of a sudden that we could legally have sex and… I don’t know. It was like lightning or something,” he said, the tender words tumbling freely from his mouth.

Felicity tilted her head, a soft, adoring smile on her lips. “That long?” she asked, but before he answered she smirked. “Of course, it was the sex.” Her tone was teasing, but her hips grinding slowly but purposefully against his hips were infinitely serious.

“It wasn’t just that,” he gasped, unable to stop from shifting under her. The fire had tempered while they talked, but now that she was moving again he couldn’t help himself. “It was you, Felicity. Just you. Always you.”

Felicity paused at that, and Oliver had to bite his tongue to keep from whimpering. What was happening to him? He’d never been this desperate. It was obviously just Felicity. He should’ve known it would be like this with her, but he’d never let himself really, truly imagine it before.

She leaned down and kissed him, neither bothering to keep it light and immediately trying to devour each other, like they could crawl inside each other and live there.

“It’s you, too, Oliver. Just you.”

He groaned, gripping her harder and pushing her down on his hardening length as he thrust up. She gasped, and he took the opportunity to taste the inside of her mouth again.

Just as things were heating up again, his phone rang.
The personalized ringtone of, “It’s Speedy! It’s Speedy! It’s your sister, so you better answer your phone!” in his sister’s bright, chipper voice immediately killed his hard-on.

“I thought I turned that on silent,” he grumbled, reaching over and answering his phone. Felicity tried to roll off him, but he tightened his hand on her hip to keep her in place. She raised an eyebrow, but complied and settled her weight on his hips. He tried not to groan when he answered. “What is it, Speedy?”

“What do you mean, what is it? I’m calling to check on Felicity, but she isn’t answering her phone! Tonight must have been horrible and I wanted to – ”

“That’s really sweet Speedy, but you just talked to her like two hours ago.”

“Sure, but that’s not the same thing as hearing from her right now! Is Felicity okay? Is she asleep?”

“She’s definitely okay, and she’s certainly not asleep.”

Oliver hadn’t meant to say it, but it slipped out. Felicity gaped and swatted his chest, but it was more playful than angry. “Ow!” he exclaimed anyway, smiling when Felicity grinned and shook her head.

The phone was silent for a second before Thea shrieked, “Oh my God!”

“Ow, Thea, volume!” he shouted back, pulling his phone from his ear to speak into the microphone before slowly returning it to its spot.

“Not sorry! Something happened, didn’t it? You kissed Felicity! I know you did! Don’t deny it! It’s in your voice like the time you told me you’d be happy to wait for her forever like the total sap you are!” she exclaimed, far too excited for Oliver’s liking.

Felicity clearly heard Thea through the phone, but she shrugged at Oliver’s raised eyebrow. Obviously, she didn’t care what he told people. And it was people, plural. At Thea’s declaration, he heard a voice that was obviously Roy’s sounding interested on the other end. And increasing in volume.

Roy very clearly said, “I told you, Thea. That means I win the pool.”

“You guys bet on when Felicity and I would get together?” Oliver asked, incredulous but somehow not entirely surprised.

“So you confirm it!” Thea exclaimed, getting dangerously close to shrieking territory again.

Felicity shook her head, grabbed the phone, and put it on speaker. She laid the device on Oliver’s chest between them. “Yes, Thea. Your brother and I are in a relationship now. Congratulations, Roy,” she said, grinning down at Oliver. He couldn’t help but smile back. A relationship. They hadn’t even talked, but they didn’t have to. Everything that needed to be said was between them in that moment.

“Goodnight, Speedy. We’ll see you tomorrow,” Oliver said, not even reacting when his little sister said, ‘You don’t have to go to bed yet, big bro. Don’t disappoint your woman on your first night together!’

He hung up. “Now where, were we?” he asked, drawing Felicity closer with a grin and flipping them over in one move.
Felicity gasped as his weight settled on her hips. Her legs had fallen open for him, and Oliver decided in that instant that he’d never feel more at home than he did between Felicity’s thighs. “Smooth move, mister,” she murmured, cupping his face in her hands and bringing him down for a kiss.

“I think we were talking about how much I wanted you. And you wanted me,” she said, shifting her hips and groaning when she felt his length between them. Fuck, he felt like groaning too. They still had their pants on, but the friction was delicious.

“Of course,” he said, slipping his hand inside her pants and groaning when he felt how wet she was. She tossed her head back and gasped.

Tonight was going to be long and, if he had anything to say about it—which most definitely he did—the last thing on either of their minds would be Cooper Seldon.

“Wait for me forever, huh?” she asked between kisses, somehow managing to stutter out the words as Oliver’s hands roamed lower. Obviously, he had work to do if she could still form coherent sentences.

He kissed her, long and deep, sweeping his tongue into her mouth before pulling back and saying, “You’re worth every second, Felicity. I’m just happy it didn’t take that long.”

She sighed when his hands found their destination. Throwing her head back without rational thought, she just managed to choke out, “Me too” before there were no more words between them.

At least, no coherent ones.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think? There wasn't another dramatic Cooper moment, but rest assured it's coming next chapter. This story only has a chapter or two left, so get ready for the epic climax! At least, I hope it's epic. (I haven't actually started writing it yet...)

Btw, this is my first attempt at Olicity smut! I know it wasn't really explicit or anything, but this is my comfort zone with the two of them right now. I'm pretty proud of how it turned out!

Drop me a comment and a kudo here, then head over to my Tumblr (same name) if you want to chat! I love hearing from you guys.
Chapter Summary

Cooper makes his move.

Chapter Notes

Okay guys, I'm a little unsure about this chapter. As I was writing, it became something pretty different from what I originally thought this chapter would be. I'm interested to see if you guys like it as much as I do. I thought about rewriting it to fit my original vision, but after some deliberation (and encouragement from thatmasquedgirl), I decided this was the story I'd always set out to tell, even if I didn't know it in the beginning.

Also, this chapter is dedicated to my OVER 350 FOLLOWERS ON TUMBLR! Idk how many of you are also following me over there (same name) but if you are, I appreciate and love you so much! I've never been embraced by a fandom the way the Olicity fandom has embraced me, and I'm so happy I decided to randomly watch the superhero show with the hot guy in it.

So, I hope you enjoy! See you at the end :)

Felicity woke up the next morning like she never had before. Usually, her mornings consisted of gritty eyes, glaring sunlight, and a general distaste for any time on the clock that combined sunlight and a.m. This time, it was like a Disney movie. She felt well-rested, warm, her eyes were grit-free, and she already had a smile on her face. Birds could’ve started helping her with her morning routine and she wouldn’t have been too surprised.

Felicity thought that was mostly due to how she was wrapped up in the arms of the man she loved and felt pleasantly sore in a way she hadn’t felt in too long. Soreness was usually bad because it meant she’d had to go to the gym the day before, but the creation of it this time had been much more pleasurable.

For what might’ve been the first time in her life, she woke instantly, energy restored, and ready to start the day. And by start the day, she definitely meant picking up where she and Oliver left off last night.

But Oliver was still sleeping. He hadn’t moved a muscle when she stirred, and a brief glance at his gorgeous face confirmed that his eyes were closed, his face slack, and his mouth was slightly open on an almost-snore. She so rarely got to see him sleeping since he almost always woke before she did, so Felicity took a few moments to sit and reflection upon the perfection of the face of the man she loved.

