Where to Go From Here......

by julespt90

Summary

The story starts the day after Oliver confronts his mother about Thea's paternity before going back to the Foundry. Sara shows up and the two sleep together. Felicity finds Oliver and Sara together in the Foundry the day after they slept together.
Chapter 1

A/N: A few months ago I started getting into the show Arrow. Yes, I was a year behind, but I started and then couldn't stop. Oliver and Felicity -became my new favorite non-couple on TV. So it was then I decided I wanted to get back into fanfiction with my new favorite non-couple. I haven't done fanfiction writing in a while but this pairing made me want to write again. The story takes place the day after Oliver tells Moira he's through with her when he finds out about Thea, and he and Sara sleep together. I started writing this right after that episode, but I'm not the fastest writer and I wanted to write a few Chapters before I started posting so anything that's happened since then is not reflected in this story directly. There may be some carryover but it's purely coincidental. I hope for any of you who are interested like the story I've come up with. Titles tend to be the hardest part so give it a chance even if the title doesn't grab you. I do want to thank Charlynn (oyhumburg), my beta. Without her probably none of this would make sense. Enjoy.

~ Jules~

Where to Go from Here…?

Chapter 1

"Tap, Tap, Tap...; Tap, Tap, Tap...."

As hard as she tried... well, in all honesty she wasn't really trying that hard, Felicity was unable to specifically pinpoint where that overly annoying, repetitive noise was originating. It could be from her planted foot as her toes continued to hit the hard travertine tiled floor, which for a work place was really quite beautiful... and so not important right now. Or, possibly, it was the pencil that was wrapped around her long, graceful fingers as it hit the sleek, tempered glass of her work space. Probably not the pencil, though, because it kept making it's way from the desk to her mouth and back again every few moments in quick succession. Maybe it came from the second hand as it inched around in its 360 degree pattern on the wall clock that hung symmetrically above the elevators that were in clear sight of where she was sitting and where her catlike, pale blue eyes had been focused since arriving earlier that day. But, more than likely, the sound was the thump, thump, thump signifying the heavy, rapid beating of her heart as she waited for Oliver Queen, aka The Arrow, to stride off the elevators of Queen Consolidated and decide her ultimate fate.

It was now 10 o’clock. An hour past the time he usually strode into work. Well, work was such an ambiguous term when it comes to Oliver and his 'day' job, but either way he was usually there by now. He could be with Diggle, working out after his 'meeting' with his mom the night before, having lost track of time. After all, she had lost track of time watching Oliver work out more than once. But John was pretty reliable and would know when it was time to quit and shower and make their way into the office.

It was no use. Felicity needed to focus on something other than her boss being late, which, in her mind, was not a good sign. So, the blonde did what anyone else in her position would do: she got out her tablet and started to work on her resume. Maybe she should check out Central City and see what was available there, because she knew once Oliver 'let her go' (and how could he not after what she told him about his family?), she would not be able to stay in Starling.

Yeah, sure, Oliver promised she would never lose him, but was it really true? This wasn't just
some random name on a list; this time, it was his mother, and who doesn’t side with their own mother? Moira could be pretty convincing, not to mention manipulative, when she wanted to be, so the mayoral candidate had probably convinced her son that Felicity was just a jealous, bitter girl who should be let go from her current position as his executive assistant and removed from their lives for good. How could she stay in Starling City if that happened? Well, she couldn’t, and that was why it was time to start thinking about the future and what she would do when Oliver fired her. Because, now, it was a quarter after 10:00, and her imminent firing just seemed inevitable.

Just as she was about to review her current resume and make the appropriate adjustments (how does one describe being the personal, technical assistant for a vigilante, breaking several federal laws all in an effort to help said vigilante save their city, his city?), the elevator bell dinged, signaling its arrival. She hadn’t even managed to type a single word. Her heartbeat went into overdrive as she waited for the doors to open.

But it wasn’t Oliver who stepped over the threshold when the doors opened, and, as much as Felicity was dreading her next encounter with Oliver, she definitely didn’t want to deal with the brunette that was headed her way either. Isabel Rochev was not what Felicity needed that morning.

She watched as the skinny... and, yeah, alright, she could admit pretty if not stoic... executive made her way towards Felicity’s desk, her stiletto heels making a loud clicking noise as she assertively ambulated over. Well, that definitely took away from the tapping noise that only moments ago had seemed so annoying.

Without any salutations or a greeting, the woman quickly went into a tirade about Oliver. "Where's your boss? We were suppose to meet thirty minutes ago to go over some business proposals, and he never showed up. Not that I'm surprised. He has a knack for never being where he's supposed to be."

"He's not here," was all Felicity offered.

Watching as Isabel forcibly placed her hand on her hip, Felicity heard the annoyance evident in the woman’s voice as she responded, "I can see," waving her hand around the office space in emphasis, "that he's not here. What I need to know is where is he?"

Counting to ten before responding, Felicity plastered on her best smile and, through gritted teeth, said, “did you try calling him?”

Almost to the point of shouting, Isabel replied, “of course I tried calling him, but, not unexpectedly, he’s not answering his phone!” Smug derision invaded her voice. “What? Did you two have a lover's spat, and now he's off licking his wounds?”

Even with the sarcasm oozing from the woman's words, Felicity refused to rise to the bait, but she did decide to plant her hands on her desk and stand for more effect. She definitely felt at a disadvantage with Isabel standing over her. "It's not like that with us, and you know it. Now..."

Thankfully, before the conversation could go any further, Felicity's work phone rang. Trying to appear apologetic Felicity mouthed 'sorry' to Isabel before pointing to her phone as she shrugged her shoulders and mouthed 'work' before sitting back down and answering the call in her most business-like voice. "Oliver Queen's office, this is Felicity Smoak speaking. How may I be of assistance?"

She surveyed the brunette’s retreat as Oliver's business partner stalked off, stomping back onto the elevators before heading to... wherever. Really, she could give two figs – who even ate figs anyway? – unless it meant she was heading far, far away, never to return.
Realizing someone was now talking, the blonde turned her attention to the person on the other line. "Felicity, you there? It's Diggle."

Taking a deep breath and rubbing her now throbbing head after her encounter with Isabel, Felicity replied, "hey, John. What's up?"

"You okay? You sound a little distracted?"

Sighing, Felicity adjusted her glasses while taking another deep, calming breath before answering. "Yeah, I'm fine. What can I help you with?"

"Have you seen Oliver?" "No, not since last night, why?" Worried now, Felicity was almost afraid to ask, "what's going on?"

The blonde could easily decipher the frustration in Diggle's voice, but she also knew he was trying to stay calm for her sake. "I'm sure it's nothing, but, when I went to pick up Oliver, he wasn't at home, and no one had seen him this morning. I finally found Moira, but she admitted to not having seen him since last night. She also seemed pretty upset. Do you know what that's all about?"

Readjusting her glasses once more, Felicity tried to keep her voice even as she responded, "I... I have no idea. Maybe they had a disagreement about something?" She cringed. She did not like lying to Digg.

"Yeah, I'm sure it's nothing, but I hate when the guy goes off the grid. I really need to find the man. Could you do me a favor and head to the Foundry? You're closer than I am, and Oliver really needs to get to Queen Consolidated. He's already super late for his meeting with Isabel, and she is not going to be happy."

"Tell me about it," Felicity grumbled under her breath.

"What was that?" Diggle asked.

Sitting up straighter and fiddling with her glasses, Felicity replied, “nothing,” sighing as she put her tablet back in her bag. “I’ll head over there now, John. Do you just want me to bring him back to Queen Consolidated or meet you somewhere else first?”

“No, I’ll just meet you both back at the offices. Thanks, Felicity. See you soon.” And, with that, the man hung up.

“Yeah, see you soon,” Felicity responded with as much enthusiasm as she would if she was heading to the dentist for a root canal.

Knowing there was no sense in putting her Oliver-wrangling errand off, the IT specialist headed to the underground garage of Queen Consolidated where her shiny red Mini awaited. Once in her car, Felicity again tried to take deep, calming breaths to slow her rapid heartbeat. It was to no avail, and, even worse, her hands were shaking uncontrollably as she steered the car towards her destination. Once there, she quickly parked in the alleyway next to Verdant. As she exited her car her respirations started to increase as well. Nothing was working. She easily admitted to herself that she was extremely nervous about her upcoming encounter with Oliver, but Felicity wasn’t a quitter. It was time to face to music. Squaring her shoulders, she bent down to wipe her sweaty palms on the front of her pretty pink cotton sundress. At the last moment, though, she decided otherwise, thinking better than to ruin her dress. After all, there was a very good chance she'd be out of a job at any minute and, henceforth, would have no money to replace it if it was ruined.
Yet, as she made her way to the basement of Verdant, her resolve started to crumble. She chastised herself for thinking that going there was a good idea. “Sure, Diggle, I’ll help you find Oliver. No problem. It’s not like I’m worried about when I see him. Noooooo. This won’t be a problem at all. Yeah, right.”

Seeing Oliver not on the Salmon Ladder, Felicity strode right by her well outfitted IT station and headed towards where Oliver and Diggle usually sparred. It was there she saw something that she hoped to erase from her mind for all eternity.

Stopping in her tracks, Felicity watched as a half clothed Oliver tackled a half clothed Sara – thankfully, she at least had a sports bra on – down onto the sparring mat, both of them giggling as he did it. It was then that she watched as her boss, and damn it her secret crush, leaned in and kissed the girl passionately.

Feeling as if she was about to hyperventilate... and definitely not wanting to get caught seeing the pair together, Felicity turned to make a quick getaway before they could even know she had been there, but damn if her three and a half inch heels didn’t fail her at a time when she really didn’t need that to happen. For, as she turned, her right heel snapped, causing her to gasp and cry out in pain as her hip hit the steel gurney right next to her... which, sure, was always good to have when an emergency injury came up but not when someone was trying to make a clean getaway. Slightly cursing herself, she heard the one thing she had prayed she wouldn’t: Oliver’s voice calling out to her as she hit the ground. “Felicity...? What are you doing here?”

Hearing him move – to possibly help her – and asking, “are you okay,” the blonde quickly lifted her hand, not looking his way while motioning for him to stop.

“I got this,” was all she could grunt out before placing her hands on the floor and attempting to stand. Trying to be as graceful as possible when one’s sleek and sexy stiletto gave out at the worst possible time ever, she rose to turn and greet the pair, working to keep her face as calm and neutral as possible, concealing the hurt one feels when catching their boss, and secret crush, in a very compromising position.

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If he hadn’t been watching her every move to make sure she was okay, Oliver might have missed the hurt that flashed briefly in her eyes before she was able to cover it up with a sweet smile and awkward wave. But, because he was focused on her every move, he saw it before she had the time to completely cover it up, and the guilt he felt for putting that look into her warm, blue eyes hit him like an arrow to the heart, for the one person he never wanted to hurt in this truly cruel world was Felicity.

He watched as Felicity once again turned around as Sara scrambled off the sparring mat to grab her grey hoodie and cover up her bare body, the carefree feeling of only a moment ago gone. Yet, if he was at all honest with himself, it was probably for the best, because he really didn’t know or understand what he was doing with Sara right now, and he had better figure it out before anything else happened.

Sighing, rubbing his hands over his face, Oliver rose as well, grabbing his own shirt off the floor and pulling it over his head. “Felicity,” Oliver headed over to her against his better judgement. Wrapping his fingers gently around her wrist, he lightly pulled her around to face him once again, softly asking, “are you sure you’re okay?”

Her voice sounded breathless, which initially caused him concern, but, as she started to ramble,
Oliver felt a little more at ease. “I’m fine. Really. Nothing some Gorilla glue won’t fix... well, at least I hope so, because these were really expensive shoes. A splurge of mine when Walter gave me the job at Queen Consolidated. I know it seems silly to spend so much money on shoes... Wait, who am I talking to? Your a billionaire. $400 on a pair of shoes probably seems like nothing.Oops. Did I really say that, because I didn’t mean to insinuate that you didn’t care about the money you spent on clothing or, really, shoes for that matter....

It was when Oliver finally placed both hands lightly on her shoulders that Felicity stopped. Casting her eyes downward, she took a breath and said, “sorry. Uh, what was the question again?”

Reaching his finger down under her chin, Oliver brought Felicity’s eyes back up to meet his own. “I asked if you were okay.”

Oliver stiffened as he felt her pull away from his touch. “Yeah, I’m fine.”

Taking a deep breath, he decided to try and change the subject. “What are you doing here?” It was then he heard Sara say, “I think I’m going to head out.”

Feeling guilty now for forgetting Sara was even in the room as his attention had been focused solely on Felicity, Oliver turned to face the other blonde in the room, and, as he did, he heard Felicity respond before he could.

“Don’t go on account of me. I mean, I have to get back to work, and I should probably go home and get another pair of shoes since it would look silly if I hobbled around on one stiletto at all day. And, yeah, I should probably stop talking now.”

Waving her off, Sara replied, “it’s fine. I really need to go find a place to stay in case my dad takes Laurel’s side on her hate where I’m concerned and doesn’t let me into the house.”

Oliver quickly moved away from Felicity and walked over to Sara. “Hey.” He grabbed her arm just as he had Felicity’s, and, ever mindful of his surroundings, Oliver watched as his executive assistant stiffened and turned away as he spoke with Sara. “You know you aren’t alone.”

Sara easily replied, “yeah, I know. I’ll....” Looking in Felicity’s direction before continuing, she said, “I’ll just see you later.”

Oliver acquiesced, his attention quickly reverting back to his uneasy executive assistant.

“Sorry again, Sara,” Felicity said as the blonde headed up the stairs to exit the building. Oliver watched as Sara just waved her off and left. He made a mental note to check on her later.

Turning to his executive assistant/IT specialist once more, Oliver crossed his arms across his chest and asked again, “ alright, it’s time you told me what brought you here. And try to do it in two sentences or less.”

“Fine,” Felicity replied as she brought her head up high. “While you were here,” she waved in the direction of the sparring mat, “Isabel Rochev came to see me, looking for you of course and being her usual pleasant self when I couldn’t tell her your whereabouts, because I guess, according to her, we’re always together. Then Diggle called all worried about you because he couldn’t find you at the house, and no one had seen you since last night. Oh, and, yes, I realize this is more than two sentences, but I’ve been sitting around the office all morning, waiting for you to fire me. Do you know what that feels like, just sitting and sitting, waiting until your boss gets into work just to fire you?”

Now, that last statement really got Oliver’s attention. Crossing back over to her, Oliver once again
gently placed his hands on Felicity’s shoulders. “Why would you think I was going to fire you?”

“Because,” he watched as she took a breath before continuing. “Because you saw your mother last night, and I hadn’t heard from you, and I just assumed she convinced you that I was wrong to tell you her secret and that I should no longer be a part of your life.” With that last statement, Oliver watched as Felicity tried to keep from crying, small tears pooling at the edges of her beautiful, blue eyes.

“Hey,” he said as he gently placed the palm of his hand on her cheek, stroking it lightly with his thumb, reveling in how soft her skin felt. “I told you that you would never lose me, and I meant it. Don’t you trust me anymore?”

“Of course, I trust you, Oliver,” Felicity replied, grabbing his forearms with her hands. “But this is your mother.”

“Yes, it is my mother, but she’s not you,” he said, trying to reassure her that nothing could ever make him want her to leave. “Listen to me, and hear me this time. I. Will. Never. Leave. You. Okay?” Then he grabbed her and pulled her against his body, relishing in the feel of her gentle curves against him. Even if he shouldn't.

He felt her nod in acquiescence. Without releasing her, Oliver began to warmly rub circles along her low back. And, before he could stop himself, he asked, “maybe we should talk about what you saw a few moments ago.” He felt her stiffen immediately and pull away, knowing their close moment was over.

“No, I think it’s best we treat this just like Russia. I have no business commenting on what you do with your personal life, Oliver.”

“Felicity...”

“No,” Felicity raised her hand to stop him. “I mean it. I’d rather not talk about this at all.” He watched as she hobbled over in one high heel to her IT station and sat down. “Diggle wanted me to bring you back to Queen Consolidated, but I really need to go home and change. Do you think you can get there on your own and deal with Isabel without me?”