But there was a renewed energy in her body she hadn’t felt in a long time. It felt like a whole new
era.

Apparently in this era, she had some excess energy she needed to burn off. Since her fabulous boyfriend (they hadn’t DTRed, but Felicity highly doubted Oliver would mind the labels) was asleep, she’d just have to make use of the building’s state-of-the-art gym. Oliver had one, of course, but it was mostly weights and the salmon ladder – or Lust Ladder, as she called it privately. She grinned at the thought that she could call it that out loud now and took a few minutes to fantasize about Oliver’s reaction.

Felicity was more of a cardio girl when it came to gym equipment. She also liked kickboxing. Either way, she was going to face the morning with a smile, a workout, and then one of Oliver’s post-workout smoothies that somehow disguised the taste of the kale he put in them.

Then sex. Felicity planned for a lot of sex. The workout was just to stretch her muscles.

Part of her briefly worried she was turning into a sex-crazed lunatic, but then she remembered the night before and smiled. For how ravenous she’d been, Oliver had been insatiable. If she did become a sex addict, she was almost positive she wouldn’t be alone.

She crept out of Oliver’s arms, grinning when he immediately rolled over onto her pillow and wrapped his suddenly free arm around it. Felicity couldn’t help the dopey smile that took over her face – how many was that this morning? – as she threw on some workout clothes. Her things had slowly migrated into Oliver’s room. Felicity threw on her prototype workout wristwatch from Curtis he’d been asking her to test out and went into the living room.

Ophie was still asleep, presumably in the room that had been Felicity’s, and the apartment was quiet. The door to Lyla’s room was still closed and she presumed the woman was still asleep too. For once, Felicity was the first one awake.

She sent a quick text to Oliver’s phone, letting him know where she was going, and opened the front door.

Javier and Ramos were there, and they turned to face her with identical professional yet expectant looks on their faces.

“I’m going to the gym,” she said, her voice much more chipper and warm than it had any reason to be lately. “I’m sure you’ve studied the building so you know where it is. Which one of you wants to come?” She knew better than to attempt to go by herself. Not only would Oliver and Lyla freak out, but it was stupid with Cooper on the loose. Yeah she was in Oliver’s building, but she still didn’t quite feel safe outside of the apartment.

But today was a good day. Maybe the best day she’d ever had, when coupled with the events of the night before. She wasn’t letting herself live in fear. She was going to work out and then spend the day with her boyfriend. It was like there were small bluebirds flying around her head and singing or something.

She resented the brief thought that the only thing that made her feel better was getting laid, but it definitely didn’t hurt. Besides, it was probably more the realization of five years of emotions than the sex. At least partially.

The bodyguards glanced at each other, obviously having a silent conversation about their orders or whatever, and Ramos turned back to her with a small smile, obviously infected by her good mood. Felicity was happy they finally had cause to see it. “I’ll accompany you, Miss Smoak,” he said in very lightly accented English.
Felicity quietly closed the apartment door and waved a hand in the air. “Felicity, please. No need to stand on ceremony with me,” she said, smiling up at the bodyguard. She was smiling more than she had since the news about Cooper broke and it felt good to feel like herself again. Her face muscles were getting a workout, too.

“Of course, Felicity,” he said, easily falling into step behind her as she power-walked through the building to the amazing gym.

It was still early, an almost unheard-of hour for Felicity to be awake unless it was for a job, but as she climbed onto the elliptical for her warmup she didn’t see it as the torture device it usually was in her eyes. Everything was just better.

For five years, she’d been living with this simmering attraction for Oliver mixed with other stuff she refused to identify and let it exist under the banner of being best friends. Even when she dated other men, it never really went away. It made her heart soar to know he’d been feeling the exact same way. Now, their feelings had been brought out into the light of day and given glorious new life.

Things had to work out between them now, because Felicity didn’t think she’d ever be able to put all those feelings back in their box again.

From a girl with self-professed commitment issues due to a deep-rooted fear of abandonment, that casual thought of forever made her impossibly giddy.

She was nearing the end of her cardio routine when something caught her attention. It wasn’t quite a sound or anything else so sensory. It was more a feeling. A deep, powerful feeling in her gut that something was terribly, horribly wrong.

The door to the gym burst open.

Felicity leapt off the elliptical and immediately backed up, her brain going into overdrive to take in the scene as she unconsciously pulled out her phone and dialed number one on her speed dial.

Ramos didn’t even stand a chance. Seven armed men dressed in black with helmets covering their heads and faces poured into the room. Five went after the bodyguard, overwhelming him easily, and two came for Felicity.

One hand still clutching her phone like a lifeline, all of her Krav Maga training flew out of her head and she picked up the closest thing – a ten-pound weight – and threw it at the goon closest to her.

Unfortunately, though the man in front of her was stunned at her brazen display, the other moved like a cobra and was on her in seconds. She struggled, of course, kicking, squirming, biting, and otherwise being the most inconvenient person possible, but the man was covered in Kevlar and had over 100 pounds on her. He had her phone on her ground and both arms firmly behind her back in second. He even managed to lift her slightly off the ground, making struggling much more difficult and putting painful pressure on her shoulders.

The other man recovered and sneered at Felicity. Without ceremony, he stomped on the phone she had fought so hard not to abandon on the ground. It wasn’t necessary – there wasn’t anything Felicity could do with the phone unless she was holding it – but it was cruel and demoralizing enough to make her pause for the briefest instant.

That was all the man behind her needed. He quickly transferred both her wrists to one hand and enclosed her throat in a crushing grip.
The man leaned closer to her, just next to her ear, and sneered, “Cooper can’t wait to see you.”

Felicity struggled to head-butt the man, but she was gasping for air and he did something with his hand that lit her up with pain before the blackness overtook her.

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Oliver woke up with a smile on his face, which he would’ve thought impossible if not for the events of the night before.

There was a pleasant burn in his body, muscles buzzing like they hadn’t in a long timme. He hadn’t slept with anyone since… well, since Felicity invited all her friends over and introduced her new boyfriend Cooper. They’d been smiley and held hands and did the ‘conversations with a glance’ thing… and as soon as the dinner was over, Oliver had gone to the nearest bar, taken as many shots as he dared, and slept with the first pretty blonde to look his way.

He’d felt disgusting afterward. The girl – he couldn’t even remember her name – was the perfect choice. She’d put on her clothes and left with a sassy wave as soon as they were done, but it felt like a betrayal. He hadn’t gotten a hangover, but he had still felt like throwing up in self-loathing well into the next day. Since then, he’d sworn off women for a while and just… never got back on them.

That was an innuendo Oliver thought Felicity would enjoy but when he opened his eyes to share it with her, his personal ray of sunshine was nowhere to be found.

He felt a flash of worry for a brief moment before he grabbed his phone. A text from her was waiting on his screen, ‘Woke up before you for once. Going to work out in your building’s insane gym. I know, I’m working out of my own free will. It’s a miracle! Be back soon. Don’t scowl, I took a bodyguard.’

How she was able to ramble just as adorably in text as she did in real life was a mystery, but Oliver couldn’t stop the smile on his face.

Then he noticed the missed call and frowned. Normally, he was a light sleeper… but he’d put the phone on silent last night after Thea’s ill-timed interruption. It had only been a little over fifteen minutes ago and he wondered what had made her call instead of just text or come back upstairs and talk to him directly.

Curious, he pressed play.

The first seconds had him leaping off the bed and throwing on the first clothes he could get his hands on. He heard the sounds of fighting, lots of people moving around a small space, and then the distinctive crash-clatter of the phone hitting the ground. There were several more punching and kicking sounds – and some panicked noises that he knew were made by Felicity that brought him closer to a heart attack than his age warranted – before everything went silent with a horrible crack.

“Lyla!” he shouted, bursting into the hall.

It was a testament to the other woman’s field experience that she was only a few seconds behind, her eyes and posture alert and ready despite her pajamas and bedhead as she somehow managed to ask calmly but urgently, “What is it?”
Before the question was done, Oliver put his phone on speaker and played the message again as he began walking to the door. Lyla followed behind, her face increasingly horrified as the message continued.

When they reached the door, their expressions were equally thunderous. Only Javier was on the other side, startled by both the unexpected door opening and the anger on both Oliver and Lyla’s faces.

“Where is she?” Oliver asked, trying not to growl. He could practically hear Felicity reprimanding him in his head for snapping at the poor man, but that just brought more light to the fact that she wasn’t here.

Javier was obviously startled, but he responded promptly. “Miss Smoak took Ramos and went to the gym. They’ve been gone for about forty-five minutes,” he said.

“How long exactly, Javi?” Lyla asked, obviously not interested in the usual casual camaraderie with her men.

Javier straightened, adopting a graver air at Lyla’s tone. “They’ve been gone for,” he checked his watch, “thirty-seven minutes, Mrs. Michaels.”

Lyla pulled out her phone and made use of the app Felicity had put on her phone to easily comb through security footage. She set the time for exactly 37 minutes prior in the building’s gym, but Oliver couldn’t just stand there. He went to the elevator, every inch of him a predator that was itching to hunt.

They made it to the proper floor and the three of them burst into the destroyed gym just as Lyla’s phone showed the footage of masked men dressed in black infiltrating the same room not even an hour before. Oliver watched in horror, easily placing the images on the screen in the room in front of him, as the men neutralized Ramos – who was still lying on the floor, though Oliver could in some distant part of his mind that the other man was still breathing – then went for Felicity. Somehow, against all odds and every emotion he was feeling in this situation, he couldn’t help but let out a choked laugh when she threw a free weight at the advancing man. It was so like her.

But, despite her training, Felicity had been overwhelmed and terrified and the men obviously had experience and numbers on their side. The man in front of her crushed her phone just as the one behind her crushed her neck in his huge hand, leaned in to whisper something in her ear, and caught Felicity as she went limp.

Oliver was practically vibrating. He was standing in the same place Felicity had been not even an hour before, but when she’d needed help – needed him – he wasn’t there. Noise roared in Oliver’s ears, overwhelming him, but he found the strength to turn to Lyla. “How could this happen?” he asked, doing his best not to sound accusatory. It wasn’t Lyla’s fault. She was the head of security, yes, but this type of situation couldn’t be blamed on solely one person. As much as Oliver wanted someone to rant at and fight and somehow do enough to get Felicity back, he knew Lyla was the wrong target. There was only one person who deserved his ire, and this time Cooper would be lucky if he got away with prison.

Lyla was typing furiously on her phone, obviously checking up on what went down in the past hour. “The cameras in the garage went on the fritz. Felicity didn’t spend as much time on them as she did on the stuff inside. Obviously, they took out my man in the garage. Once they got inside, they took out anyone they came across until they found Felicity and Ramos in the gym.

During Oliver’s inner turmoil, Lyla had already called the SCPD and reported the kidnapping.
“The police will be here soon, and I’m sure Lance will be with them. We need to be ready to answer their questions,” Lyla said, looking up at Oliver.

Seeing something worrying on his face, she put a hand on his shoulder and moved in front of him, forcing him to meet her eyes. “Oliver, I know how you’re feeling. But you can’t run off without a plan. You’ll end up doing more harm than good and we won’t be able to find Felicity as quickly. We need to work with the police. Do you understand me?” she asked, squeezing his shoulder and shaking it slightly when he stayed silent. “Do you understand?”

Finally, Oliver met her eyes and nodded. It felt impossible. Sit and wait around, talk to the police, when Felicity was out there and needed his help? He felt like he was coming apart at the seams, vibrating into pieces with pent up energy. His rage burned so hot it was black, so hot it didn’t even burn. Cooper had violated Felicity in almost every possible way, and years later, when she thought she was safe, he invaded her life again. Not only did he terrorize her, but he took her from where she thought she was safe. He took her, violating her again, and Oliver knew that if Cooper survived taking Felicity Smoak, he was going to rectify that.

Felicity woke up in stages.

The first was an awareness that her head was pounding and her muscles ached. Not like a ‘good workout’ or ‘sex marathon with Oliver’ ache, but an honest-to-goodness protest on her body’s part of her treatment of it. Her throat felt like someone had dumped a bucket of sand down it, but swallowing ached horribly.

Then, she realized she was tired to a chair. A really hard, uncomfortable chair. The ropes bindings are wrists and ankles to the arms and legs of the chair were tight and painful. Her hands and feet were already tingling and she suspected they’d be numb soon, which wasn’t good. It could lead to nerve damage, which was bad for someone who loved computers as much as she did.

She was cold. Her cropped compression leggings and thin, clingy tank top did nothing to protect her from the chill of the… where was she?

After a struggle, Felicity managed to open her dry, heavy eyes. Thankfully, she’d put her contacts in before her workout. Though they felt sticky and thick on her eyes, Felicity didn’t imagine that her glasses would’ve survived the struggle.

She took in her surroundings and gasped. It was dark, but there was enough light to see. She was in the middle of a giant open space. The floor was concrete and so were the walls, but a brief examination – which including stretching out her stiff, sore neck and trying to ignore the resounding ache in her throat – showed she was in what looked like an underground concert venue. The stage was in front of her, but there was no seating or windows. Band posters decorated the walls, overlapping each other and peeling in some places. Despite the fuzziness in her brain, she knew exactly where they were once she saw the familiar logo: Brother Eye. It was a bar on the surface, but underground it was a concert venue. She and Cooper had come here for their first date to see Flying Neon Pygmies, one of their favorite techo-punk-pop-EDM bands at the time.

The room was empty except for her, and she gave herself a moment to be afraid. She needed it. Just this one moment where she was alone and let the terror crash over her, freezing her insides but sending her heart into overdrive while she struggled to keep her breathing even. Cooper had
her. Crazy Cooper, who’d spent the past several years in prison because of her, had gotten out and now had her, alone, away from any form of help.

She sat there for a few moments, letting the fear run its course, before she took a deep breath and focused on a more productive emotion: anger.

Anger she could work with. It was hot and malleable. Fear froze and anger burned.