Oliver smirked slightly at her reference to his co-CEO. “Yeah, I can handle it. I’m going to shower and call Diggle now. I’ll see you later,... right?” Worried now with what after she just witness, she may never want to see him again.

“Yeah, I’ll see you later.” And, with that, Oliver watched as a now shoeless Felicity headed up the stairs to head home.

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As Sara left Verdant she heard her phone start to ring. Pulling the device out of the pocket of her grey hoodie, she eyed the phone number before answering.

“Hi Dad.” she said, happy to hear from him.

“Wait Dad, slow down. What did you say? Someone’s at your place to see me? Is it Laurel?” Trying to keep the disappointment from her voice when he said no, Sara waited until her Dad was finished before replying.

“Well, I was going to head to your place now, can they wait? Okay. No, I’m fine. I promise. I was
just hoping I could stay with you for a while till I get my feet on the ground. You know, things like, find a job, earn some money, find a place of my own. Thanks Dad. I was hoping you wouldn’t turn me down.”

“Okay, you’re headed to work. That’s fine Dad. I don’t need a babysitter, as you should know that. Yeah, I’ll just see you later. Love you too.” and with that she disconnected the call, but Sara’s curiosity was definitely peaked, not sure what this unexpected visit meant. Guess there’s only one way to find out so Sara quickly headed off to her Dad’s, and yeah, I guess her place now as well.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

The story starts the day after Oliver confronts his mother about Thea's paternity before going back to the Foundry. Sara shows up and the two sleep together. Felicity finds Oliver and Sara together in the Foundry the day after they slept together.

Chapter Notes

So thank you to all who are giving this story a try. I'm pretty bad with story summaries so I'm glad that did deter some from reading. This is my first time posting a fic here so I'm trying to work out how it's done. It was originally posted as a 1 Chapter Fic, but that isn't the case. This is an ongoing fic that will be probably be around 14-15 Chapters....? My plan is to post at least 2 Chapters a week. With that said I hope you'll continue to read what I have in store for Oliver and Felicity. If you can let me know what you think.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Where to Go From Here.....

Chapter 2

Sara headed down into the basement of Verdant expecting to see Ollie, but, when she arrived, there was only his partner, John Diggle, present. The man looked at her for just a moment, saying hi, before he went back to looking intently over some documents he held sitting at Oliver's IT specialist’s desk.

She decided it might be a good idea to engage Ollie’s right hand man in some conversation, working to get to know him a little better, especially since she was now planning on sticking around. Hopping up on the desk and sitting next to him she asked, “anything interesting?,” hoping to engage the stoic man in some conversation.

She watched as he must have decided to quit what he was reading and quickly stowed the papers in a locked briefcase before turning his attention to her and answering her question. “Nothing of importance.”
The blonde wondered if that was really true, mainly because, if it was undoubtedly nothing, why would he lock it up? She didn’t have time to ponder those thoughts further as she heard Diggle ask her a question.

“Looking for Oliver?”

"Yeah, I am. Do you know where he might be," she asked.

"He's probably finishing up some things at Queen Consolidated. He missed an earlier meeting..." Sara noticed how Diggle looked over at her and the sparring area before continuing, "... and got stuck staying late dealing with his partner's displeasure."

"Oh." Trying to stay nonchalant, Sara sneaked a peek at the empty desk chair beside her before asking, "where's uh...?" She pointed to the empty chair and acted like she didn't already know the name of the woman who sat there.

"Felicity," John finished for her.

"Right. Felicity. Is she coming with Ollie?"

Diggle bent down and grabbed his duffel throwing it over his shoulder before replying, "don't know." He then turned, heading down the hallway. "Could you let Oliver know when he arrives that I'm here. I'm just going to go change and begin working out."

"Sure, no problem," Sara said as she waved to the retreating form.

With nothing to do, the blonde decided to take a peek at Felicity's equipment, thinking she really did have a nice set up here. Looking around first, noticing John hadn't returned and Ollie and Felicity weren't there, Sara started going through the different browsers Felicity had running. Wow. She was impressed. Sara didn't think the blonde had it in her to hack into Federal agencies. She then saw something on the League of Assassins, but, before she could open the site, she saw Ollie on one of the video cameras outside and he was headed this way. Moving away from the computers, Sara headed over to the table that housed all of Ollie’s arrows. Just as she went to grab one, she heard Ollie call her name.

"Sara," he called to her as he came down the stairs. "Have you been here long?"

"Nope. I just got here. How was your day," she asked as she walked over and gave him a quick but thorough kiss on the lips. Yet, as she pulled away, it wasn't pleasure she saw in his clear, blue eyes but surprise and maybe even apprehension. Shrugging it off, Sara walked back over to his display of arrows and began to fiddle with one of the tips. "Quite the set up you have now. Very different from Lian Yu."

Smirking slightly, Oliver went over to where she was standing and replied. “It certainly is.”

Turning to face him, she asked, “do you ever think about... it?”

Whispering softly, without thinking, he quickly replied, “too much.”

Not sure she heard him correctly, she asked, “what was that?”

“Noth...” But, before Oliver could finish his statement, Diggle came out from the back, changed into his sparring clothes, carrying his duffel with him. “Hey, Oliver. Did everything go okay with Isabel,” he asked as a big grin spread across the man's face.

“Yeah, I managed to smooth things over with my co-CEO,” he replied. “Ready to do some
Throwing his bag down, Diggle laughed, looking at Oliver in his business suit. "Yeah, I'm ready, but it looks like someone needs to change first."

Rolling his eyes, Oliver replied, "I'll be right back."

As Oliver moved to go change, he asked Sara, "do you want to go a few rounds with us?"

Sara walked over to where he was standing, reaching out and squeezing his hand, and said, "no, I'm going to head over to my Dad's and see if he'd like to go to dinner tonight."

Oliver gently squeezed her hand in return when he replied, "okay, I guess I'll see you tomorrow."

"Yep, you will."

She turned to go but paused when she heard Diggle ask Oliver. "Where's Felicity? Isn't she with you?"

The younger Lance quickly turned to see Oliver's reaction, and what she saw immediately made her question what her present lover felt for his IT specialist. As soon as Diggle asked the question, Oliver became immediately worried, the concern evident across his face.

"What do you mean, is she with me? No, she left Queen Consolidated hours ago, tired of Isabel's offhanded innuendos. She told me she was headed here. When I didn’t see her, I just assumed she was in the bathroom. Or maybe on a food run."

"No, man. I haven't seen her. Do you want me to call her and make sure everything's okay?"

Sara watched as Oliver waved Diggle off. "No, I’m sure it’s nothing. I’ll call her as I head back to change, but, just in case, be ready."

Diggle nodded in acquiescence.

Before she could stop herself, Sara blurted out, "would you like me to check on her?" Even before Oliver could answer her, though, she knew what his answer would be. If something had happened to Felicity, he would want to take a look into it himself.

"Thank you, Sara, but no. I’ll take care of it. You have fun with your Dad, and I'll talk with you tomorrow."

Not wanting to push him on the issue, Sara smiled and said, "okay. But, if you change your mind, you know how to get in touch with me.” And, without waiting for an answer, Sara left.

And as she headed out into the night, Sara decided there was one stop she needed to make before heading back to her Dad's.

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Oliver headed back to change, whipping out his phone as he walked. 'Damn it,' he thought. 'Why didn’t she let anyone know she wouldn’t be here?’ Mentally talking to himself, he tried to remember that Felicity wasn’t expected to be at the Foundry every waking hour of the day, although she usually was. Feeling guilty for his unreasonable expectations, he tried to keep his
Although she usually was. Feeling guilty for his unreasonable expectations, he tried to keep his voice in check so he wouldn't yell at her for not being where she said she would be. He listened as her cellphone continued to ring, her voicemail eventually picking up.

You’ve reached Felicity. I know I should be answering, but you caught me at the one time when I couldn’t. Leave a message, and I’ll call you back.

He couldn’t help but smile like he always did when he heard her voice and that message but quickly sobered, remembering she hadn’t answered her phone and he now had to leave a message.

“Felicity, it’s Oliver. I’m over at Verdant and thought you would be here by now. Call me back.”

It probably sounded harsh, but the man didn’t care. He was worried, and, if he didn’t hear from her soon, he and Diggle were definitely heading out on an unexpected mission that night.

After he ended the call, Oliver tossed his cell aside and quickly changed out of his office attire. While his body moved like a machine, his mind was oblivious, stuck on, not only Felicity’s unexplained absence, but also their confrontation from earlier. Cargos on and electing to go shirtless, he left everything else behind in the bathroom, snagging his cell at the last minute. As he approached a stretched and ready Diggle, he admitted to himself that he was unfocused and in no place mentally to be sparring. Digg would undoubtedly get the jump on him, but Oliver didn’t care. He needed to stay busy while he waited, and a little physical exertion - or abuse - could certainly be distracting. This time, however...? Well, if nothing else, it felt deserved. With that thought, he lifted his hands, tensed, and awaited for Digg’s first attack. He didn’t have to wait long.

Chapter End Notes

I hope no one is disappointed that this Chapter had no Felicity. I'm sorry for that, but I can assure that won't be the case after this. This is most likely the shortest chapter I wrote for this story, but a necessary one to set up for what's to come.
Chapter Three

It was dark except for the low light glowing from the small lamp on the end table next to Felicity’s couch. That’s where Felicity sat, on her white down, puffy sofa, curled up with a pink chenille blanket covering her now pajama clad legs – alone with her cellphone clutched in her hand. She flipped the small rectangular object over and over again, periodically stopping to look at the screen telling her she had one saved voicemail. She should probably call him back. It wasn’t like her not to respond to one of Oliver’s commands, but right now she didn’t know if she was up to it.

Yes, it was a shock and, if she was at all honest with herself, a disappointment seeing Oliver and Sara together, but what right did she have to let it bother her? None. They were friends. Okay, maybe friends with one of the two having secret fantasies about their friend, but that’s all they were: fantasies. She liked what she did for Oliver, and she wasn’t willing to walk away just because she had to deal with another female in the mix. So, if that’s how it was going to be, that’s how it was going to be. With that decided, Felicity once again took a peek at her cellphone, wondering what she should do. For as resolute as she was in her decision to deal with Sara in a mature and positive way, she really didn’t want to start dealing with it until tomorrow, but she knew, if she didn’t call Oliver back, he and Diggle would show up at her apartment, and that was something she definitely didn’t have the strength to deal with right now.

Taking a deep, calming breath, Felicity flipped her phone back over and pushed Oliver’s contact information. She silently berated herself for sighing like a stupid teenager when she looked at his
photo. Damn it, why did he have to be so good looking?

However, as the phone began to ring, the blonde swore she heard a phone start to ring... right outside her apartment – not just outside but directly at her door. Setting her blanket over the backside of her couch, Felicity rose and headed to the front door. Putting her ear against the wooden surface, the blonde suddenly jumped and squealed as a loud knock reverberated throughout her tiny apartment.

“Felicity, it’s Oliver. Are you okay in there,” he softly but forcibly spoke before waiting a moment and knocking again, only the second time a little louder.

“Come on, Felicity, open up. I know you’re in there. I heard you. I just want to make sure you’re okay.” After no response, he softly yet loudly enough so Felicity heard said, “if you don’t open this door in the next minute, you know I’m going to come in with or without your permission.”

Unlocking the deadbolt, Felicity opened her apartment door with more force than she intended, but she was a little put off by his high handedness. “What do you want,” she angrily replied, whipping her hair off her face as it had fallen forward when she opened her door.

“Felicity...?”

Holding her hand upright, she stopped Oliver from talking as she swept her hand into her apartment signaling for him to enter. “Just come in. I’m scared we’re about to wake up the entire building, but,” holding her index finger up, “only for a minute. It’s late.”

Rubbing a hand over his face, Felicity heard if not saw his frustrations as he spoke. “I know it’s late. That’s why I’m here. Digg and I were worried about you when you never called back, so I decided I would come over and make sure you were okay.”

Being uncharacteristically defensive – maybe because it was so late and she was tired, Felicity placed her hand on her hip before replying, “why isn’t Digg here with you, huh, or even yet, why isn’t Sara?” As soon as the words were out, Felicity regretted saying them. Slapping her hand across her mouth, she turned away from Oliver, embarrassed by her actions.

Before Oliver could even comment, the blonde removed her hand but was still unable to face him. “I’m sorry, Oliver,” she said as she shifted but still didn’t face him pointing to her head then her lips, she added, “mouth, filter. I really need to learn when to keep my mouth shut.”
Sparing a glance in Oliver’s direction and seeing he wasn’t angry – more worried if she really thought about it, Felicity turned fully to face him and pressed on. “Look, I made a promise to myself... and to you.” Motioning between the two of them and finally looking him in the eye, “whatever you and Sara have going on, it’s none of my business. Was it a little uncomfortable with what I saw? Yes.”

She watched as he nodded and shrugged his shoulders, "I'm sorry you saw that."

She gave a slight nod of her chin acknowledging his words. “But that’s not going to stop me from helping you. I like what I do for you... well, not do for you, more like do for you...” She waved her hand around expressively, distractedly, “you know what I mean..., right?”

Placing one hand gently on her shoulder and squeezing it, Oliver softly replied, “I do.”

Moving away from his touch – uncomfortable with his nearness, Felicity, turned and walked over to her couch and sat, reaching up and placing the chenille throw back over her legs. “Good.”

She spread her hand over the blanket, working out wrinkles that weren’t even there, before once again giving him her undivided attention. “Well...” She moved her hand gracefully down her body. “You came. You saw. I’m fine. You can go now.”

“Not yet,” he said, blowing out a breath before heading over and sitting down next to her – closely next to her, Felicity noticed, and, since she was right up against the arm of the sofa, she had no way to scoot over and away. “Here,” was all he said as he handed her a bag that she hadn’t even noticed he was holding.

“What’s this,” she asked, taking the rectangular and medium sized package in her hand. It was wrapped in gold sparkly paper with a bright purple ribbon on the top. “The holidays are over?”

A smirked formed on his lips as he said, “just open it.”

Felicity carefully pulled the ribbon apart, then gently removed the pretty wrapping paper away from the box.
“Just open it already.” Oliver impatiently said.

Smiling at him, Felicity replied in return, “and ruin the pretty paper? Never.”

“It’s just wrapping paper, you know.”

“But it’s pretty wrapping paper and shouldn’t go to waste. Just don’t say anything if you see this on your Christmas gift next year.”

That’s when she heard Oliver laugh. Not a smirk or a grin, but a full on laugh. She loved it when he laughed. She loved when she was the one who made him laugh. He laughed so little that, when he did, as cliche as it sounded, it was music to her ears.

As she unveiled her present, Felicity could only gape in surprise, for inside the pretty wrapped box was a pair of Manolo Blahnik black ankle wrap stiletto sandals in a size seven – just her size.

“How... how did you know my size?”

Felicity chided herself for her immediate knee jerk reaction as she tried to stop the small tears from forming at the edges of her eyes. A better response would have been thank you and maybe even a squeal of delight, but of course the blonde never had the right response, because, if she did, she would have waited for Oliver to answer her first question before blurting out another.

“Why,” she asked in a soft, gentle tone, relishing the precious shoes before her.

“Because your other ones broke, and I knew how upset you were.”

Felicity just looked at her boss incredulously. She was speechless. Finally, she found her voice. “But... but these shoes probably cost double on what I spent on the others and I got them wholesale!”

“Do you like them,” was his only reply.
“Do I like them? He just asked me if I like them. Of course I like them,” the blonde almost shouted, pulling the pair forcibly yet oh so carefully out of the box and pointing them at him. “But I can’t keep them. They’re way too expensive.”

Placing his hands over hers, Oliver slowly assisted Felicity in carefully placing the shoes back in the box. Softly he asked again, “Felicity, do you like them?”

Quietly this time, she said, “yes,” as she bent her head down, allowing her hair to cascade over her face so he wouldn’t see the lone tear that rolled down her cheek. She must really be tired because she wasn’t prone to being so emotional.

“Hey,” Oliver said as he brushed her hair aside and tenderly used his thumb to wipe the tear away. “I didn’t mean to make you cry.”

Wiping her eyes as to stop any other tears from falling, Felicity met his gaze and said, “you didn’t. I... I don’t know why I’m being so silly. They’re beautiful, Oliver, and I really appreciate the gesture, but...”

“No,” Oliver said, cutting her off. “Felicity, you do so much for me. Let me do this one thing for you. Please?”

Looking into his eyes, Felicity could see the vulnerability in them, see that the gesture really meant something to him, that he truly wanted her to accept this gift, and, if that didn’t cause the blonde to lov... No, not that. Care. She cared for him. Because even Felicity didn’t want to admit to those greater feelings, not even to herself.

Not knowing where her boldness came from, Felicity leaned forward and gently placed a soft whisper of a kiss on his cheek – close to the edge of his mouth but not so close it was considered indecent. As she pulled back, she breathlessly sighed, “thank you.”

Felicity continued to watch Oliver’s eyes as she moved back, seeing the light blue orbs darken, and, as they did, her stomach began to flutter, her cheeks became flushed, and the small living room of her apartment all of a sudden became very hot and very claustrophobic.

They stayed like that for a few seconds, neither moving. It was so quiet. All you could hear was their breath mingling together, the rates steadily increasing, their heads both started to move
forward simultaneously; but, as quickly as the feeling started, it abruptly ended when Oliver moved hastily to stand up.

Breaking eye contact, he glanced at his watch and said, “I better go.”

Throwing her blanket once again over the couch, Felicity stood as well, agreeing, “yeah, it is getting late.”

Oliver turned to go, but, as he reached for the doorknob, Felicity asked, “you never did answer my question: how did you know my size?”

Turning back to face her, Oliver’s mouth slowly turned up, smirking, his only response being, “Thea,” before turning around to leave.

Felicity laughed as she followed him to the door. As he exited, he turned once more to face her.

Felicity held the door, ready to close it after his exit, and said, “you do know, though, that this doesn’t mean I’m going to bring you coffee.”

Oliver grinned as he reached up and cupped her face in one of his palms, gently stroking her cheek with his thumb. Felicity couldn’t stop herself from leaning into his touch before she heard him say, “lock up when I leave.” And then he was gone.

*****

Oliver couldn’t believe it. Well, he could. He just didn’t want to. He waited until he heard Felicity’s deadbolt lock into place before swiftly taking the stairs from her fourth floor apartment to the ground floor. What was that? He'd almost kissed her, and, if he was honest with himself, he really wanted to, and that was not a good idea.

Hurriedly striding to his car, he unlocked the door and quickly started the engine. He needed a release, but he’d already sparred with Digg. And where had that gotten him? Some very sore ribs and a bruised back. Thank goodness Felicity couldn’t see his wounds, for then he’d have to answer a lot of questions he really didn’t want to answer. Like how his concentration was way off because he had been worrying about whether or not she was okay, and how the encounter with
Sara and her that morning really had played with his emotions.

He really had no business kissing Felicity... as tempting as it might be. He first needed to figure out what was going on with him and Sara. He should probably talk to Digg about it, for Diggle was always the voice of reason, but Digg had no idea – Oliver’s fault of course – of everything he and Sara had been through on the island. So maybe this time it was best if he kept everything to himself, because, as much as he wouldn’t want to answer Felicity’s question about why he was so bruised up, he really didn’t want to answer any questions Digg might ask about the island.

Oliver was so consumed by his thoughts of Felicity and Sara that he didn’t even realize that he was being watched – had been ever since he walked into Felicity’s apartment earlier. As he speed home, he had no idea the chaos that was soon to follow.

*****

Watching as Oliver sped away in his Mercedes sedan, a shadow gazed into Felicity Smoak's apartment, that shadow having just had a very clear view of Oliver and Felicity's rendezvous. Finally, after several minutes, the shadow watched as the blonde IT specialist turned off her living room light and headed into her bedroom. Only then did they turn away and grab for their cellphone.

Listening for someone to answer, the shadow gave no salutations when the call was finally received. “Remember that favor you asked from me? Yeah, well, I’m in. Don’t worry. It'll get done. Just make sure I get my money.”

**With that, they forcibly hung up their phone and scurried off into the night.**

Chapter End Notes

Hope you all liked this last chapter. It was fun to write
Chapter Four

Felicity walked into work that day a whole lot happier than she had been yesterday. She knew her job was secure – both jobs, and she had some super stylish shoes to go with her carefully thought out outfit that morning. What could go wrong?

*Famous last words.*

Before she could even stow her things away and log on to her work computer, Felicity watched as a very pissed off Isabel Rochev strutted off the executive office elevators and purposefully headed her way. It was like her very own... even more twisted (and Felicity had always found the movie to be creepy)... *Groundhog’s Day.*

Slamming her hand on Felicity’s desk the brunette indignantly exclaimed, “two days. Two days your boss has been late. And, yes, we did have a meeting this morning at eight am....” But then, surprisingly, Oliver’s co-CEO stopped mid-sentence into her tirade and glanced over at the clock on the wall. “Wait. Did... did you just show up as well? Hmm, it’s a little late for you, too,” Isabel remarked while tapping a perfectly French manicured nail on her chin. “Should I then assume that you two love birds made up and your night was very *tiring.*”

Not a question; an assumption. Ugh.

Felicity really hated when Isabel brought out the *innuendos.* Why, oh why, did Felicity have to beat her boss into QC that morning? She had assumed, since said boss had shown up at her place very late the night before, that he wouldn’t mind if she took a little extra time before coming into
work that morning, and, yes, she was late... but only a little late, and, really, it wasn’t because she slept in. Not really. It just happened.

Well, it happened, because she had to find the perfect outfit to give her new shoes justice. Was it a little girly and a silly thing to do? Sure. But every woman had a right to be a little silly and a little girly sometimes. Although, the whole time she was getting ready, she swore to herself (and kept repeating it in her head) that her efforts were not about Oliver, not for Oliver; rather, they were all about the shoes. Only the shoes. Of course, that didn’t stop her from wearing a short emerald green dress to work that day, knowing how Oliver loved the color green. Yet, she had beaten him to work, which, in turn, meant she couldn’t stop her mind from wondering to that place as she contemplated why he was a little late. It wasn’t like it was hard for him to choose an outfit. After all, he was a guy.

Nope, she wasn’t going to go there. She had made a promise to herself the night before that she wouldn’t dwell on what Oliver and Sara might or might not be doing with their free time, and she planned to keep that promise, no matter how hard it was. If only she hadn’t mistakenly glanced down at her new shoes and got swept away by the feelings they provoked. She also couldn’t stop the sigh that escaped from her lips after admiring said shoes. She only hoped Isabel assumed the noise she emitted was from having to deal with the other woman that morning versus pining away over Oliver.

It was then that she, herself decided to glance at the clock above the elevators. “It’s only 9:30, Ms. Rochev. I wouldn’t actually call that late, especially since I recall leaving here after 7:00 last night.”

Felicity then pulled out her tablet and checked her boss’s calendar. Shrugging while adjusting her glasses, she replied, ‘I’m sorry I don’t see Oli... Mr. Queen having an appointment with you this morning either.”

“It was scheduled after you decided to leave last night, before your boss I might add. What kind of executive assistant are you?”

Before Felicity could even reply to Isabel, Oliver strolled off the elevator, and, without missing a beat, responded, “an irreplaceable one,” before turning Felicity's way. “Good morning, Felicity. You look very nice today, and....” He winked at her as he strolled past her to enter his office. “I really like your shoes.”

A faint blush stained Felicity’s cheeks as he walked by. It simply couldn’t be stopped, no matter how hard she tried. And then she watched as Isabel smirked knowingly, peering at Felicity’s shoes and then at her very flushed face before arching a finely plucked brow and following Oliver into his office.
Now, if that didn't just pop her satisfaction bubble.

*****

“What the hell was that?”

Oliver was wondering the same exact thing as Isabel shouted the words at him. What *was* he doing? He had no business flirting with Felicity – under any circumstances, but he just couldn’t stop himself when he saw her standing there in her pretty emerald green dress and new black heels, her cheeks a little colored over her confrontation with Isabel, which only seem to deepen when he remarked on her appearance, making her even more attractive than she already was. He was mentally kicking himself for doing such an irrational thing... and in front of Isabel, no less.

“I was paying my employee a compliment, Isabel – something people appreciate every now and again, I might add. You should try it sometime. It might make you more *likable* around here.

“I’m not trying to win a popularity contest, Oliver; I’m here to make money and keep this company afloat... something I thought you were interested in as well.”

Moving around his desk, removing his jacket, and adjusting his tie, Oliver sat and motioned for his co-CEO to do the same. “Of course, I want to keep this company in business. I’m sorry I missed our meeting this morning. I planned to be here but was out late and overslept. Did I miss anything important?”

Isabel, instead of sitting in the chair that Oliver had offered, sneaked a glance Felicity’s way to see if his executive assistant was watching before walking around to where Oliver was situated and moving in between his legs, sitting on the edge of his desk right in front of him. Leaning over, whispering in his ear, she asked, “and why were you out so late?”

Pushing his chair away, desperately needing some space from Isabel, Oliver stood and walked over to the wall of windows on the opposite side of his office. “That’s really none of your business, is it?”
“Touchy. I promise I won’t spill any office gossip about you and your *executive assistant* if that’s what you’re worried about, Oliver. Trust me, there’s already enough of that going around.”

Turning to face his partner once more, Oliver, frustrated with his feelings that he did have, but didn’t want to admit about Felicity and the turn this conversation had taken, replied, “and who started those rumors in the first place, Isabel? Don’t even pretend it wasn’t you.” Walking back over to stand in front of her, Oliver pointed his index finger at her small frame before making his point. “For the last time, there is nothing going on between Fel... Ms. Smoak and I. She is my employee, and I’m her employer, nothing more.”

It was just at that moment, when Oliver was making his declaration, that the subject of their conversation decided to enter his office, and Oliver saw Felicity's reaction before she could hide it - the evident pain in her eyes as she heard his last statement to Isabel.

_Damn it_, he swore to himself.

Two days in a row, it was he who put that look on Felicity's face, and, man, did he hate himself for it. He quickly masked the guilt he felt before anyone might notice, for that was a necessary evil to keep Felicity safe. He knew deep down if he ever got involved with her that he would never let her go, making her an even greater target for his enemies. He had made a promise to himself when he left her the night before that he would keep her at arms' length. It was best for the both of them, but that didn’t stop him from feeling like the biggest hypocrite in the world when he heard the hitch in her voice as she spoke.

“Uh, sorry to interrupt, Mr. Queen, but Mr Diggle is waiting downstairs to take you to your 10:30 appointment. It’s a little out of the city, so he wanted to make sure you had plenty of time to get there.”

“Thank you, Fel... Ms. Smoak. Please inform Mr. Diggle I’ll be right down. I’m just finishing up with Ms. Rochev.”

“Yes, sir.”

He watched as she turned to leave – her shoulders ramrod straight and her gait unaltering. He knew deep down he had hurt her, but she would never let it show, her pride wouldn’t let it. And if that didn’t make him love... No, not _that_. If that didn't make him _respect_ her even more for it.
Turning back to Isabel, Oliver reached around her, grabbing his coat and draping it over his arm as he moved to leave. “When I get back, Ms. Rochev, we will finish our conversation concerning the meeting I irresponsibly missed.”

He motioned her out, and, as he did, his cell phone began to ring. Stopping, he watched as Isabel gave Felicity a curt nod before getting on the elevators and making her exit. He checked the call and saw it was Sara. He glanced over at Felicity before answering the call. “Hi, Sara. What’s up?”

Waiting as she replied, Oliver stole another quick look Felicity’s way. She was still typing, ignoring his presence, but he knew she was listening, because, before he turned away, their eyes met just for a second. But that second gave him the ability to do what he knew he had to do.

Turning his attention back to his call, Oliver answered Sara’s question. “Yeah, I’d love to meet up later. Why don’t I call you when I finish up at work and we can go out? Okay, talk to you then.”

Ending the call, he turned his attention completely onto Felicity, attempting to ignore the pain she was trying so hard to hide in her beautiful, pale blue eyes. “I’m heading out. Diggle and I will report back to you if we find out anything new about the mirakuru. Will I see you at the Foundry later?”

Glancing his way for a moment before returning to her computer screen, Felicity replied. “Yeah, I should be there later. I’m still trying to get more information on what Sebastian Blood might really be up to. If I miss you because... because of your date with Sara, I’ll just leave anything I find at my workstation.”

Oliver nodded in acknowledgement, softly saying, “thank you,” both of them knowing it was for more than just the research she was doing.

“Felicity, those... those shoes really do look nice on you. I’m glad they fit.”

She smiled his way, but the gesture, he noticed, didn’t reach her eyes as it might have before, and for that he was truly sorry.

“See you later,” was all she said.
“Yeah, see you later.” And then he left.

*****

Later, as Felicity was leaving work, she headed down to the garage to grab her car and head over to the Foundry before going home. It had been a long day, and, honestly, the last thing she wanted to do was head over to the Glades, and she hated herself for thinking that way, because she loved what she did to help Oliver, but the words he had said earlier were still fresh in her mind, and the pain she felt in her chest after hearing them had not lessened since that morning. She didn’t know if she had the strength to see Oliver and Sara together right now. But she made a resolution to herself, and she needed to stick with it, no matter how hard it was.

Unfortunately, that was just something she was sure she was going to have to get used to.

As she made her way to her car, she had the strangest feeling that she was being watched. She wasn’t sure but moved to grab her cellphone just in case, surveying her surroundings as she did so. Nothing seemed amiss. Yet, even though nothing seemed awry, she remembered John repeatedly telling her to always trust her instincts, and, because of that, she decided to make a call.

“Hey, it’s Felicity. I’m really sorry to bother you. Thanks, I appreciate it, but you don’t even know why I’m calling. Yeah, okay. Well, if that’s true, would you mind coming to Queen Consolidated right now? I need a favor. You’re sure? Thank you. I really appreciate it. Yeah, I’ll be in my office. Thanks again. See you soon.”

*****

Felicity would never regret calling Roy that night.

They were walking side by side, later, through the QC parking garage when that same warning sensation made her shiver. As she opened her car door, there, sitting on the driver’s seat, was a bouquet of a dozen roses. Now, usually, she’d be pleased to see a surprise arrangement of flowers waiting for her after a hard day’s work. What woman wouldn’t? Only, the flowers weren’t yellow for friendship, or pink for thank you, or even red for love; they were black with a black ribbon tied around them and a card that said ‘Watch your back.’ To say she was a little freaked out was an understatement.
And, of course, the first thing out of Roy’s mouth was, “we need to tell Oliver.”

“No! That’s the last thing we are going to do. He has enough on his plate without worrying about this.”

“No, Roy. I’m serious.” Grabbing his forearm for effect, she continued, “I promise that I’ll tell Digg.” And then she pointedly looked directly into his eyes. “Okay?”

Nodding, he replied, “yeah, okay. But I don’t like it.”

“Neither do I, Roy; neither do I,” she softly whispered before gently nudging his shoulder and saying, “but I’m glad you’re here with me.”

Smiling at her, Roy could only nod again in agreement. Helping her, they placed the roses and the card into a large garbage bag before placing them in the trunk of her car hiding them from plain view.

“I swear I’ll show Digg these later, and we’ll figure out what’s going on. Remember, we are not going to involve Oliver, okay?”

“I said I wouldn’t tell, and I won’t, but, if I find out that Digg still has no idea about this after a few days, well... all bets are off.”

“Fair enough.” Grabbing her keys, Felicity looked back at Roy, smiling for the first time in the last few hours. “You ready to head back to Verdant?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

He even saluted her, the cheeky monkey.
As Roy moved to get into the car, Felicity grabbed his forearm once more, looking again into his eyes. “Thank you again for being here. I really mean that.”

Roy lightly squeezed her hand before he turned to enter her car.