Oliver. She needed to communicate with Oliver. Sure, maybe the police too, but as usual, in a crisis, her first thought was of Oliver. Was he awake yet? Did he even know she was gone? Something in her gut said yes. There was no way this could be happening and Oliver have no idea. Was he scared? Angry? Both, like her? Lyla was probably making him talk to the police and sit still, which she knew wouldn’t go over well. Oliver was a fixer. Whenever something was wrong with the people he loved, he had to fix it. Sitting around and waiting for someone else to solve the problem had to be killing him.

With the fear manhandled into an iron box in the corner of her brain, Felicity focused. What was she going to do? She didn’t have her phone, which meant the signal couldn’t be tracked. The only thing she had was her watch… Her amazing prototype watch that had wifi capabilities. If she had a few seconds and both hands, she could tweak it to transmit and –

“Oh good, you’re awake,” a sickeningly familiar voice said, causing the fear to spiral within her like a tornado. She heard his footsteps moving closer behind her. He put a hand on her shoulder and leaned down, making Felicity cringe to the side when his lips pressed against her head.

“Don’t touch me,” she commanded, more of a croak than a voice, but still firm and angry as she ignored the horrific burning sensation it caused. She refused to cower in the face of this man. Fear had ruled Felicity’s life for too long. No more.

Cooper chuckled, which made her skin crawl. His hand ran through her ponytail before he moved to stand in front of her. “Don’t be like that, baby. We haven’t seen each other in so long,” he said, his tone and smirk twisted and cruel.

“Not long enough,” Felicity snapped, letting all her loathing for him show in her eyes. “I could’ve gone another… oh, forever.”

Cooper laughed this time, but she could tell from the tightness around his eyes that he was entirely aware she wasn’t kidding. He wasn’t entirely deluded like he wanted everyone else to think. There was no happy “Felicity and Cooper,” even in his head. At least, Felicity had that consolation. They weren’t together in any version of reality, even one cooked up in her psycho ex’s head.

“I wouldn’t say things like that, babe. It’s just you and me. Sure, there’s some people running around to make sure we aren’t disturbed but… It’s just us. No one knows where you are and there’s no way they can find you,” he said, his entire countenance becoming even more cruel. This was the true Cooper. This was the man she hadn’t known she was dating until it was almost too late.

“What do you want, Cooper? Don’t spew all that crap about loving and missing me. I know you, remember? There’s only one thing you love more than yourself,” she said, trying to sound unaffected and bored. Like she dealt with these kinds of things every day. Like she was beyond certain that the police were going to barge in any minute.

Without warning, pain ignited across her cheekbone and her head whipped around.
Felicity turned her head back around, breathing harder and trying to roll with the pain. Cooper’s hand was still in a fist – he’d punched her – and there was a wicked smile on his face. “I knew something had to shut you up. I just had to find it. Still not tired of listening to the sound of your own voice, huh babe?” he asked, his manic eyes shining.

Felicity stayed quiet this time and Cooper smirked. “That’s what I thought. You are right, though. I do need something from you,” he said, walking away to grab something from the shadows before wheeling it over. Cooper placed a metal desk on wheels in front of her chair. A single laptop sat in the middle, it’s screen dark. “I haven’t changed much, babe. I want the same things I wanted before.”

Her money.

Her work.

Her life.

Cooper started untangling her hands and Felicity’s mind raced. Her hands were free, but she knew he’d be watching her every move. He knew enough about coding to know if she tried to double-cross him. So, she needed to get her other hand to her watch without rousing suspicion.

A plan formed, but Felicity really wasn’t looking forward to it.

“No funny business, Felicity. I’ll know,” he said, tapping the side of his head. “Now, I want you to download all your prototypes and software to this computer and delete the original files. And, oh… transfer me about 50 million dollars.”

Felicity’s fingers were at the keyboard, but she turned to look at him with hard, cruel eyes. “Seriously? You really haven’t changed,” she sneered. “You’re still just chasing after me, second best… No, not even second best. You’re just never as good at me as anything, are you?” she asked, rhetorically, because she kept going. “You’re not as good as Oliver, either. God, the way he can – ”

Cooper swung again, but this time Felicity felt all the air go out of her lungs as his fist slammed into her gut. It went so deep, Felicity would’ve sworn she felt his fist against her spine. Painful, but successful. He’d always been so self-important when it came to Felicity, but he couldn’t stand hearing about Oliver.

Felicity curled in on herself, not even needing to over-dramatize the horrific pain coursing through her body, and brought both her hands to her face. Fast as lightning, her hands changed the wiring she’d run through several times before Cooper grabbed her ponytail and wrenched her head back. “Shut up and do it!” he snarled, shoving her head back toward the desk. She could barely even breath, still gasping for breath.

Felicity wanted to have to try not to look smug, but the pain radiating from her face, throat, neck and general torso area did much to dispel that notion. She’d done her part, and now she just had to pray that the SCPD would come soon.

Unfortunately, Felicity wished they could’ve come a little bit sooner. She was having a hard time pretending that this was taking her so long. Then again, Cooper knew how smart she was. Breaking through her own firewalls was hard work, not to mention that each different project and piece of software was encrypted separately. The money was easier and wouldn’t be sorely missed – aside from the fact that she could make sure it was returned to her – so she started with that.

Cooper was standing over her shoulder, his sharp eyes watching the screen, but there was a new
prototype tracking software she was developing for the government that could use a test run. Felicity knew it would work, but suits tended to like quantitative research. Overall, it meant Cooper wouldn’t be able to detect the tracker because he’d never seen anything like it before.

The money transfer, thankfully, was taking a long time.

“What’s the hold up?” Cooper asked, fiddling with the waistband of his pants.

Felicity rolled her eyes. “I may be a famous model, but I’m also responsible with my money. I have a safeguard in place that means my account can’t transfer more than $99,000 in one transaction to any individual I haven’t previously transferred money to without talking to my bank first. The conversation tends to be lengthy – my account manager and I are good friends now – and I assume you don’t want any outgoing calls from this location anyway. So, chill out. I’m working as fast as I can,” she said, once again doing her best to sound unaffected. No reason to be scared. As long as she was giving Cooper something he wanted, he wouldn’t hurt her. Irreparably.

And talking hurt a frack ton, but Felicity wouldn’t have traded the pain away if it meant she couldn’t snark her psycho ex.

Suddenly, the cold barrel of a gun was pressed against her temple and she froze. That must have been why he kept touching his waist. There was a gun there the whole time.

“I don’t appreciate the sarcasm, babe. Better work a little faster,” he said, his tone smug with the knowledge that he had the upper hand. Even with the police on the way, Felicity couldn’t ignore the sick feeling of fear in her stomach. No matter who was on the way to find her, she could be dead in a second if Cooper decided to pull the trigger.

She hated guns. Cooper had never used one before, to her knowledge, but prison changed people. Obviously for the worse in Cooper’s case, though become an even worse person than he already had been was probably pretty difficult.

Felicity kept working, trying to toe the line between working at her top speed and working so slow that Cooper would notice. The gun changed things. Fear was an ice block in her stomach, trying to distract her and freeze her fingers, but she couldn’t let it. She’d done her part. There was no way the police didn’t know where she was by now. They were coming, and she just had to be patient.

Being patient was never her strong suit.

Thankfully, she didn’t have to wait very long.

A loud clang reverberated from upstairs, which Felicity thought sounded an awful lot like the door to Brother Eye bursting open, followed by yelling and boots clambering on the ground.