She, herself, then took a slow, calming breath before climbing into her bright red Mini, and, as she started the engine, leaving to head to Verdant, she couldn’t help but be worried that possibly things were about to get a whole lot worse in Starling City.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The team all together in the 'Arrow Cave'

Chapter Notes

I want to thank everyone who is reading this story, commenting (which I really appreciate) and giving me kudos, it really does help keep me going. This next chapter was fun, but also extremely hard to write. You have all the characters in play but only one person's POV. The story is going to start moving along. I'm not really one to drag things out so I hope you all like what's next. See note at end for more info!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Where to Go From Here.....

Chapter Five

One Week Later...

Oliver and Sara were headed into The Foundry after completing a surveillance mission on a warehouse building Felicity had led them to, hoping it would provide possible clues, if any, on who might be responsible for the mirakuru that had started to plague Starling City. Unfortunately, that lead hadn't panned out and had ended up being just another dead end.

Frustrated by the lack of results for the past week, Oliver began to forcibly punch the code that would allow them access into the 'Arrow Cave,' a term Roy had started using and the rest of the team seemed to follow suit with... much to Oliver's chagrin. Plugging in the sequence of numbers was not difficult. It was something that had become so rote in his life, but Oliver was distracted that evening, and such a simple task seemed to take longer than usual. After several tries, he briefly glanced sideways at Sara who silently raised an eyebrow at him, the unanswered question in her eyes asking ‘what the hell was wrong’ as he continued to struggle, but thankfully she said...
Although, if he was honest with himself, it wasn't even the pointless mission that had him on edge. It was the team. Well, not really the whole team per se, just one very important aspect of the team: Felicity.

Sure, on the surface, everything seemed to be normal. Well, as normal as things could be when you’re a playboy billionaire running a multi-billion dollar business by day and an arrow carrying vigilante hunting criminals by night; but that would only be to the people who didn’t really understand the dynamic Oliver, Felicity, and Diggle had perfected over the past year. Things were just off... and not in a good way.

As hard as they all tried to act like nothing was wrong, it just wasn’t true, and Oliver knew it was affecting Felicity the most. He could see the strain Sara’s addition to the team, professionally and personally, had put on his IT specialist. Oh, it wasn’t anything she had said or done. No, Felicity was too good a person to let her true feelings show. Well, at least not to anyone but him. He could usually count on his executive assistant to be brutally honest where he was concerned, except now he was starting to question even that.

Either way, even if she wasn’t truly being one hundred percent honest with him (and Oliver really hoped that wasn’t true), he could see the changes in her - as subtle as they were. It was the tenseness in her posture as she worked diligently on her computers, the barely visible dark circles under her eyes that she tried to cover up with makeup – something Oliver knew plenty about from all the models he had dated in the past. She seldom ate... at least not in front of him. But the most significant change of all, something even Digg couldn’t deny, was she rarely talked anymore, and that was so not Felicity-like. And, as much as he hated to admit it... well maybe not so much, he missed her rambles most of all. They had become another way in which for him to relieve stress, to relax, and at times to actually feel happy. Listening to her voice calmed him in a way that working out couldn't even do.

He realized something needed to change, yet he wasn’t sure how to go about it. Finally getting the door open yet still feeling defeated, Oliver motioned for Sara to enter in front of him as the pair started their descent into the lair. That’s when Oliver heard Roy’s voice yelling, “watch out, Felicity. Oh no!”

Not knowing if something was wrong but anticipating the worst, Oliver rushed by Sara and raced towards the back of the building where he had heard the young man’s voice. Panic gripped him as he hurried towards his team's location. He could hear Sara following closely on his heels, her voice softly yet firmly telling him to slow down and assess what might be happening before coming in guns, or in Oliver’s case, arrows blazing. And, although Oliver knew deep down Sara’s advice had merit, he didn’t care. All he knew was that he needed to get to Felicity and make sure she was okay. It wasn’t rationale, especially since The Foundry was more secure than even Queen Manor and Roy, who would never let anything happen to Felicity, was back there with her, but,
even with that knowledge front and center, it didn’t stop Oliver from rushing towards their location.

When he reached his destination, his heart was racing but not out of exertion. No, it was out of fear... which may have contributed to him uncharacteristically losing his cool, for there she stood, Felicity in her workout gear, standing over a groaning Diggle with an extremely self satisfied look on her face.

He should have been happy. He should have been overjoyed – even grateful – that nothing was wrong, especially since Felicity was smiling, which was so rare these days, but that's not what Oliver felt. He was angry. Which is most likely why his team, who were involved in an innocent sparring session, were shocked when he growled, “what the hell is going on here?”

After his outburst, he found himself on the receiving end of three very surprised pairs of eyes gaping in his direction. Yet, as shocked as they were, none of them initially answered his question. In fact, it seemed like they were deliberately ignoring him, but, finally, after a few tense, quiet moments, he watched Felicity quietly reach to Digg and help him up from the mat. Once Diggle was upright, Roy jumped down from the perch he had occupied while watching the other two spar and headed over to Oliver. The billionaire couldn’t help but notice how the young man’s eyes were shining with delight as he rubbed his hands together in glee.

“Oh man, I can’t believe you just missed that. It was awesome. Felicity took Diggle down just like that,” Roy grinned as he snapped his fingers for effect.“She was amazing, and Diggle...”

“That’s Mr. Diggle to you kid,” Oliver heard John say as the man grabbed his sweatshirt and covered his body.

Roy glanced in Digg’s direction, nodding before saluting in acknowledgement and continuing, “right..., okay, Mr. Diggle. Anyway, she really was great. I don’t think she even broke a sweat.”

“Don’t get too excited, Roy. I think John was taking it easy on me,” Felicity replied while leaning down, both hands on her thighs as she tried to catch her breath as she smelled her armpit before smiling back. “And I most definitely broke a sweat.”

Roy just waved her off. “No way, Barbie. I can tell when John... uh, Mr. Diggle... is holding back, and he was definitely working you hard.”
Oliver felt Sara, as she was now next to him, take his hand in hers and congratulate Felicity. “That’s great, Felicity. It’s not easy to take down a man the size of John. I’m impressed.”

“Thank you,” Felicity kindly responded as Oliver watched the smile slowly fade from her lips. Inwardly, he winced as he saw the pain, brief as it was, cross over her face.

Releasing Sara’s hand, Oliver moved away to begin removing his gear, all the while keeping his intense gaze on Felicity. She had looked happy for a moment, and, in turn, that had made him happy. Yet, it had quickly been extinguished when she observed the exchange between him and Sara. Guilt and regret ate at him, but he needed to stay focus on other things, so he decided to ignore those feelings, and ask, “why all the extra training?”

He waited as he watched Diggle, Roy, and Felicity look amongst themselves before answering. He then waited some more for someone to actually answer his question. When still no one spoke, he pointedly glared at each one of them individually before addressing the trio through gritted teeth. “Is someone going to tell me what’s going on, or am I going to have to use one of my arrows to find out?”

It was Felicity who spoke up, her voice trying to sound carefree and flippant but coming off nervous and tense instead. Why was she being so skittish? First, she moved to adjust her glasses that weren’t even there since she had been sparring with Diggle – a nervous habit she had picked up or maybe had always had, Oliver wasn’t sure. But, when she quickly realized her mistake, she just shrugged it off and moved around him, not meeting his gaze to grab her workout bag. “It’s nothing, Oliver,” she said, emphasizing his name, the sarcasm evident. “I just thought with the new threat in town that it wouldn’t hurt for me to be a little more prepared, that’s all.” Then softly under her breath, thinking no one would hear her but Oliver did, she whispered, “and I will not be a liability to this team.”

Before he could comment on her last words, he heard Diggle ask, “how did the mission go?”

Turning his attention to John, although his thoughts were still on what Felicity had just admitted, Oliver shook his head as he answered, “another dead end, I’m afraid.” As he said it, he saw in his periphery Felicity’s head bow down in anguish, the disgrace she felt for having failed the team evident on her face before she could conceal it.

“I’m sorry,” she murmured quietly.

“Hey,” he softly replied as he headed over to her, placing one hand gently on her shoulder while moving his other to tilt her chin up to look directly at him, the turmoil evident in her pale blue
eyes. All Oliver wanted to do was wrap his arms around her and make her feel better. He started to move even closer towards her, his hand starting to slide from her shoulder down her arm, but he quickly stopped himself, knowing this was not the time or place for any of that, but he wasn’t fast enough for Diggle not to notice, and Oliver knew his friend would most certainly question him later.

“None of this is your fault,” he said while gently squeezing her shoulder. “We’ll get a lead on the guy in the mask soon, and, when we do, we’ll take care of it.”

Meeting his gaze, Felicity placed a calm hand on his forearm before whispering back, “none of this is your fault either.”

The two just stared at each other for a few moments before they heard Sara ask as she approached the pair, “so, what do we do now,” breaking whatever moment Felicity and Oliver were having, and Oliver immediately felt the loss when Felicity pulled away as she reached down once more to pick up her bag.

“Now, I’m going to go take a quick shower, and then I'm going to head home. Maybe in the morning we’ll have more answers,” Felicity said before looking at Roy. “You still able to take me home?”

“Yep,” the young man replied. “I even made sure I had my extra helmet just for you. I can’t wait to have you on the back of my motorcycle,” he said as he winked at her.

“Calm down, Casanova, or I may have to tell Thea on you,” Felicity laughed as she winked back.

All Oliver could see was green, and it wasn’t the Arrow suit kind of green either. He didn’t want to admit it, but he was jealous of the rapport Roy and Felicity now had. When did that happen? And, really, what right did he have to let it bother him?

But it did.

Trying to be nonchalant, Oliver asked Felicity, “what’s wrong with your car?”

He wouldn’t have been concerned if it wasn’t for the pause she gave him as she darted her eyes
towards Diggle before answering. “It’s nothing,” she shrugged. “Just a little maintenance. I should have it back in a few days.”

Oliver didn’t say anything right away. He just looked at her, trying to figure out what she might be hiding, but she gave nothing away. “You should have told me. I could have loaned you a car.”

Rolling her eyes before answering, Felicity said, “it’s okay, Oliver. I know how busy you’ve been. When I mentioned it to Roy, he offered to take me home. Of course, he didn’t mention it would be on a motorcycle.” And she gave the younger man a pointed look.

Roy sheepishly grinned in her direction. “Hey, it’s not my fault you have a thing about bikes.”

“It’s not a thing,” she countered using quotation marks as she spoke. “I just prefer doors and a roof. Oh, and an airbag – or ten – when I’m traveling. You know... all those things that keep you relatively safe in case you’re in an accident.”

“Don’t worry, Barbie. I’ll keep you safe.” Roy smirked but looked very serious as he spoke.

“I know you will,” she said sincerely as she smiled back before turning to Oliver and tentatively asking, “uh, you wouldn’t mind...? I mean, do you think it would be okay...?”

Holding his hand up before moving it to gently squeeze hers, Oliver stopped her ramble and asked, “what is it, Felicity? You know you can ask me anything.”

Blowing out a breath, she more assertively inquired, “well, as much as I trust Roy – and I do. I mean, I would like it more if he had a car versus a motorcycle, of course, but I know he’ll be safe... Well, at least I hope he will.” Stopping, Felicity took another deep breath before continuing, “would you terribly mind if you and Digg picked me up on the way to work in the morning? I know it’s a little out of the way – at least, if you’re at Queen Manor for the night, but I really don’t think helmet hair would be appreciated at Queen Consolidated, and, as much as it might be a new fashion statement, I’d rather not find out.”

Oliver had heard the whole ‘if you’re at Queen Manor for the night’ but decided to ignore it for the time being. “That’s it?” he asked surprised.
“Yeah, that’s it.”

Oliver’s eyes softened as he looked openly at Felicity before gently answering. “Of course, Diggle and I can pick you up. In fact, until you get your car back, Diggle can drive you wherever you need to go.”

“No, no, that’s not necessary. Just in the mornings would be great. I was only kidding about the motorcycle. I trust Roy. He’s been really helpful to me this past week, so it’s okay if he takes me home at night. That is, when he’s not working for you or Thea. When he is, I promise to ask Digg... or, if Digg’s also working for you, I’ll call a cab. No big deal.”

Scrutinizing her face, Oliver tried once more to find out what she was hiding, but still she gave nothing away. “I will agree as long as you agree to something for me: no cab. No matter how busy we are, someone will make sure you get home safely.”

“Oliver, I’ll be fine. I just need a ride, not a babysitter, okay,” Felicity countered.

“No, Felicity, this is non-negotiable.”

“Fine,” she spat out. “But I can take care of myself, you know. I’ve been doing it long before I met you or Diggle.”

“Duly noted.”

Oliver watched as she stuck her tongue out at him before turning to go take a shower. He didn’t care. As long as she was safe, he could take her anger towards him any day. It was definitely better than the disappointed looks he’d been getting recently, that’s for sure.

As she left, Felicity looked over at Roy one more time and said, “I’ll be out in about thirty minutes.”

Roy nodded in answer. “I’m just going to head up and say goodbye to Thea. I already told her I’d be taking you home. She, of course, laughed at the thought of you on the back of my bike, but she did say she was glad she had gotten me such a useful birthday present.”
Felicity smiled back as she said, “me, too.”

Oliver kept a watchful if not scrutinizing gaze on Felicity as she walked towards the back where the locker rooms had been installed, waiting until she was out of hearing range before turning to Diggle and pointedly growling at the man before saying, “you and me are going to talk after she leaves.”

John just nodded as if he already knew this discussion was going to occur.

Oliver glanced over at Sara and asked, “do you want to train tonight or head out?”

Sara eyed the back where Felicity had just gone before turning back to Oliver and answering, “I think I’ll stay and train for a bit. I’m just going to...” She pointed in the direction of the locker room. “... Go change, and then I’ll be ready.”

Oliver dipped his head in acquiescence as he watched her go.

“Do you think it’s safe to have the two of them back there alone together,” Diggle asked.

Oliver ignored the question as he carefully put his arrows away before looking over at Digg. “I’m sure it will be fine.”

“Whatever you say, man, but you’re walking a very thin line, and soon you might fall off.”

“What are you talking about,” Oliver countered.

“You know exactly what I’m talking about, Oliver,” was all Diggle said before giving his boss a pointed look before walking towards the back to take his own shower.

Oliver just sighed, rubbing his hands over his face as he was left alone with his thoughts.
She was done in fifteen but didn’t exit the shower for another five.

Felicity had heard Sara come into the locker room soon after her, and it wasn’t as if she was trying to ignore the other blonde; she just didn’t have the energy to make an effort to be friendly tonight, and, in her defense, neither had Sara. She was exhausted from Oliver’s questions and could only think about going home and attempting to relax and hopefully get some sleep, which was a challenge these days.

Leaving the shower, she was drying off when she heard Sara say, “wow, that’s some bruise you got on your back there.”

Felicity tilted her head to peek around and see what the other woman had noticed, and, yep, there it was: a big black and blue blemish on her right shoulder blade, probably from the many falls she had taken before she was able to get Digg down to the ground.

“Yeah, that one's going to hurt a bit,” she replied.

“Do you want an ice pack,” Sara asked, pointing towards the med area.

Felicity just waved her off, not meeting her gaze. “No, I’ll just use one when I get home if it’s still bothering me. Let’s just hope Roy keeps his promise and doesn’t crash his bike with me on it.”

One side of Sara’s lips turned up as she said, “motorcycles can be fun, you know.”

Briefly looking over at the blonde, Felicity replied, “not my thing,” as she grimaced while putting on her bra.

“So, Oliver has never taken you for a ride on his bike,” Sara inquired as she changed into her workout gear.

Felicity could tell the woman was fishing. She just didn’t understand why she was fishing, and maybe, if she wasn’t so tired, she might dwell on the why, but right then it really didn’t matter.
She was exhausted and just wanted to go home. “Ah, no. Oliver wouldn’t trust me on the back of his motorcycle,” was all she said.

“Why not?”

Felicity thought about the question for a minute. She tapped her finger on her chin trying to come up with an appropriate response before she realized she couldn’t. Shrugging her shoulders, she replied, “you know, you might just have to ask him about that one.”

“I just might.”

Thankfully, she had finally finished getting dressed and could leave without any further discussion about her and Oliver, and, as she took a quick peek in Sara’s direction, she saw the other woman had finished as well, although Sara’s attire was quite different from her own. Felicity hated that she felt dumpy in her comfy black leggings and oversized MIT sweatshirt, while Sara stood there in tight cropped yoga pants and a sports bra. Sighing, she reached over and took out her watch and earrings, putting them on before leaving. She knew wearing earrings under a motorcycle helmet was probably not a good idea, but she didn’t care; she needed something to make her feel ‘girly’.

She hadn’t even heard Sara come over till the other woman grabbed her wrist and raised her hand up towards her face. “Wow, that’s some nice watch you have there. I love the pink band with the pink and white diamonds. Where did you get it?”

Felicity smiled as she gently stroked the band back and forth before answering, “isn’t it beautiful? It was a birthday gift from Digg. The diamonds aren’t real, of course, but I just love how girly it is.”

“Why do you think the diamonds aren’t real,” Sara asked, “because they look real to me.”

Felicity looked at her incredulously. “Because, if they were real, this watch would be ridiculously expensive and way more than anyone should be spending on a birthday gift for me. Besides, if they were real, I’d be terrified to wear it. Knowing me, I’d probably lose it, or break it, or... well, you get the picture.”

Sara raised the watch one more time to carefully inspect it before releasing Felicity’s hand once more. “Well, either way, it’s really pretty.”
“Thank you,” Felicity said in response. “I really do love it.” She reached down to grab her bag and turned to go, and, as she did, Felicity looked over her shoulder and said to Sara as casually as possible, “have a good night.”

Sara waved in response. “Thanks, you too.” But, instead of staying while Felicity left, Sara followed her out.

The two headed back to the sparring area where Roy, John, and Oliver were all waiting. Oliver had changed out of his Arrow suit and looked ready to spar. He was wearing his typical cargo pants as usual, and of course he was shirtless. Why did the man have to look so good without of a shirt? Felicity, could feel his clear blue eyes on her the minute she walked into the room. Her body shivered in response. She moved to smooth back her customary ponytail to hopefully calm her already frayed nerves.

Looking over at Roy, she asked – her voice coming out more throaty than she would have liked, “you ready to go?”

“Yes, let’s go,” he said as he motioned her towards the stairs that would lead them to the back alley where his motorcycle awaited.

Sara had meanwhile moved over to Oliver and had wrapped her arm around his bare skinned waist. Felicity hated herself for wondering what that would feel like.

Before she and Roy had even taken two steps, Felicity inwardly cringed when she heard Sara say to Digg, “John, what a beautiful watch you got Felicity for her birthday. I was just admiring it.”

She looked over her shoulder in time to see John glance at her, an eyebrow raised in question as his cheeks turned a pale shade of pink before he replied, “thanks.

“Hey,” Roy chimed in. “Did you see”… He moved to Felicity’s desk and grabbed something and held it up. “… the Barbie doll I got her? I wanted a computer ner... IT specialist one but couldn’t find one, so I got her the cheerleader one instead, mainly because I thought she’d look good in one of these outfits.” Felicity turned bright red as he spoke, the color rising from her neck all the way to the top of her head.
“When was your birthday?” Oliver asked.

Felicity could hear the hurt in his voice when he spoke, and, when she glanced his way, their eyes met and his beautiful blue eyes were filled with guilt and shame for not knowing. Waving them all off, she looked at Oliver, her eyes trying to convey to him that she wasn’t upset that he hadn’t known. In fact, none of them would have if it wasn’t for a casual conversation she had had with Digg and Roy that week about some of the insane ways celebrities celebrate their birthdays, and the question came up as to when her birthday was. She, without thinking, had inadvertently said that it had just passed. If she would have known that they’d have such a strong reaction to it, she never would have mentioned it, for the two had reprimanded her in length for not mentioning it sooner. So, the next day when she came to work, well her nighttime work, she had found two beautifully wrapped presents at her computer station waiting for her. She chided them for going out and buying her anything but really appreciated it that they had. She, of course, made them swear they wouldn’t say anything to Oliver, because she didn’t want him to have to think about her birthday and feel bad that he hadn’t gotten her anything with everything else going on. And now the exact thing she had hoped to avoid had happened.

“Oliver, it’s no a big deal,” she said.

“No, I mean it. I don’t even celebrate my birthday. My mother... well, it doesn’t matter,” she said as she shook her head. “These guys found out completely by accident and bought me some presents. Which was totally sweet and unnecessary. Besides,” she gestured between the two of them. “You bought me those new shoes just last week.”

“Yeah, but that’s wasn’t for your birthday,” he softly replied, his eyes so intense as he looked at her. She knew he was probably thinking about that night when he brought her the shoes, and she’d be lying to herself if she wasn’t thinking the same thing, a flutter building in her stomach as those thoughts surfaced.

“Speaking of those shoes,” Oliver continued. “I haven’t seen you wear them since that first day after you got them.”

She shouldn’t have been surprised he had even noticed, but she was, especially since she knew he’d been going out of his way to avoid her when he could.

“Oh... well, I’ll try and remedy that as soon as possible,” she replied, not wanting to draw attention to the fact that Oliver noticed her footwear.
Wanting this conversation to end, Felicity looked over at Roy and said, “okay, Casanova, put my present away and lets head out of here.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Roy replied, his lips curving upward into a grin. She knew he loved that nickname, and, well, she enjoyed calling him that.

Felicity looked at the group around her before heading out with Roy leading the way. “See you all tomorrow.”

It was as they hit the staircase that she heard Oliver say, “Roy, I know I don’t have to tell you to be careful, because you know what’ll happen if you’re not.”

She couldn’t help but observe the piercing look he was giving Roy – one that would have definitely put the fear in most men, but Roy didn’t waver holding Oliver’s gaze as he talked. “Don’t worry, she’ll be safe with me.”

Oliver nodded in response.

Finally, the two of them made it out of the door, and she was so glad to be heading home.

*****

Once Felicity and Roy left, Oliver turned to Sara, gently removing her arm from around his waist as he asked, “Sara, do you mind if John and I have a few minutes alone before we get started?”

“Sure. I’ll just warm-up in the back.”

“Thank you.”

He waited until Sara was gone before turning to Diggle, glaring at his right hand man, his jaw clenched and his hands pulled into tight fists by his side. He took a deep breath and, through gritted teeth, said, “you are going to tell me, and tell me right now, what the hell is going on here!”
Here's a link to the watch John bought Felicity. I think there were other sites that sold it a little cheaper, but it was a nice little present for our IT specialist :).

http://www.ewatches.com/detail.asp?
 iq=1&bo_products_id=0&bo_products_variance_id=98565
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Oliver confronts Diggle, more fun with Felicity and Roy, and Sara and Oliver talk.

Chapter Notes

I just want to thank all of you who are reading this story, leaving feedback (which I love to read) and giving me kudos. It really does help. I'm so sorry it's taken me a while to get this update up. I'm really trying to stick with updating at least once, hopefully twice a week, but May is a really busy month. Once my kids are out of school for the summer I'm hoping to have a little down time, that's if work doesn't keep me busy. I was going to post this Tuesday but it was birthday and I ran out of time. I hope to get back to my at least once a week posting soon. Thanks again and I hope you all enjoy this next installment! Oh and if I haven't mentioned this before none of this would be possible without my awesome beta and friend oyhumbug

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Six

He waited until Sara was gone before turning to Diggle, glaring at his right hand man, his jaw clenched and his hands pulled into tight fists by his side. He took a deep breath and through gritted teeth said, “you are going to tell me, and tell me right now, what the hell is going on here!”

Diggle didn’t immediately respond. He remained calm as he eyed his boss, but Oliver could see the indecisiveness and inner turmoil the man was feeling as it was showcased in his chocolate brown eyes. He didn’t want to betray Felicity’s trust by sharing any information with him, but he also knew that Oliver wasn’t going to let him leave without the man telling him everything he
John sighed while rubbing both hands over his face before looking directly at Oliver. “She doesn’t want you to know.”

“She doesn’t want me to know what,” he grounded out.

Diggle walked over to Felicity’s computer station, gently lifting her new Barbie doll off her desk and moving it lightly within his hands. His hands looked so big as he handled the innocent toy. He appeared to be studiously studying the Mattel doll with his actions, but Oliver knew different. Digg was waging a war within himself - should he or should he not share? It didn’t really matter what John was thinking, because, before they were done, Oliver would know everything.

Tired of waiting, Oliver addressed the man once more. “John, I need to know - whatever it is.”

Frustrated, Diggle put the doll back down before turning to face Oliver. “She’s being stalked, okay. Every day now it’s been something different. First, last week,” he gestured with his hands. “She found two dozen dead, black roses in her car with a note attached to them that said, ‘watch your back.’ That horrible smell stayed in her car for days. It got so bad she finally did call a cab to get her to and from work. I admonished her for that one, but of course she just waved me off, telling me she could take care of herself. Then someone broke into her apartment, breaking a window and shredding several of her favorite dresses and destroying a few pair of shoes – one pair being those that you just bought her last week. That’s why you haven’t seen her wear them, and, trust me, she was very upset about those shoes. There have been other things as well,” he continued as his voice rose with each word he spoke. “Hang ups on her phone; her feeling like she’s being watched whenever she’s not here; and, the most recent, someone broke the front windshield of her car yesterday. That’s why it’s in the shop... and just when the smell from those damn flowers was finally gone.”

Furious by the news, Oliver tried to control the rage that was boiling within him. It definitely wasn’t easy as he tried to keep his voice calm and controlled when he spoke. He failed miserably. “And why the hell wasn’t I told about this?”

Shaking his head, Digg softly replied, “because she didn’t want you to know.”

“Why the hell not,” Oliver asked, his outrage growing but his voice still controlled. Why the hell not, he thought. He couldn’t stop the guilt from rising up, suffocating him, knowing that Felicity had been going through this for seven days, and he hadn’t been there for her, nor did she want him to be.
John took a quick glance towards the back of the lair where Sara had gone before answering. “I think you know why.”

Briefly peering in that direction, Oliver just shook his head, confused, pacing back and forth to try and comprehend everything Diggle had just said. “What would Sara have to do with Felicity not wanting to tell me about her stalker.”

“Come on, Oliver, isn’t it obvious?”

Remaining silent, Oliver stopped his pacing, pointedly looking at Digg, letting him know he was going to have to explain further. “She just didn’t...”

“She just didn’t what, Digg,” Oliver growled, crossing his arms over his chest in frustration.

Blowing out a breath, Digg resolutely looked at Oliver. “Felicity was worried, if you found out, you’d, as she put it, ‘kick her off the team.’”

“What?” He couldn’t believe what John had just said. “Why would she think that?”

Sighing, Diggle said, “because of Sara, Oliver. Felicity thinks that, with Sara here and her ability to not just ‘kick some ass’ as she likes to say, that you wouldn’t need her anymore, and, with this stalker, you would think her a liability and not want her around.”

Defeated, Oliver slumped into the closest chair, thinking those were the exact words she had said earlier that night. Words she thought no one had heard, but he had. How could he have failed her so miserably? Didn’t Felicity realize how important she was to the team – to him? “I didn’t know,” he weakly whispered.

Digg walked over to him, squeezing his shoulder. Oliver knew it was a sign of support. “Look, man, it’s not totally your fault. We told Felicity to tell you. She was insistent on you not knowing. In her mind, she thinks of herself as the physically weak link on this team, and she didn’t want to seem fragile or needy.”
Oliver shut his eyes, the shame he felt washing over him. He really was going to have to talk with Felicity... and not just about this. There were things she really needed to know, and it was probably long past due for such a discussion between them to happen. Opening his eyes and looking at probably his closest friend since Tommy died, he said, “I’ll take care of it, I promise.”

Digg nodded in response. “I better head out of here,” he said before looking towards the back. “I think you still have a long night ahead of you.”

Oliver eyed his friend and bowed his head, concurring in his partner’s assessment of the evening to come.

“I’ll see you in the morning,” John said as he waved and headed up the stairs out of the Foundry.

Oliver watched him go, and, after he was gone, the man took a deep breath before standing, calling out to Sara, “you ready to get started?”

He was surprised at how quickly she entered the training area. “How much of that did you hear,” he asked.

“All of it,” she said while walking to him. She stood just inches away before reaching to lightly touch his arm. “I think we need to talk, too.”

“Yeah, I think we do.”

*****

Felicity almost collapsed on her couch the minute she saw it when she opened the front door to her apartment, but she regretfully stopped herself from doing so. The impulse was strong, but, as tired as she was, she promised Roy she wouldn’t do anything until he thoroughly checked out the place. Thankfully, her one bedroom flat in a converted downtown Brownstone was not that big. There were only three units in the entire building. Her place was small but cozy, with a galley kitchen that had a breakfast bar for sitting and eating. There was no dining room, but she didn’t really need one as she rarely ate at home and pretty much never had company over. The living room was a good size with floor to ceiling windows that let in a lot of light. Thankfully, Diggle had the one that had been broken immediately replaced. She hated seeing the boarded up window every time she had walked into the room. It was helpful that he knew so many men from the service who went into these types of jobs after being discharged. The bedroom was a little on the
tiny size but it had french doors that opened to a small balcony where she had put a bistro set, where she would sometimes sit and read if it wasn’t raining or use her laptop to catch up on her TV shows that she always seemed to be behind on now. And, even though her bedroom was what most people would call miniscule, it had a massive walk-in closet which all but made up for the diminutive size. The bathroom was decent. It had an old style pedestal sink which was very pretty and had a lot of character but was horrible for storing her beauty products, and, yes, even though it didn’t seem like it, she loved her beauty products. Luckily, the builder who had converted the building to three apartments did do some renovating while leaving the home's character in place and had installed plenty of custom cabinetry along the side bathroom wall for storage. The claw foot tub, which was a tub shower combo, called to her most evenings with a glass of red wine. Sadly, she just never had enough time to try it out. Plus, old homes had a lot of character but not a lot of hot water, and most likely that beautiful tub would never get to the temperature she needed to actually enjoy a long soak.

Yet, the main reason she picked her flat was that she was on the top floor, giving her private access to her own rooftop deck which had an amazing view of the city. She just loved going up there and looking out over the city that Oliver and the rest of the team worked to protect.

Diggle hated the lack of security, but she didn’t care. She had allowed Digg to install an unobtrusive, pretty high tech security system to help ease his mind. Plus she wasn’t going to let some psycho scare her from her home. She loved the place. It was a short commute to work, and she had made her own quirky touches to it, so, no matter how scared she was or how scared someone tried to make her, she wasn’t going anywhere. It did help, though, that she knew she had Roy and Diggle watching her back. Thinking about them, though, unfortunately brought her thoughts to Oliver. Sighing, she knew it wouldn’t be long before he would get John to 'spill the beans,' and it worried Felicity.

Before she could dwell on it further, she heard Roy come back into the living room where she had waited. “It’s all clear, Barbie. I didn’t see anything out of the ordinary, and everything seemed to be in its proper place.”

Felicity couldn’t stop her lips from turning up into a smirk. “It’s scary that you know where all my stuff is, Cassanova.”

He grinned back. “Hey, it’s not my fault that women are so predictable with their belongings.”

Smacking him gently on the arm, Felicity replied, “just as long as you aren’t going through my unmentionables, we’ll be good.”

He gave her a sheepish grin, and it was then that Felicity knew. “You didn’t,” she gasped.
Shrugging, he said, “hey, John told me to check everything, so I did.”

“That’s Mr. Diggle to you,” she grumbled while crossing her arms over her chest.

He just laughed. “I promise I won’t tell anyone about the school girl outfit I found.”

Her face turned a deep shade of pink as he admitted to what he saw.

“Oh, come on, Barbie,” he said while giving her a one arm hug. “You can trust me.” Then his face got very serious and business like. “Do you want me to stay for a little while... at least, until you’re asleep?”

She just waved him off. “I’ll be fine. I promise. Besides, don’t you have a girlfriend you need to see home?”

He squeezed her just lightly once more before replying. “She’ll wait for me. She knows I was bringing you home.”

What Roy was saying then dawned on Felicity. “Oh my god, does she know about the stalker?”

Letting go, Roy gave her a noted look. “She knows someone’s been harassing you, that’s all. She doesn’t know any specifics, okay?”