“Shit,” Cooper spat, and in one quick move he had untied Felicity’s legs and dragged her off the seat by her hair. The only thing that kept her from howling in pain was the gun pressed to her neck causing fear to freeze her vocal cords. As much as Felicity wanted to shake off the fear, she couldn’t.

Cooper had her back against his chest, lifted slightly off the ground so she couldn’t get any leverage. His arm was across her chest, pinning her own arms beneath it. No matter how hard she struggled, she couldn’t get free.

“What did you do, Felicity?” he asked, his voice trying for levity and failing. His breath was hot in her ear and Felicity tried to recoil. “Why couldn’t you have just done what you’re told for once?”
“Doesn’t sound like me,” Felicity wheezed, biting off a whimper when Cooper tightened his hold and pressed the gun even harder against her neck.

“They’d you have to ruin everything, Felicity?” he asked, his voice getting louder over the round of pounding feet. Felicity could hardly hear anyway over the roaring in her ears. “I don’t just mean this time. We would’ve been perfect together. I just needed a little something, don’t you get it? Things were hard, but then you came along and you had everything. I was just taking my part!”

“It was my life, Cooper! You didn’t deserve any of it!”

Felicity was getting more scared by the minute. She thought Cooper was more or less the same as before – psycho, but not really. Apparently, she was wrong. He sounded more and more unhinged every seconds and that meant he was unpredictable.

Cooper continued as if he hadn’t heard her. “Then you had to go crying to the police and Oliver and get me thrown in prison. I don’t know what you see in him anyway. He’s a lumbering Neanderthal who will never be your equal,” he hissed, making Felicity’s skin crawl where his breath touched her skin.

Before she could start vehemently defending her boyfriend, however much good it would’ve done, the door they’d been facing finally crashed open. Police officers in tactical gear swarmed in and took up defensive positions, all their guns pointed on Cooper. And by extension, Felicity, since she was being held in front of their intended target.

Her eyes swept the group, tripping over a stoic, badass-looking Lyla for a moment before they fell on a familiar dirty blonde head at the very back of the crowd.

*Oliver.*

His blue eyes were wild, but they focused on Cooper with terrifying intensity.

“Drop your weapon!” a familiar voice shouted, and Felicity saw Quentin at the front of the officers, obviously taking point on the whole rescue operation.

“I don’t think so, Commissioner Lance,” Cooper sneered, obviously recognizing the man who’d officially arrested him years ago.

“I came back for Felicity for one specific reason,” Cooper bent his head to kiss her temple, jerking her even tighter against him when she tried to move away, “and since you so rudely interrupted, I didn’t get it. Now, I guess I’ll just have to take something else.”

His tone and the fact that his hold tightened on her even more, however that was possible, left no one unsure of what he meant. Since he didn’t get the money and prototype ideas, he would take the source of them – Felicity.

Oliver looked like he was about to throw himself at Cooper, gun or not, but obviously someone had spoken to him before they came because he managed to restrain himself. Felicity made a reminder to check for any cracked teeth when they got out of this – because they would both get out of this.

“You’re surrounded, kid. We’ve got officers at every point of entry, including that little backstage door you were probably planning on escaping through. Drop your weapon, let Felicity go, and everything will go nice and smooth,” Lance said, his voice loud but level.

Felicity couldn’t see Cooper’s face, but she felt him tensing up, obviously getting more worried as the situation got further out of his control.
After a few fraught seconds, Felicity felt Cooper relax. That made her tense up. Why was he relaxing? Did he have a plan? What was –

“I’ll surrender,” he said, and Felicity felt a cold shiver race down her spine at his smug, cruel tone. “But only to Oliver Queen.”

Felicity had stayed silent until now, but she couldn’t anymore. Obviously, whatever Cooper was planning was a trap. Just as she opened her mouth to say something – anything – Cooper snaking his hand up and clamped it over her mouth, somehow still keeping his firm hold on her.

Everyone else was still, keeping their eyes on Cooper, but Lance took a moment to glance over his shoulder at both the man in question and Lyla.

“Not gonna happen, Seldon –”

“Okay.”

It was the first time Felicity had heard Oliver’s voice in what felt like years, though she knew it had probably been mere hours. Seeing him there, his blue eyes shining with fierce intensity and his voice ringing out strong and sure with just one word, somehow made her feel safe despite the gun to her neck and psycho ex at her back.

Oliver somehow made it through the tactical grouping of police officers with his usual athleticism and grace to Lance’s side. The police commissioner was staring at him like he was crazy and his mouth was moving like he was saying how bad an idea this was and it was against protocol, but the roaring in Felicity’s ears had picked up and she couldn’t hear it. She could hardly even see anything. Just Oliver, really. Looking at her, gazing at her, really, looking into her eyes like they were the only two people in the room, his eyes only briefly darkening when they took in what had to be a horrible shiner on her left cheek.

And that was how she knew that, even though this was horribly dangerous and definitely a trap, Oliver was going to do what Cooper demanded. If it meant the slightly chance of everyone – of her – getting out relatively unscathed, he would do it. Oliver was a self-sacrificing idiot like that.

Completely ignoring all of Lance’s words and the restraining hand he tried to put on Oliver without taking his gun off Cooper, Oliver walked into the no-man’s-land between the police and Cooper. He looked poised, ready, and his eyes were fixed on the man behind her.

Felicity

Felicity.

*Felicity.*

She was the only thing Oliver could think of. Not even Lance talking in his ear about how Cooper was dangerous and unstable and this was so against police protocol he couldn’t even begin to let Oliver bring him in broke through his firm, icy concentration. All he could hear was his own heart pounding and all he could see was Felicity trapped in Cooper’s grasp.

She’d done her part. When his phone started to go off – despite Oliver not setting any alarms –
and he saw Felicity’s location, he would’ve collapsed in relief if he hadn’t been so singularly focused on getting her back. She’d found a way to bring in the cavalry, and if this was the only way to make sure everyone got home, then so be it.

Cooper’s hand was over Felicity’s mouth, but he could see in her eyes that she’d be yelling at him if she could. Obviously, he knew not to trust Cooper, but with everything crashing together he didn’t have time to think of another way.

He took a step forward.

Another.

Another.

Until he was standing a scant few feet in front of Cooper, his hands loose at his sides, his eyes trained on the man behind the woman he loved.

Oliver could see the cunning in Cooper’s eyes just as easily as Felicity could probably sense it, but he wasn’t going to let that stop him. “Whatever you’re planning, it isn’t going to work,” Oliver said, his voice calm and assured.

Cooper sneered again, which Oliver thought might be his default expression, and said, “I think it is.”

Everything happened so quickly that Oliver wouldn’t be able to remember the exact order of events until days later.

Cooper pointed his gun at Oliver and Felicity finally had her opening. As Cooper aimed his gun at Oliver, Felicity gave a mighty heave with her whole body, putting Cooper off balance. A shot rang out from somewhere and Oliver rushed forward, ignoring the roaring blood in his ears.

Felicity spun around in Cooper’s arms, hooked her leg around his, and sent both of them crashing to the ground with the pink-haired pixie on top. Cooper tried to rally, but Felicity grabbed his arm holding the gun and repeatedly slammed his wrist against the ground until he let go. Then, with a rage Oliver had never seen in her, she grabbed the gun and hit him squarely on the side of the head.