“Are you sure you don’t want me to stay for a bit?”

Waving him off once more, she told him, “no, no. I’ll be fine.” He just kept pointedly looking at her. “I promise.”
“I could call Queen to come and check on you.”

Grabbing his red hoodie, gently but firmly she said, “you will do no such thing. Besides, he’s got other plans tonight, or did you not see that he and Sara were going to spar.”

“He’d come for you, Barbie – that I’m sure off.”

But, before she could argue that fact, Roy headed to the front door and said, “lock up and reboot the alarm when I leave.”

And then he was gone.

Felicity was sure he was waiting on the other side of the door until he heard the locks slide into place and the alarm reengaged, but she didn’t mind. It really did help.

She turned and looked around her apartment, sighing as she did. She began to think about Roy’s last comment concerning Oliver and what he meant. But, as her brain tried to process his words, she became even more exhausted. This wasn’t the time to be having these thoughts, so, instead of dwelling on Roy and Oliver, Felicity headed to the bathroom to get ready for bed.

After she had washed her face and brushed her teeth, she got out of her clothes and put on some of her most comfortable pajamas. Again, she wouldn’t win any glamour awards, but she was comfortable, and she really needed to get some sleep.

Just as she was about to climb into bed, she heard someone knocking at the front door. She wasn’t sure who that could be since it was close to two in the morning. Grabbing the baseball bat she now kept close to her bed, she headed to the door to see who it might be.

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Sara and Oliver headed over to the leather couch that he had purchased for the lair a few months back. The team had been spending way too many late nights there not to have something comfortable to rest on.
Sitting side by side, he took one of her hands in his, turning to face her, and asked, “tell me?”

Blowing out a breath, she used her free hand to move her hair behind her ear before meeting his gaze and softly asking, “Oliver, what’s going on here?”

Leaning back a bit, he looked at her confused. “What do you mean?”

Exasperated, she rolled her eyes as she stared at him. “You know exactly what I mean.”

Looking down – unable to meet her gaze now, he said, “I... I don’t want to hurt you, Sara.”

“Well don’t,” she said, squeezing his hand. “Just be honest with me.”

Raising his head once more, he peered into her eyes, whispering, “I don’t know what to say.”

Sara continued for him. “You and Felicity: what’s going on with you two?”

Sighing, he replied, his gaze never wavering, “I don’t know.”

Losing patience with his reticence, Sara challenged him. “I think you do, Oliver. You have feelings for her, don’t you? And not just the ‘we’re friends’ kind of feelings. I see – hell, we all can see – that it’s more than that, that it’s more than ‘just friends.’”

“I’m sorry,” he said as he bowed his head in defeat. “I’m not sure how all this happened.”

Grabbing his other hand in hers, Sara pulled them both gently so he would look at her once more. “Oliver, how do you feel about me?”

He squeezed back before answering. “You know I care about you.”
“I know,” she said while nodding. “But I think you need to figure out why.”

Before he could answer, his phone rang. Oliver saw it was his mother, and he really didn’t want to answer it, but he was worried since it was late, and she knew he wasn’t speaking to her unless it was about Thea, so he decided he should answer it.

Standing, he released Sara’s hands and walked a few steps away. “Mother.”

“Oliver, I’m sorry to be calling you so late.”

“What do you want,” he quietly grounded out.

“Look, I know you’re still mad at me, but if you could just let me explain...”

Stopping her in mid sentence, Oliver asked, “mother, it’s late, and I’m not going to have this discussion with you, now, nor ever, so I just want to know if Thea is okay?”

“Of course she’s okay, darling. Why would you ask?”

“Then why would you be calling me at this time of night... or morning for that matter? As long as Thea’s okay, then, whatever it is, it can wait.”

He went to hang up before he heard his mother on the other line say, “don’t hang up. This is important.”

“What,” he softly but sternly asked.

“It’s last minute, but you promised to support my campaign – if not privately but publicly. I just got a significant contribution from an anonymous donor, so we’re going to be holding a campaign party at the house on Friday night.”

“That’s in two days.”
“I know, and I know it’s last minute, but it would mean a lot to me, and to Thea, if you were there.”

Sighing as he rubbed his hand over his face, knowing he was going to have to go, he said, “I’ll be there.”

Hearing her breathe a sigh of relief, Oliver didn’t want to tell her it was only because of Thea, not her, that he attend.

“Oh, and it’s black tie, so dress appropriately. It’ll start at seven PM, so, if you can get here a little early before guests arrive, I would really appreciate it, and you can invite whomever you want to come. Night, darling and thank you.”

He looked at his phone with disbelief. He couldn’t believe his mother was still talking to him like nothing was wrong between them.

“What was that all about,” she asked. Lifting his hand, shaking his phone, he said, “my mother and a campaign party.”

“Sounds like fun,” she said as she rose to stand in front of him. Laying a hand on his chest, she asked, “is everything okay with you and your mom?”

He gently removed her hand as he walked over to retrieve his shirt and their jackets. “Yeah, everything’s fine. Why would you ask?”

Shrugging, she said, “I don’t know. It just seemed like you're angry with her.”

After putting on his shirt, he walked back to her and watched as her lip turned up in a smirk as he helped her into her jacket. “No sparring tonight?” she asked.

“No sparring tonight,” he confirmed as he put his own jacket on.
Turning to face him, placing her hands once more on his chest, Sara asked, “can I be your date for the party?”

“Sara...”

“Just for one night, Oliver. It doesn’t have to mean anything.”

Nodding, he quietly said, “okay.”

As he turned to go, he heard Sara ask, “are you going to see her tonight?”

Turning back he looked at her, he admitted, “I don’t know.”

She nodded back. “I guess I’ll see you tomorrow then?”

“Yeah, tomorrow.” He eyed her carefully before saying, “be safe.”

“You too.”
Chapter Seven

He didn’t go to Felicity’s home after leaving the lair. Oh, he wanted to. The desire had been great. But he knew as Oliver Queen he couldn’t just show up at his Executive Assistant’s home in the wee hours of the morning (the paparazzi would have had a field day with that one), nor was he going to don the Arrow suit again. Plus, he wanted to see Felicity as Oliver Queen, not as The Arrow. So, instead of doing what he really wanted, he roamed the streets on his bike for a while before heading back to the Foundry and spending the night there – alone.

In hindsight, as he now stood in front of Felicity’s door, he wished he’d thrown caution to the wind and had shown up at her place the night before. But nothing was going to change what he didn’t do. There were so many things he wanted to say to her, to explain, but he wasn’t even sure where to start.

Sighing, he figured the best place would be by knocking on her front door. So, after taking a deep breath, he raised his hand and did just that. Only, after a few moments, there was nothing, no voice saying 'hold on,' or any sound that would suggest someone was home. So, he tried again,
only this time he banged a lot louder, calling her name. “Felicity.” Again, nothing. It was after the third attempt that true fear started to take hold. He was just about ready to forcibly kick the door down when it finally opened and there she was, looking... just fine.

“Hey.” she said as she opened the door not even glancing his way before turning and heading back into her apartment. "I hope I didn’t keep you waiting. Sorry, I was brushing my teeth and using my Waterpik, which, unfortunately, makes a lot of noise, so sometimes I don’t hear the door, but...” Shrugging as she continued to talk, still not even noticing him, she continued, “ ... proper dental hygiene is important, and, if you drink red wine and coffee like I do, it’s important to prevent stains... And I’m rambling, aren’t I?” It was then that she finally turned and directed her gaze upon him. An unexpected look crossed her face before she flushed an alluring, deep pink color, matching the lip stick shade she was wearing.

"You're... you're not Digg?"

He couldn’t help it. His lips started to hike upwards even after he had panicked thinking the worst. Amazingly, this woman still had the ability to surprise him. Dental care, really?

“No, I'm not,” he said as he entered her home.

As he moved further in, Oliver watched Felicity move about to collect her coat and bag, not meeting his gaze once more. “So where’s... where's Diggle,” she asked, letting out a breath before continuing. “I figured he’d come and get me while you waited in the car.”

“I’m taking you to work this morning,” he replied walking closer towards her.

“Wait, what,” she said as she stopped in her tracks. “You... you did bring a car, right? Because I really wasn’t kidding about the motorcycle. First, do you see this skirt,” she remarked as she moved her hand up and down a form fitting black pencil skirt. “And, not only that, remember – helmut head.” To emphasize her point, she gestured towards her perfectly coifed blonde locks. “Plus, I’m having a good hair day, so I decided to wear my hair down for a change, and I was happy to just to survive the ride last night with Roy, not that he did anything dangerous. Or break any laws. Or drive too fast. But I will admit to being happy when I finally put my feet on solid ground again. So, please, Oliver, tell me there is a car outside.”

“I noticed,” he whispered before he could stop himself at the comment concerning her hair.
“What,” she asked as her gaze turned to him, her eyes wide with anxiety at the thought of having to ride on a motorcycle to work that morning.

The outside of his mouth again twitched slightly as his eyes became a little brighter than just a moment before, listening to her ramble. It was a welcoming sound. “You know, you’re one of the few who can make me do that, right?”

“Do what,” her brow furrowed in confusion.

“Make me smile,” he answered.

“Oh,” she said, her beautiful big blue eyes opening even wider behind her glasses – so much so that he could see her incredibly long eyelashes shoot above the frames, her shock evident at his response. Clearly, that was not what she had expected him to say.

He watched as she licked her lips, stirring something in him he didn’t want to acknowledge, especially to himself, before Felicity addressed him again. "You... you didn't answer my question."

Amused, since he'd missed being around her this way, he gave her his most innocent look, his hand covering his mouth to suppress a grin. "What question was that?"

"The one where you were supposed to let me know that there’s a car out front and not a motorcycle, Oliver," she replied as she dropped her bag and coat on the floor and placed her now free hands on her hips, her exasperation evident.

He couldn't hold back any longer; he dropped his hand as his chest rumbled, a soft laugh leaving his lips. “Yes, Felicity, there is a car waiting outside,” he replied, as he held up his hand, anticipating her next question he was sure to come. “And, yes, I know how to drive a car, so don’t worry.”

“I’m so glad I can amuse you this morning,” she remarked, surly but with no heat to her words, and, like Oliver, she couldn’t stop her lips from tilting slightly upwards in a small grin as she reached down to grab her things once more. “Okay, then,” she said after standing fully upright. “I guess we should head out of here. Don’t want to be late, especially since we’ll be showing up together.” Then she abruptly halted her movements. “Wait,” she exclaimed, slapping her hand to her forehead. “We’ll be showing up together.”
Oliver watched as the realization crossed her face before she took a quick glance in his direction and immediately reached for her cell phone and muttered to herself, "I knew this was a bad idea. All I need is more gossip about me and my boss." Turning to Oliver she said, "you know I think it’s best if I take a cab."

Returning her attention back to her phone, Felicity started to dial the local cab company, but, before she could even connect, Oliver took the phone from her grasp and hung it up. "Oliver...?"

Gently touching her arm, Oliver steered her over to sit on her couch. "Felicity, we talked about this. You are not taking a cab to work, and that’s non-negotiable."

He watched as she stared up at him, her concern evident. Yet, that wasn't what bothered him the most. Now, sitting so close to Felicity, he could see how pale her face was, paler than normal, and the dark circles he noticed last night under her eyes were definitely more prevalent. Oliver hesitated for just a moment before he reached out and brought his palm up to cup her cheek as his thumb began to rub tenderly under her eye. "Hey, it's going to be okay. I promise."

She looked directly at him then, her eyes not waverling, their blue pools glistening with the tears she was holding back inside.

"Felicity, please just tell me," he softly but gruffly pleaded. Her head dipped down from his gaze, and he knew she was thinking hard.

Without raising her face to look at him, she said, "you know." It wasn’t a question, and he could hear the disappointment in her voice. "He promised me he wouldn’t tell."

Sliding his hand delicately down her face, he took his index finger and placed it lightly under her chin, lifting her eyes to meet his own, and the sadness he saw tore at his insides. His other hand took one of hers and placed it on his thigh as his thumb tenderly rubbed back and forth along her knuckles. "I forced him to tell me, Felicity. I knew something was wrong, and I needed to know. What... what I don’t know is why you didn’t tell me.” She tried to turn away, to move away, but he wouldn’t let her. “Felicity,” he softly said, “tell me.”

She used her free hand to reach for the one under her chin and brought it down to their other joined hands before speaking. She looked down then, her eyes averting away from his gaze. “It doesn’t really matter now, does it? You know, and that’s that. So,” she said while trying to rise once more, her eyes still avoiding his own, “we really should be heading into the office now.”
Gripping her hands a little tighter, he continued to keep her in place. “That’s not it. There is someone stalking you, threatening you, and I want to know why one of the people I feel closest to in this world didn’t want to tell me. I told you once, Felicity, that you’re never going to lose me, and I meant that.” He watched as a lone tear fell down her cheek. He lifted his hand and brushed it away with his thumb and, afterwards, kept his palm in place, cupping her face tenderly.

“I’m sorry, Oliver,” she said as she placed her hand over his, her eyes now meeting his own. “I... I admit it. I’m scared of losing you. I don’t know what I’d do without you... and Digg.”

“Hey,” he said as he swiped another tear that had started to fall. “I promise that’s never going to happen. Okay?”

She slowly nodded in acquiescence, her eyes remain fixed on his.

He nodded back before releasing her hand that rested on his thigh but kept the one on her face in place as he reached into his pocket. “I... I have something for you,” he said as he held out to her a small box, his hand slightly shaking as he did so. Damn, he was nervous. “I’m sorry it’s not wrapped. I’ve had the gift for a while. I... I planned to give it to you on your birthday, but, for some reason, I thought your birthday was in May.”

Smiling up at him, she released her hand from the one on her face and used both to take the package from him. “You... you got me a present... a while ago?”

He placed his now free hands on his legs, rubbing them on his thighs. “Yeah. I saw this one day when Thea roped me into going shopping with her, and it reminded me of you.”

Felicity looked down at the small gift in her hand, gently sliding her fingers back and forth over the box. Returning her gaze to his, she asked, “why did you think my birthday was in May?”

It was now Oliver’s turn to look away, though, as he did so, he reached and allowed his fingers to softly rest upon the top of the gift box. “I remember one time you mentioned how the green glass blown tumblers at Verdant reminded you of emeralds and that they were your favorite gemstone. I guess I just assumed since emeralds are the May birthstone that your birthday was in May. I never thought to ask you.”
“You remember me saying that?”

He turned back to face her as he placed his hand once more over her own. “I remember everything you say.” She arched her brow in response. He smiled at her as he said, “yes, unfortunately or fortunately, everything.”

She looked down once more at the box the two of them held in their hands, her fingers underneath his continuing to caress the small package, but still not venturing to open it.

After a few moments of comfortable silence, Oliver asked, “why don’t you celebrate your birthday?”

Felicity raised her eyes once more to meet his own, the sadness evident as she spoke. “My father left on my birthday,” she replied as she shrugged her shoulders and averted her gaze while continuing to stroke the gift. “To my mother, the date signified, not the birth of her only child, but the day her husband left her. It’s okay now. I’ve learned to live with it – so much so that until this year I’ve barely thought about my birthday.”

Oliver’s heart broke just a little more for this person who had become such an integral part of his life. “Felicity,” he whispered while firmly grabbing her hands to still their movements. “Open it.”

She smiled up at him as she gently lifted the top and opened the box. Inside was another box, only that one was a small velvet one. “Oliver...?”

He smiled back. “Just open it.”

And, as she did, she couldn’t help the rush of air that left her lungs. “Oh, my god. You... you got this for me?”

Inside the box was a small, curved, arrow ring. It wasn’t large. It was thin and delicate and made to fit on her middle finger. It was made from platinum with small emeralds encased all around it, and it shown beautifully in the sunlight as Felicity held it up to get a better look. “It’s beautiful, but, Oliver, it’s so much.”

Oliver took the ring from it’s holder as he gently grasped her hand within his own and carefully
placed the ring on her finger. “Felicity, I want you to have this,” he quietly said. “Besides,” he continued, a grin shaping his mouth. “I had it specially made for you, so there’s no returning it.”