It was over in seconds, but it felt like hours before Oliver finally reached Felicity. She was hitting Cooper repeatedly with the butt of the gun on his cheeks, jaw, temples, and any piece of his face she could reach. Her blue eyes burned with righteous rage and Oliver knew she would’ve been shouting if any words could get past the anger trapped in her vocal cords.

“Felicity!” Oliver exclaimed, feeling a heady mix of relief and concern. The rage was still there, simmering below the surface, but his main concern was the woman he loved.

Cooper was unconscious by now, his face a bloody, fleshy mess, and the police were closing in to make arrests and take statements.

Before they could get close enough, Felicity’s eyes hardened and she glanced briefly at Oliver. “One more thing,” she said, and then she struck out as fast as a cobra. Oliver didn’t even know she could move that fast.

Fueled by fury, fear, and purpose, Felicity laid into Cooper’s hands and wrists with the butt of the gun. It only took moments for them to become almost unrecognizable lumps of red and purple. Oliver was paralyzed for a moment, unsure what to do in the face of Felicity’s mission, but before long he grabbed Felicity’s hands and pulled him away, simultaneously pulling her off Cooper.
She didn’t try to fight him. Her mission was over. Felicity felt somehow both frail and like iron in his arms as she watched the police descend upon Cooper. As much as Oliver’s anger wanted an outlet, as much as he wanted to lay into Cooper like Felicity had, he knew it wasn’t his place. This fight was Felicity’s, and she had put her demons finally to rest. Not only would Cooper be going to prison for the rest of his life – hopefully a much more secure one – but he would never have use of his hands again.

Oliver overheard one of the police officers trying to cuff Cooper and murmuring about how his hands and wrists felt like they were full of marbles.

Felicity might have heard it too, but it definitely wasn’t the reason she turned around, clutched his bulletproof vest like a lifeline, and started sobbing.

“It’s over,” she gasped between sobs while Oliver held on to her as tight as he dared. As long as she wanted him, he’d be there. “It’s finally over.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, what did you think? I hope you liked it!

Originally, Oliver was going to play a much bigger role in Felicity’s escape/saving from Cooper. It was going to mirror the rescue 3x05 a lot more. Felicity played an important part in her own rescue in the show, but I ended up writing her basically entirely saving herself and vanquishing her demon while only having the other characters play a part by distracting Cooper. I guess it’s a pretty close mirror to canon, but obviously it got a bit more violent at the end.

Once again, I wasn't going to write it this way! Originally Oliver was going to be the one who went off on Cooper. But then, as I wrote, I realized I was setting it up for Felicity to be her own hero. She gets pretty violent at the end, but I feel like that's true to Felicity in this AU. This man has tormented her for too long, and not only does she end his current reign of terror but she makes it so that he can never hurt her -- at least with technology -- again. Also, escaping prison is hard with no hands.

Anyway, drop me a comment or kudo if you're so inclined, and head over to my Tumblr! I love hearing from you guys :)
Oliver has a surprise for Felicity. It's much, much better than the surprises that came before.

Chapter Notes

THIS IS IT! The end of "Love Through a Lens!"

My first completed WIP here on AO3. It's been such a ride! Everyone has been so amazing, leaving such nice comments and being generally awesome. The fact that some of my favorite people in the Olicity fandom also loved this story as much as I did makes it that much more bittersweet! THANK YOU more times than I can ever say for all the comments, kudos, Tumblr chats, and general fabulousness you've all shown me.

By the way, someone requested I incorporate the photoshoot that inspired all this into the story. I already had it planned, so here you go!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Look over here, yeah… Oh, perfect, hon!”

It took everything Felicity had to maintain her series “model” face and not smile. She’d always loved being photographed by Oliver but it only got better after they officially started dating.

It had only been three months but it felt like forever. Then again, in a way it felt like they’d been building toward this ever since they met. Their friendship created the unshakable foundation that made this kind of relationship possible. There was nothing but honesty, intimacy, and love between them. She never knew love could be like that.

Felicity let go of the strap of the black crop top she was wearing, moving into a new pose that
played with the red skirt she was wearing. Her hair was still pink and short, which thankfully worked for the hair dye company she was posing for.

“You always say that,” Felicity teased, looking up at Oliver from under her lashes.

He grinned from behind the camera just a few feet away from her and murmured, “It’s always true.”

Felicity wrinkled her nose and shook her head. It just made Oliver smile wider.

“I love you,” he said, taking a picture of the exact moment Felicity heard him. He always said that was when she was her most beautiful – at least, that’s what he said in polite company. When they were alone, the answer was a little different.

“Guys, make everyone sick later,” Thea called from behind the camera, her eyes glued to Felicity’s face – more specifically, her makeup.

Felicity rolled her eyes with a smile, but got back to modelling.

“I thought you were happy for us, Speedy,” Oliver ribbed good-naturedly as he captured Felicity’s different angles.

“I think my exact words were ‘oh thank Gucci you finally admitted you were dating.’”

“Yes, I do recall something along those lines.”

“I’m surprised you remember, what with how you were making out with Felicity while we were trying to congratulate you.”

“We weren’t making out.”

Thea glared at her brother for a moment, obviously disagreeing, but for some reason dropped the subject. Felicity would’ve questioned why Thea wasn’t beating this point into the ground until Oliver agreed or unequivocally proved her wrong but, as she’d been reminded, she was on a job. Tommy, Sara, Digg, and even Ophie were on the shoot today. It was a bit unusual to have everyone together, but the stars had aligned and everyone wanted to spend time together. They’d missed the Queen sibling squabble because they were huddling around the craft services table and talking quietly so Felicity could hear her “mood music.”

They took a few more frames before Oliver stood up straighter, fiddling with the camera. If Felicity didn’t know any better, she would say he was… nervous. Oliver didn’t fidget.

“Okay, I want you to do something new for this shot. Stand up, turn to the left, and close your eyes. I’m gonna take some close-ups of the hair,” he said.

Felicity complied, but glanced over at Oliver, her brow furrowed. It was common to get direction like that from any photographer, even Oliver, but his voice sounded odd. “Is something wrong?” she asked, tilting her head. Oliver was usually such a steady presence, especially on set. It was odd to see him out of sorts.

He looked up at her from the camera, his blue eyes wide with surprise. Felicity wondered if he’d ever get used to how well she knew him. He shook his head and smiled, warming up his entire face. “Everything’s perfect, Felicity. We’re almost done, okay?” he said with a wink.

Felicity blushed, which she did an annoying amount around Oliver, and returned to the instructed
She maintained perfect posture and a soft, dreamy expression even though her eyes were closed. She heard the camera going off every few seconds, and Oliver’s voice reassuring her that everything looked perfect.

“Felicity? Open your eyes,” Oliver’s voice came from right in front of her.

Felicity opened her eyes and gasped, unable to believe her eyes.

Oliver was on one knee in front of her with a small, velvet box in his hands. Her eyes managed to drag away from the little box to Oliver’s eyes, which were shining up at her with so much love it made her heart clench. Her stomach dropped and for once, she had no words.

“Felicity Smoak,” Oliver said, sounding both emotional and confident at the same time, every word spoken with conviction. “I know we’ve only been dating for three months, but I feel like we’ve been together for years. It hasn’t always been easy, but every step we’ve taken in our lives has led to this moment. I know it hasn’t been perfect for either of us, but I’m grateful for every experience you had to go through because they made you into the woman in front of me right now. And I love her with everything in me. No matter what’s happened in the past five years, no matter how dark things got, you’re the one who lights my way. You’re my always, and I just want the chance to be yours. Will you make me the happiest man on earth?”

Felicity was nodding before he even finished, her hands clasped at her mouth and tears of joy in her eyes.

“Yes?” he asked, grinning.

Felicity nodded. “Yes!”

Before Oliver could move, Felicity fell to her knees, took his face in her hands, and planted her lips on his.

Every time they kissed was electric. Her entire body was on fire, starting from her lips and her pounding heart. Oliver responded instantly, smiling under her mouth. Felicity lightly scratched his scruff like she knew he liked and couldn’t hold back a smile when he moaned quietly into her mouth. She licked his bottom lip, asking for entrance he readily granted and then –

“Guys! Seriously? Little sister eyes!”

Their lips detached, but Felicity still held Oliver’s face and their foreheads rested against each
other. All she saw were Oliver’s endless blue eyes and she wondered if there was any way to make this position permanent.

*Flash.*

Too soon, Oliver took her hands off his face and brought them in front of him. Within moments, he had her left hand between them and slipped on the ring. It was a gorgeous square diamond with one small diamond on either side set into a platinum band. Felicity didn’t know anything about carats or cuts, but it could’ve been a fracking Ring Pop and Felicity would’ve been just as excited. It was the promise that mattered, not the jewelry. The fit perfectly and was beyond gorgeous, snug on her finger like it had always been there.

*Flash.*

She was engaged. To Oliver Queen. The love of her life.

Felicity felt like she was soaring. Happiness and love coursed through her and she was smiling so hard she thought her face would freeze that way.

*Flash.*

A loud *pop* broke them from their reverie and Felicity looked over to see everyone holding champagne glasses and Tommy with a bottle of Dom Perignon.

“Congratulations!” they all cheered, lifting their glasses and smiling as Tommy poured the fizzy drink. Thea was standing next to the camera, which was standing on a tripod, obviously going through some pictures with a huge smile on her face. Felicity remembered the flashes she heard. Oliver had set the camera up to take pictures while he proposed.

Felicity turned back to Oliver, suspicious. “You planned this,” she said, not even a question. Oliver’s giant smile said it all. “How long?”

“Have I wanted to marry you or have I been planning this?” he asked, and Felicity thought his massive smile was mirrored on her face despite her slight annoyance that everyone knew about the proposal before she did. “I knew I wanted to marry you the first night we were together and I realized you loved me as much as I loved you. I’ve been planning this ever since I realized we’d both be on this shoot.”

Felicity melted. They’d only known about this for two weeks, which meant he moved fast.

Another thought popped up. “You got a ring in two weeks?” she asked.

Oliver blushed a little, uncharacteristically flustered, but before he could answer Tommy came over and pulled them both to their feet. Felicity hadn’t even realized they were still on their knees, practically leaning against each other.

Tommy handed them both full champagne glasses and winked at Felicity. “He got the ring three weeks after you started dating,” he said, smiling mischievously as his friend when Oliver glared at him. He looked back at Felicity. “I demanded the whole story once he told me about his plan.”

The rest of the group came over and Thea exclaimed, “I’ve known for *months*. It’s been torture because I couldn’t drop hints to Roy. I couldn’t get him to call in sick to be here because Ollie didn’t want me to tell anyone else the plan.” She threw her arm around Felicity. The model couldn’t help but smile back down at her future sister-in-law while Oliver insisted Thea didn’t need to be thinking about marriage yet.
Oh frack, in-laws…

Thea continued, oblivious to Felicity’s minor freak out, and began telling the story.

“Let me set the stage. Ollie called me all bashful – ”

“I wasn’t bashful.”

“ – basically pleading for my help – ”

“I definitely wasn’t pleading.”

“ – to find the perfect ring for my future sister. He didn’t even need me! He saw that one in the window and immediately said ‘that’s the one.’”

Everyone laughed at the siblings and ‘awwed’ at the story, and though Oliver was glaring he couldn’t keep up the façade of anger in the face of his sister’s bright grin.

“You did help, Speedy,” he said. “I couldn’t have done it without you.”

“Well, the ring is perfect,” Felicity said, holding her hand out and gazing down at the diamond. Sparkly. “How did you know my size?”

Thea lifted her head high. “I have a knack for these things.”

Sara came forward and hugged them both, a hand on each of their shoulder as she disengaged Felicity from Thea and put her with Oliver. She looked between them with a happy, almost motherly smile and sighed. “You’re welcome,” she said, so sincerely that everyone laughed.

Oliver put his free arm around Felicity’s waist and pulled her close, smiling down at her. Felicity felt like she was going to combust with love and rainbows from all the happiness she was feeling.

Sara sighed dramatically. “Just imagine where we’d be if I hadn’t introduced you. Felicity would probably have gone off to MIT and become an amazing genius and Oliver would probably still be taking pictures of flowers and not letting anyone see them,” she said, like she was an old woman fondly looking back fifty years at what could have been.

Felicity chose to look at Oliver and see fifty years ahead. From her perspective, things look unbelievably bright.

“You think you guys had it bad,” Digg said, shaking his head and looking at the sky like he was asking for strength. Felicity blushed a little and noticed Oliver was doing the same. She wondered if he’d called their mutual friend as often as she had for advice, venting, and generally neurotic things.

Ophie danced around everyone’s feet, her tail wagging a mile a minute, obviously picking up on the happiness in the people around her.

They talked more, calling their friends that couldn’t be there. Felicity did her best not to think about telling her mother. Donna would probably scream, demand to see the ring, and then ask for the story.

Then again, she’d always been dropping hints about Felicity and Oliver getting engaged basically since they started dating. As much as she loved her mother, she was happy that her engagement moment was just her friends. Felicity needed to prepare for Donna’s excitement whenever possible.
Felicity just completely avoided thinking about the Queens. Oliver could handle his parents.

Felicity stayed on cloud nine for the rest of the impromptu engagement party, not even having it in her to act embarrassed when everyone wolf-whistled as she and Oliver left.

It lasted all the way across town and into Oliver’s apartment – basically their apartment now. There wasn’t really a formal discussion about it. Oliver never wanted her to leave, Felicity never wanted to leave, and her things slowly just migrated over. Her TARDIS slippers were by the bed, their clothes shared the closet, and deliciously scented candles sat on every available surface. When her lease came up, she asked Oliver about it and he’d just said “don’t renew it.” And that was that. Like everything else in their relationship, it was shockingly easy and amazingly perfect.

Once they walked inside and Ophie ran to her water bowl, which had taken up permanent residence under the window in the kitchen, it all hit her.

She was engaged.

To Oliver.

Felicity Smoak was going to marry Oliver Queen.

She turned to him with a huge grin, her heart leaping when she saw his happy, expectant expression. “We’re getting married,” she said, a little quiet like saying it any louder would break the moment.

“We are,” Oliver said, breaking into a huge grin. He didn’t smile often and Felicity thought he smiled more today than he had all in one day in a while.