She eyed the gift, rolling it over her finger as she spoke. “How did you know my ring size?”

“Hey,” he said trying to sound offended. “You’re not the only one who can find out information.”

She eyed him as she smiled and whispered, “thank you.”

He leaned forward as he reached behind her head, pulling her towards him as he placed his lips softly on her forehead, lingering there for a moment, not wanting to let her go. “You’re welcome.”

He sat back, his hand moving to the back of her neck, his thumb unconsciously, once more, making light strokes along the base of her throat. Neither spoke. Oliver could hear his heart rate speed up, and he felt Felicity’s do the same under his hand. The two couldn’t tear their eyes away from each other. Oliver’s gaze moved to Felicity’s lips, and he battled a war within himself on what he wanted. It wasn’t hard to figure out what that was. He wanted to kiss her, and, as he watched her eyes move to his lips, he knew she wanted the same thing. But, as they began to shift forward towards each other, Oliver’s phone rang.

He leaned back, removing his hand from Felicity’s neck and rubbing it over his face before pulling the thing out of his pocket and seeing that the caller was Thea. “I have to take this,” he said as he stood and moved away from the couch.

“What’s taking you so long,” he heard her ask.

“I promise, I’ll be there soon. It’ll be just a little longer. Just be patient.” And then, without another word, he hung up, ending any further conversation before turning back to Felicity.

She stood now and smoothed the lines of her skirt as her eyes met his. “I guess we need to go now.”
As she once more bent down to grab her jacket and bag, Oliver moved immediately to her side, gently placing his hand on her wrist. “Wait, I need to ask you something.”

Standing, she lifted her eyes to meet his gaze and nodded. “Okay,” she said. “What is it?”

Blowing out a breath, he moved his hand lower, grasping her hand and twining their fingers together. “My mother is having a campaign fundraiser at Queen Manor tomorrow night, and it... it would mean a lot to me if you could be there.”

“Oliver, I don’t know if that’s such a good idea.”

Squeezing her fingers, he softly replied, “please, Felicity. I really need you there.”

Releasing his hand, she raised her own to cup up his cheek, staring into his eyes. He tried to let her see what he was feeling but didn’t know if he really knew how. After a few moments, she asked, “this is really important to you, isn’t it?”

He leaned his face into her palm, releasing the breath he didn’t realize he had been holding as he closed his eyes and whispered, “yes.”

“Then I’ll be there.”

He opened his eyes and looked at her, thinking there were so many things he wanted to say but all he was able to get out was, “thank you.”

She smiled up at him at first but then he watched as her eyes turned serious as her hand fell from his face. Twisting her fingers in front of her, Felicity waited a few seconds before asking, “have you thought about reconciling with you mom?”

“No,” he replied with more force than he intended as he turned away from her. Oliver felt her hand lightly grab his arm as he allowed her to turn him back around.

“Oliver, it might help if you just talk to her.”
He ran his free hand over his face as he answered as honestly as he could. “I just don’t think I can. Every time I look at her, all I can see are the secrets, the lies she’s kept, and I find myself wondering what else she might be hiding.”

Felicity began to run her hand up and down his arm, and Oliver watched as the ring he had just given her glittered in the sunlight. He couldn’t deny that it elicited an extremely warm and possessive feeling, seeing her wearing his gift and seeing how beautiful they fit together.

Breaking him out of his reverie, he heard her softly say, “you know, you have secrets, too.”

Looking down at her, his shoulders sagged slightly as he said, “I know, and I figure that makes me the biggest hypocrite ever, but I... I just don’t think I can.”

Felicity nodded, and he knew she would drop it for now. “Alright,” she said. “I’ll let it go, but I’m going to say something else you may not like, so, please, don’t bite my head off when I do, okay?” Oliver studied her for a moment, taking her hand that was on his arm and placing it in his own, intertwining their fingers before tilting his head forward, signaling his acceptance of her request. Blowing out a breath, Felicity eyed him directly and said, “I think you should tell Thea.”

He released her hand hard as he moved away and forcibly replied, “no way is Thea ever going to know that Malcolm Merlyn is her father.”

Felicity stalked over to him and moved in front of him, getting into his personal space. “Oliver, secrets have a way of coming out, and don’t you think it would be better coming from you than from someone – anyone – else? You know I won’t tell her, I can assure you I would never share this information with anyone but you, and you know that I don't regret telling you...”

“And I’m glad you did,” Oliver softly replied, interrupting her.

Felicity sighed as she looked up at him and took his hand once more in her own, squeezing it as she said, “I could never keep that from you.”

“And I lo... can’t tell you how much your honesty means to me,” he said as he squeezed her hand back. “But, in this instance, I think it’s better that she doesn’t know.”
“Just tell me that you’ll think about it, okay,” she replied as she stared up at him. “I think Thea is a lot stronger than you give her credit for.”

“Okay,” he said, dropping a quick kiss on her forehead. “I promise.”

Smiling at him, Felicity placed her free hand over his heart and said, “thank you,” before letting go and heading back over to the couch. “Now,” she said while moving to grab her bag and coat once more to leave. “Can we go?”

“There’s one more thing. Well, actually, two more things,” Oliver said as he smiled back at her.

“Oliver,” she exclaimed while lowering her bag and coat back to the floor and plopping down on her couch.

“Felicity,” he mimicked as he moved to join her, sitting sideways to face her.

She turned to face him as well. “Just tell me. I can see it in your eyes. You’re worried about what you have to say.”

Oliver nervously licked his lips as he stared at her lovely face, taking in every line of her finely shaped brows, to the curve of her cheeks, to the fullness of her lips. “First, you have the day off work today.” Seeing an argument about to ensue, Oliver held his hand up and continued, “Thea wanted to go shopping for a new dress for the party tomorrow night, and I thought it might be fun if you went with her... especially with everything else that’s been going on recently.”

He knew she was going to refuse, but he didn’t give her the chance. “Think of it as a belated birthday present. Everybody should have a day off for their birthday.”

Oliver watched Felicity blow out a frustrated breath, but the look in her eyes indicated he had won this battle even before he heard her resigned, “fine.”

“What’s number two,” she asked.
He grabbed her hands, rubbing his thumbs over her knuckles as he spoke. “Sara’s asked to uh, to be my plus one for the party tomorrow, and... and I agreed.”

Oliver felt Felicity try and pull her hands away from his grasp, but, like before, he wouldn’t let her.

He watched as she turned away from him, the light within her big blue eyes that had started to come back that morning slowly disappearing. “Why are you telling me this,” she asked.

Removing one hand, Oliver lifted it to cup her cheek as he whispered, “Felicity, please look at me.” He watched as she eventually turned her eyes toward his. “I’m telling you this, because... because Sara and I, we aren’t seeing each other any more. I care about Sara. I always will. She and I share something that no one else understands, but she is a part of my past, not my future. It’s just... she was there when my mother called last night about the party and asked if she could come as my date, and... and I didn’t feel right turning her down, so I said yes.”

“Does Sara know why you and your mother are having problems?”

Squeezing her hand lightly, he replied, “no. As much as Sara and I have shared, I honestly don’t completely trust her. That is something I’ve only shared with you and Diggle.”

“Okay, Oliver,” she said before taking a deep breath. “I understand why you’re taking Sara. What I don’t understand is why you’re telling me.”

Rubbing his thumb over the apple of her cheek, he continued, “because... because it’s you that I want to be my plus one.”

He kept his focus on her eyes as he tried to convey to her everything he wasn’t able to express through words. “Oliver,” she blew out his name as a whisper. “What are you trying to say?”

“What I’m saying...” As he, without thought, moved his hand from her cheek to the back of her neck, Oliver continued, “... is that, after this party, I really want to explore what’s happening between... us.” He paused before adding, “that is, if you want that, too.”

Felicity reached up to grab his free hand and softly replied, “I... I want that, too, but are you sure?”
He gave her a small smile before saying, “yeah, I’m sure.”

Neither moved; they just remained silent as they stared into each other’s blue eyes, thinking of what the other had just admitted. Then, without a word, they drifted forward simultaneously, their lips touching, meeting in the middle for the softest of soft kisses. Oliver’s lips lingered on hers as he slowly stroked the outer edges of Felicity’s smooth, plump mouth. The kiss continued for several seconds, their lips exploring. As they kissed, Oliver moved both hands to tenderly hold her face, while pulling her closer to him as she grasped the lapels of his suit jacket.

The kiss wasn’t passionate or steamy by any standards; it was sweet, and tender, and filled with so much promise and emotion that it was perfect. Although, that didn’t mean he wasn’t opposed to heating things up in the future. Their mouths continued to slide over one another’s for a few more moments before they broke the kiss together, leaning their foreheads together, eyes closed, their breaths mingled, coming in small pants. Once they both had regained some equilibrium, they opened their eyes together, and what Oliver saw took his breath away. He knew... he knew that this – her – Felicity – was what he had been waiting for.

“Felicity,” he softly exhaled. “You take my breath away.”

Her cheeks turned a beautiful shade of red as he spoke, and it only served to warm his heart even further than it already was. But, before either could say or do anything else, Oliver’s phone rang. Again. He released her face but grabbed one of her hands as he used the other to reach for his phone. He didn’t bother looking at the screen, because he knew who it was. “Thea,” he confirmed. He decided not to answer but knew, if they didn’t leave soon, his sister would just call back every minute until he did.

Felicity smiled at him, her eyes lighting up. “I guess that’s our cue to finally leave.”

“Yeah,” he regrettably said but not before he stole another soft kiss and whispered in her ear, “we will continue this after the party.” He felt the shiver that went down her back and couldn’t help the smile that appeared at her response.

Oliver stood but kept their hands clasped as he brought Felicity up with him. She reached down to finally grab her bag as he helped her with her coat. “Ready,” he asked.

Smiling up at him, she replied, “for anything.”
Felicity couldn’t keep her fingers from stroking her lips as she watched Thea skim through yet another rack of clothes to find the perfect dress. But the dress wasn’t for the younger woman. No, Felicity had found out after meeting the younger Queen and her boyfriend outside QC that Thea already had a dress for the party. As it turned out, their little shopping excursion, unbeknownst to Felicity, was concocted by Thea's older brother in the hopes of surprising his executive assistant with yet another birthday present: a new dress for the party the next night. Even though Oliver hadn’t been completely truthful about the trip's true purpose, Felicity couldn’t be mad at him – not that day, especially when she hadn’t been completely truthful with him either.

Trying not to think about that, Felicity concentrated on remaining focused on the kiss she and Oliver had shared only a short time ago in her apartment, relishing in the ghost of his lips still lingering on hers. It was everything she had hoped it would be and more. She still couldn’t believe Oliver Queen had kissed her.

“Hey, Barbie,” she heard Roy call out. “That’s some grin you got going on. Want to share why,” he asked, wiggling his brows up and down.

She laughed. “No, Casanova. I think I’ll keep this one to myself, if you don’t mind.”

He walked over, giving her a one arm hug as he smiled at her and said, “oh, but I do mind, Barbie.”

Felicity could only half-heartedly push him away. He just laughed.

“For once, I’m going to have to be on Roy’s side on this one, Smoak. Come on. Fess up. You getting some,” Thea chimed in... in her oh-so-charming (direct and to the point, slightly mortifying) way.

Felicity couldn’t help but smile at the younger Queen. “Uh, first of all, this is not a conversation I should be having with my boss' sister, and, secondly, no, I’m not getting any. Just enjoying my afternoon with you two.”

“Well, uh huh, nice try,” Thea replied. “Like I'd actually believe that one. But seriously, Smoak, I think
we’re past you just being my brother’s employee. I... I consider us friends. After all, we are sharing a boyfriend, aren’t we,” the younger woman joked.

Even though the comment was said in jest, it home with Felicity. Lightly touching Thea’s arm, she looked at the girl seriously as she said, “you do know how much I appreciate you letting Roy... look after me sometimes, right? It’s just ever since he stepped in at Verdant to help me with some rather unruly clientele, I’ve kind of relied on him. I’m sorry if I’ve taken advantage.”

Thea just waved her off. “It’s not a big deal. I promise. I’m just glad he’s able to help.”

“Hello,” Roy waved. “I’m standing right here.”

His girlfriend just shooed him off as she glanced at Felicity. “Look, I know you probably weren’t happy when you found out that Roy had told me about... your problem, but, in his defense, I can usually get him to tell me anything, and, when you called last week, I was with him, and I saw the concerned look on his face. I can understand why you didn’t want to tell my brother. Ollie can be very overprotective at times. What am I saying? All times. And he can get a little crazy when those he cares about are... scared, so, really, I’m glad Roy could help.”

“Thank you,” Felicity replied. “But what makes you think I’m in the ‘he cares about’ category?”

Thea just laughed her off. “You really have to ask me that?”

Felicity just nodded her head yes.

Thea just linked their arms together and lead them away, heading out to another store. “Listen, I know we don’t know each other all that well, but I do know my brother. He trusts you, and Ollie trusts so few people in his life. Plus, I’ve seen the way he looks at you. And he had me pick out shoes for you. And he planned this little shopping trip. So, trust me when I say that he cares. He cares a lot. And, in all honesty, I really think you’re good for him. From what I can tell, you don’t let him get away with his crap, and there are not too many people who stand up to my brother. You keep him centered, and Ollie needs that in his life.”

Thea continued to lead Felicity down the street before saying, “and, anyway, we have to be friends, because, for the record, I love that you call Roy Casanova.”
Felicity just laughed as she grabbed Thea’s hand, giving it a quick squeeze. “Duly noted.”

The rest of the afternoon was filled with Thea determined to find Felicity the perfect dress, and, if she was at all honest with herself, the whole shopping trip turned out to be a lot of fun and a good distraction. But, even as she relaxed in the company of Oliver’s younger sister and her boyfriend, her thoughts would always eventually revert back to all that had transpired in her apartment... and all that hadn’t as well. For as happy as she was with recent revelations, she reminded herself that she hadn’t been completely honest with Oliver that morning, and that lingering guilt stayed with her the entire day.

Felicity knew that she should have told him about what had happened the night before after Roy had left, but there really hadn’t been a good time to broach the subject. Well, she could have said something when she realized he knew about the stalker, but she was too upset that Diggle had told him to think clearly, and, after that, she just didn’t want to.

She clutched her shoulder bag tightly to her side, knowing the note that was left for her the night before was still in there. She had gone to her door, only to find that no one was there. When she carefully opened it, baseball bat and cell phone in hand, all she had found was a blank envelope with a card inside. But it wasn’t just any card. It wasn’t some ‘thank you’ note or belated birthday card; rather, it was the most disgusting ‘Death’ tarot card she had even seen. Although Felicity wasn’t someone who believed in a lot of things that weren’t concrete, she felt she’d be remiss in saying she wasn’t totally freaked out by the warning – hence, why Oliver had probably noticed the dark circles under her eyes.

She had planned to tell Diggle the minute he walked in the door that morning and have him take it to the Foundry and have the card and envelope analyzed, because there was no way she was going to do it. Only, it wasn’t Diggle who appeared on her doorstop that morning; it had been Oliver. She probably should have said something, but she hadn’t, and, now... now, he was going to be pretty pissed that she hadn’t. Felicity chewed on her bottom lip, pondering what was the best way to now discuss the card with Oliver.

Yeah, she had nothing.

Maybe if she brought him a cup of coffee at the office that might help? He’d definitely know something was up, but maybe it would soften the blow. Shaking her head, she dismissed that thought. Coffee probably wouldn’t help. In fact, really, nothing would.

Sighing to herself, she sent a quick text to Digg, saying she needed to meet with him later – alone – and to please not tell Oliver, just this once. She promised she would talk to their boss after the party the next night.
He quickly replied back that he would, asked if she was alright, and told her that he was sorry.

Felicity immediately shot back a reply, telling him she understood why he did it and that she was fine, that everything had gone well that morning, and that she would explain later.

John, trying to most likely relieve his guilt, sent her a smiley face with the time he would be outside her apartment.

She sent a smiley back just as she heard Thea say, “come on, Smoak, stop texting your secret squeeze, and come over here. I think I just found the perfect dress for you.”