“We’re getting married,” she said again, stepping closer and grabbing Oliver’s hands.

“Changing your mind?” Oliver asked, but he was light and teasing.

Felicity rested her chin on Oliver’s chest and shook her head. “Never.”

Oliver leaned down and kissed her. It was soft and sweet, chaste compared to the kiss they’d shared after he proposed, but Felicity’s toes still curled. “Good,” he murmured before he ran his hands up Felicity’s arms and pulled her in for another kiss.

“You seemed a little freaked out when Thea was telling the story,” Oliver managed to say between kisses and gently maneuvering them to the bedroom.

Felicity kept kissing him, not wanting to stop, but managed to say, “It’s nothing. We can talk about it later.”

It was rare that Oliver let himself be appeased when Felicity was obviously bothered by something, but it wasn’t bothering her anymore and he had a… growing problem they both really wanted to address.

It escalated. Between them, it almost always did. Felicity felt combustible, like any stray glance or lingering hand from Oliver would make her drag him back to their room so she could have her wicked way with him. Once again, she was nervous she was becoming a sex addict, but Oliver was just as bad.

“Am I turning you on, Mr. Queen?” she asked, feeling like fire as his eyes lingered on her body when she took her skirt off. The clothes from the shoot were Sara’s and she got to keep them. She was happy about that, because she’d seen Oliver’s eyes lingering a little heatedly on certain parts
of her anatomy during the shoot.

“Everything you do turns me on, Mrs. Queen,” he responded, making Felicity gasp at the casual use of her future last name.

His hands went to her crop top, skimming under the fabric and caressing bare skin. His touch was slow and warm like honey. “So you assume I’ll take your last name?” she asked, raising an eyebrow. Her seriousness was lessened by her gasp when Oliver’s hands crept higher under her crop top to rest lightly on her breasts. His hands never stopped moving but they maddeningly avoided her nipples, causing them to become almost painfully hard. She grasped his forearms – yum – just so she had an anchor when she felt like flying apart.

“I don’t care if you do or not as long as you marry me,” he said, bending over to kiss her and pinching her nipples at the same time, causing her to gasp into his mouth. “But I’ll call you that in my head whether you change it or not.”

“Hmm,” she hummed, trying to gather her scattered thoughts and unbutton Oliver's pants. He’d already taken care of his shirt. “I like the sound of Mr. Smoak.”

Giving up on the pants, Felicity abruptly pushed Oliver on to the bed and crawled on top of him as he took her crop top with him. It sacrificed his hands on her nipples, but she was willing to lose the battle to win the war.

Felicity sat on Oliver’s hips, just her thin underwear and his jeans separating them. When she looked up from Oliver’s abs and into his eyes, she saw so much love and adoration she had to pause her plan, lean over and kiss him hard.

“I want to go through those engagement pictures you took, Mr. Sneaky.”

“Right now?”

Felicity grinned at his plaintive tone and backed up for a moment, meeting his eyes in the brief space between them. “Not right now. I’m otherwise occupied,” she said, wiggling pointedly.

Oliver groaned and pulled her back down, crushing their lips together in kisses that were getting more and more desperate. His pants and underwear, along with hers, disappeared somehow and he was inside her, filling her perfectly, making her gasp and moan.

“I love you,” she murmured, grinding a little against his hips.

“I love you too, Felicity. So much,” he responded, grabbing her hips and grinding up into her with slow, focused precision. His pants would need to come off, but it could wait. This couldn’t.

“Forever and always.”

“OLICITY” TIES THE KNOT

by Adjoa Grace, E!News.

Oliver Queen and Felicity Smoak, the world-renowned photographer and famous supermodel duo known as “Olicity” to their rabid internet following, got married on October 24th, in a beautiful, private ceremony on the historical Queen Manor lawns.
Queen and Smoak have been close friends for the past five years, constantly fielding inquiries about their relationship status. They were “just friends” for a while but officially started dating last summer. The couple got engaged after only three months but pumped the breaks when planning their big day.

The ceremony was small and secret. Smoak announced it on her Instagram just before they got on a flight to their honeymoon, a mystery location where they’ve been unreachable for comment. The picture was a selfie of them taken at the reception, holding hands to display the rings and gazing into each other’s eyes with the kind of loving sappiness we’ve come to expect and love from the celebrity couple.

The ceremony was described by an attendee as elegant, tasteful, and fun. Guests weren’t allowed to have cell phones and the entire day was a celebration of love. Allegedly, Queen had a slideshow of photos he’d taken chronicling the couples now six-year friendship, including pictures from the proposal that have yet to be released to the public.

With the all-star couple finally married, the world can now begin the countdown to a little prince or princess joining the family!

Felicity rolled her eyes but couldn’t keep a huge smile off her face. The beach house in Bali was basically a giant bedroom and bathroom, with a bed also on the deck. Lots of beds. Beds they’d made very good use of. Thankfully they didn’t have any close neighbors, because they liked to keep the doors open – even during… certain activities – to catch the ocean breeze. It had taken Felicity a day or so to be comfortable doing that, but Oliver was very persuasive. And even with the sun going down it was blazing hot.

“You promised no screens,” Oliver grumbled, still half asleep on her stomach with his arms curled around her waist.

Felicity ran her hand over his hair and smiled softly when he pressed into her hand and hummed but didn’t open his eyes. “But they’re all saying such nice things, Oliver. Even if people can’t stop speculating about when we’re going to have a baby,” she said, wrinkling her nose for a minute. "And assuming a baby will have your last name. Do you think they know I kept my last name? If anything, the kids will be hyphenated - "

Oliver pressed his face into her bare stomach, grinning when his stubble cut off her ramble and made her laugh. “Not kids yet,” he said, lightly nipping her stomach and holding her in place when she tried to wiggle away. The tablet was long-forgotten on her nightstand.

“Not yet,” she agreed, taking in a sharp breath when Oliver’s mouth moved even lower. Warmth started to building, setting Felicity on fire, and Felicity gripped his hair reflexively.

Oliver paused before he really got to work, laying his cheek against her hipbone as he gazed up at her. Gazed. Oliver hardly ever just looked at her, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. “I want you to myself for a while yet,” he murmured, his hands running down her sides to join his mouth. "But that doesn't mean we can't practice."

As the heat built, setting Felicity on fire, she couldn’t help but agree. She wanted Oliver forever.

The glint of the rings on her left hand reminded her she’d have him. Forever and always.
Chapter End Notes

WHAT DID YOU THINK?

It hasn't really set in yet that this story is over. Mostly I'm relieved because editing the second to last chapter was so hard!

Drop me a comment and kudo, then head over to my Tumblr (same name) and give me a follow if you're so inclined. I post Olicity (and some other stuff) and will definitely be talking about future stories I have planned. Subscribe to me here if you want to know when I post again! I'm gonna focus on finishing my 4.5 hiatus drabble series, but then I have a few stories in mind...

Thanks again, one last time, for all the love you've shown this story! Every hit and kudo made me smile, and I hope every chapter made you smile too.

End Notes

I can't wait to hear what you guys think! Drop me a comment and a kudo here, then head over to my Tumblr and follow me! I post awesome Olicity stuff, and I love to hear from you guys!

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