Felicity just rolled her eyes at the younger woman before depositing her cell phone back into her bag and heading over to the girl, noticing Roy silently, cheekily praying that he hoped this was the one. As Felicity passed him, she reached out and squeezed his forearm, mouthing, “thank you,” before heading over to Thea.

Thea had found the perfect dress. Felicity couldn’t deny the girl had excellent taste, and she had to admit that she felt beautiful in it. So, with that accomplished, the trio headed to the closest shoe store and found just the pair heels she needed to compliment her new dress. Afterwards, the three had lunch before Thea and Roy dropped Felicity off at her place where Diggle was waiting for her outside.

Bracing herself for the conversation ahead of her, Felicity took a deep breath, said her goodbyes to Thea and Roy, and walked towards her friend.

Chapter End Notes

Here's a link to what I envisioned the ring Oliver gave Felicity, only with Emeralds not diamonds because it's all about the Green :)!

http://www.finnjewelry.com/jewelry/pave-arrow-ring
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

The party!

Chapter Notes

Thanks so much for those who continue to read, kudo and comment on this story. It really does help motivate me and it is so appreciated. I'm sorry for the delay in this next chapter. Life has just become very overwhelming. But I have my fingers crossed that things will slow down soon. This chapter was pretty long so hopefully that will make up for the delay! Enjoy!

~ Jules ~

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Eight

Oliver had always hated wearing a tux. Even before the island, it was never an appealing choice of attire, a fact that had not changed in the five years he had been away. If anything, the feeling had only intensified since his return to civilization. Prior to his disappearance, he didn't completely mind dressing up in some ways, mainly because women seemed to get off on men in suits, and that fact had increased his chances of getting laid.

Now, it wasn't about that. He wasn't interested in the most available woman he could get into his bed. No, Oliver knew what he wanted and who he wanted, and, even though the idea scared him more than almost anything, he was looking forward to taking that step after this affair was over and he and Felicity could really sit down and just be. He'd finally admitted his feelings... well, more so that he had feelings... to one of the few women in his life who challenged him like no other. Sure, Laurel had challenged him to be a better person, one whom she thought he could be, but she never really challenged him. Sara challenged him physically and at times emotionally, but she too never really challenged him. No, that title belonged to Felicity.
Felicity – she really did have a hold on him, one that he was only now willing to admit existed. For his part, it probably shouldn’t have taken so long, but it had, and now he could only think about making up for that fact as soon as possible.

As his mind replayed their conversation from the day before, Oliver unconsciously began to tug at his shirt collar as he surveyed the room at Queen Manor that had been set up for the affair. The room was still fairly empty since the party didn’t officially start for another twenty minutes, but, as promised, Oliver had arrived thirty minutes early with his date in tow.

He spotted Sara over at the bar talking with Roy and Diggle. Catching her eye, he slightly smiled and nodded in her direction. He watched as she smiled back before taking a sip of her drink. She looked nice tonight in her simple black spaghetti strap gown. He appreciated the fact that she went with a more conservative look this evening even if the color was black, which really was no surprise. The dress came across her front high enough so no cleavage (or scars) were actually showing, and the length hit just above her knees. Her only concession was black stiletto heels that he admitted looked a lot like the ones he had given to Felicity the week before... which reminded him that he needed to replace the pair that someone had destroyed as soon as possible.

His hands unwittingly clenched into tight fists as he thought about all that had happened to Felicity during the last seven days. He hadn’t seen his Girl Wednesday since yesterday morning as the team had decided to take today and the night before off as all of them would be at the event tonight, but he had been assured by Digg, who was now assigned to the task of keeping an eye on Felicity until her stalker was caught, that all was okay. Although, when John had called the night before and this morning to check in, Oliver had noted something in the man’s voice, but decided not to press the issue knowing he would see Diggle shortly.

Oliver and Felicity still had not really talked in detail about her stalker, but he knew, as did Felicity, that they would soon. He still hated the fact that she hadn’t been confident enough to tell him about the most recent threat. He had spoken to Roy and had thanked the young man for looking after Felicity as he had, and, after conferring with both Diggle and Roy, they agreed at this time the threat did not seem Arrow related.

He was so deep in thought that Oliver failed to realize that anyone had approached him until he heard her voice, and he hated how his body immediately tensed at the sound.

“You never were one who liked wearing a tuxedo, Oliver,” his mother said.

Shifting his body to face her, Oliver attempted a smile before leaning forward to ceremoniously kiss her cheek. “Good Evening, Mother.”

He watched as his mother scanned the room before she eyed Sara across the way.
“She looks lovely, Oliver. I was so happy to hear of her safe return. Quentin and Dinah must be so thrilled to have their daughter back,” Moira commented as she turned to face her son and grab his hand lightly, squeezing it before letting go. “I know it was the happiest day of my life when you returned from the dead after five long years.”

She then, once more shifted her gaze back towards Sara. “I’m glad you two have remained close since her return.”

He noticed that Sara turned their way, possibly sensing their conversation being about her, and tipped her drink towards the both of them. Moira just smiled at the blonde as she returned her attention back to him.

“Where’s Thea,” Oliver asked, not wishing to discuss Sara, or his return home, or how his mother felt. To him her feelings were not remotely relevant right now.

Moira, her voice he noted now tinted with a little more venom than before, replied, “oh, she’ll be down soon. It seems one of the guests you invited had some issues at home, so Thea offered to allow her to get ready here.”

Before Oliver could even comment on his mother’s statement, he heard her say, “and here they are now.”

Oliver shifted his gaze over to where his mother was focused and that’s when he saw Felicity come in with Thea. He couldn’t steer his eyes away from her, for she was a vision to behold. She was wearing a full length gown in the deepest, richest color of emerald green he had ever seen. The sleeves were capped with bright shimmering sparkles covering her shoulders that ran around to the back. The V-neck plunged downward just low enough for him to have a slight peak at her tempting cleavage, and the fabric hugged her curves to give her appeal without appearing inappropriate. Simply stated, she looked gorgeous and elegant. Her makeup was simple but alluring, and she must have decided to wear her contacts, because there was no glasses in sight. Her hair was down but fixed to the side in an elaborate clip, allowing one side of her neck to be bare, one, if he was honest, he wished he was kissing right at that moment. As those thoughts surfaced, Oliver started to clench his fists for a whole different reason.

She hadn’t seen him yet, and, when she turned towards Thea, laughing at something the younger woman had said, Oliver knew he must have stopped breathing, for when he finally saw the back of her dress, all conscious thought left his brain. There was no back to her dress. The gown came to just above her shapely bottom in a v-shape with only a single thread just above her shoulder
blades keeping the dress in place. It was one of the sexiest things he had ever seen.

He heard his mother next to him say, “I have to admit, she really does look quite lovely. Thea did a remarkable job making her presentable.”

He didn’t even acknowledge his mother’s comments, for Oliver was speechless. He couldn’t tear his eyes away from the enchantress across the room.

“You know, I tried to blackmail her,” he heard his mother say right next to his ear as he hadn’t acknowledged her presence since Felicity had entered the room.

Now, that got his attention. Focusing on Moira once more, Oliver intensely asked, “what do you mean?”

She just shrugged her shoulders stating, “she came to me first with the secret of Thea’s paternity, wanting to give me the chance to tell you myself before she did. I told her I wasn’t going to do that and neither would she. I gambled on her feelings for you and told her that, while you would hate me, you would hate her as well. I guess she took the chance I didn’t think she had the guts to take. I obviously misjudged her.”

Quietly but vehemently, Oliver responded, “you did in ways you can’t even realize, mother. You know, she actually suggested I forgive you and work on trying to salvage our relationship.”

“Really,” Moira replied, her surprise evident. “Do you... do you think you might be able to?”

Oliver eyed his mother carefully. He didn’t respond right away, trying to figure out how he wanted to answer her question. Eventually, he let out a deep breath and genuinely told her, “I honestly don’t know if I can.” And, with that, Oliver left his mother standing there alone as he walked over to where Felicity and Thea stood.

Felicity had finally turned his way. Their eyes met with an intensity that rocked his whole body, and the corners of his lips tilted upwards as he watched a sweet rose colored blush tint her cheeks. He couldn’t have looked away from her even if he wanted to. He was captivated by her beauty so much so that he didn’t notice several other eyes watching as he approached her.

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How could one man be so good looking in so many ways was all Felicity could think. She regarded Oliver as he continued to move towards her. It wasn’t fair that he could look so good in any stitch of clothing he wore... and in no clothing at all.

“Uh, Felicity, did you just admit to me that you’ve seen my brother naked,” she heard Thea ask.

Felicity, just looked at the younger Queen, before taking a deep breath. “3, 2, 1. I... I said that out loud, didn’t I?”

Smiling, Thea just nodded.

Shifting her body towards the younger woman, Felicity lightly grabbed Thea’s hand before asking, “please don’t tell Oliver I just said that?”

“Sure, no problem,” Thea replied, her smile growing wider. “Only if you tell me when you’ve seen my brother naked.”

All she could do was shake her head. “I’m so dead.”

“Uh, what did I miss,” Felicity heard Roy ask as he approached the pair, wrapping his arm around Thea.

“Nothing, nothing,” Felicity quickly spat out before Thea could say any more.

The younger Queen just laughed at her as she pulled Roy closer to her body. “You look good, mister,” Thea commented as she took in his appearance from head to toe.

“She’s right, Casanova. You do clean up nicely.”

Roy looked at Felicity the same way Thea had just surveyed him, and the blonde couldn’t keep the already rosy blush that flushed her cheeks after seeing Oliver from deepening even though she knew he was just being a big flirt versus meaning anything remotely romantic in his appreciation of her appearance.
“You too, Barbie,” Roy said as he smiled at her. “You should have seen bos... uh, Thea’s brother’s reaction when you walked in.”

Yet, before Felicity could even respond to Roy’s remark about Oliver, the man in question had made his way over to their group and proceeded to possessively grab Thea from Roy and kiss her lovingly on the cheek while smiling down at her. “Hello, Speedy.”

Thea just tenderly tapped her brother on the chest, smiling back before kissing him on the cheek as well. “Big brother, we were just talking about how nicely Roy cleans up, but I have to admit it: even though I may hate myself for saying this, you do, too.”

Oliver’s smile widened as he continued to gaze at his younger sister. “Thank you, Sis. I know that must have been hard for you to say.”

Felicity watched the pair’s interaction and could only hope Oliver took her advice and told Thea the truth. She knew, coming from him, would make things so much easier. Suddenly, though, his attention turned towards her, and all thoughts of Thea or Oliver’s secrets left her brain.

“Felicity,” was all he said, but it was the way he said it – in that way that only he could – that had her heart beating faster and butterflies attacking her already queasy stomach. Hearing his voice after a very long two days made her so nervous, but it also made her feel... safe.

Felicity somehow lost her voice, which usually never happened to her. The two just stood there, staring at one another, until a glimmer of a small smirk began to form on one side of Oliver’s beautiful mouth, and it was then that Felicity realized she should say something in response. But, even as she opened her mouth to speak, she heard Thea jump in, linking her arm with her brother’s and commenting, “so, Ollie, Felicity was just saying....”

Thankfully, Roy took over before Thea could totally embarrass Felicity as he grabbed her hand and asked, “Barbie, you want to dance or...” Tilting his head towards the direction of the bar, he finished, “would a drink be a better choice?”

Felicity evaluated her choices and, seeing Sara and Diggle over at the bar, opted to forgo conversation and picked what she hoped was the lesser of two evils. “I think a dance might work for me right now,” she replied as she mouthed 'thank you' to him before saying, “just go easy on my toes.”
He just smiled in response.

As they walked over to the dance floor, Felicity was grateful that other people had already began to partake in the festivities, so they weren’t out there alone.

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As the two left, Thea shifted to face her brother and observed how he couldn’t take his eyes off his executive assistant. “You know, she’s pretty amazing right?”

Oliver, after a few moments of still watching the pair, eventually turned his full attention upon his younger sister, eyeing her intently yet not saying a word.

“What,” she finally asked after her brother remained silent. “I’m sure I didn’t say something you don't already know.”

Finally, Oliver gently placed both hands on Thea’s shoulders and said, “thank you Speedy.”

“For what,” her brow furrowed in confusion.

Pulling her into a hug, he replied, “for helping to take care of Felicity.”

As he pulled away, she just smiled at him. “Oh, that.” She laughed. “That was easy.”

“Why was she here to get ready anyway,” Oliver asked.

Thea only shrugged her shoulders saying, “I don’t know. Mr. Diggle showed up a few hours ago and asked if I would mind if Felicity got ready here. I told him sure. No big deal. It was fun, but, if you want to know more, you’ll have to ask him.”
Oliver turned towards Diggle, catching the man’s eye and tilting his head towards the far wall. “I will. Thanks, Speedy.”

Thea grabbed an appetizer as a tray passed by and, as she ate covering her mouth so as not to spit out food, she replied, “sure.” Then, as she finished her food, she turned to her brother and said, “I think I’ll go get my boyfriend now. You may not want to leave Felicity alone for too long. You never know who might approach her.”

Oliver grabbed his sister’s hand before she could move and said, “I’ll keep that in mind.”

But he didn’t let go right away; Oliver just kept looking at her intently before she once more asked, “what, Ollie? You’re making me nervous.”

Shaking his head, he apologized, “I’m sorry.”

“Ohkay then,” Thea replied. “I’ll talk to you later.”

Yet, he still didn’t let her go, keeping their hands connected. “Wait, Thea. Do you think you could do me another favor?”

“Another favor, huh? If it involves shopping again, I’m definitely in.”

Oliver just grinned down at her. “Nope. No shopping this time. But it is important,” he quickly continued as she quickly lost interest. “I’d like you to meet me at Verdant tomorrow morning so we can talk about a few things.”

“What few things,” she asked suspiciously.

Kissing her on the head before releasing her hand and heading towards Digg he looked back and replied, “you’ll find out tomorrow. I’ll see you at ten.”

And, without waiting for a response, he left her to go speak with his right hand man.
As Oliver reached Diggle, he wasted no time in asking, “what happened,” all the while keeping an eye on Felicity.

He watched as Thea reached the dancing pair, but, instead of dancing with Roy and leaving Felicity to her own devices, he watched as Roy pointed Thea over to the bar and the three ended up heading in that direction. Oliver was extremely grateful for Roy’s insight to do so. He also noticed Sara had gone over to speak with her sister who surprisingly was at the party with Adam Donner. Oliver was glad to see the sisters on speaking terms, well at least in social situations. I guess Dinah had taught them enough etiquette to at least do that. He knew it didn’t come from their father.

Placing his hands in his pockets, he waited for John to respond to his question.

Although patience was never a quality he had mastered, so, without preamble, he again asked more intently. “What. Happened.”

Diggle sighed as he ran his hands over his face. “It was trashed. Her whole apartment, Oliver. Destroyed.”

Clenching his fists tight, Oliver worked on controlling his breathing before responding. He spit out his next words as calmly as he could. “Why am I just hearing about this now?”

John took a quick glance at Felicity before answering. “She wanted to wait until after the party. She knew, Oliver. She knew that, as soon as you found out, you would go into Arrow mode to track this psycho down. Felicity didn’t want that. She knows how important your family is to you... even if you are having problems with your mother right now, which, by the way, one day I hope you’ll share with me. But, anyway, she planned to tell you; WE planned to tell you after the party, that I can promise you.

Oliver wasn’t happy that they kept information from him again, but he could rationalize why they did what they did.
“I need to talk to her,” was all he said in response. But, as Oliver moved to seek out Felicity, he felt John grab his arm.

“There’s more she has to tell you, but I want you to promise me that you’ll listen to everything that she says before reacting.”

Oliver minutely nodded to his friend before heading over to the bar where Felicity now was.

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Felicity could only sip her glass of red wine. As much as she wanted to take one huge gulp, she felt keeping her wits about her tonight might be in her best interest. She wanted to know what time it was and how much longer she needed to be here, but, when she went to look at her watch, she realized it was in Thea’s room where she had changed to get ready for that night. Since there was no place for her to keep her cellphone in this dress, Felicity wished she had forgone accessory protocol and wore her not very formal watch.

She’d only had the watch for less than a week, but she liked the feel of it around her wrist. She didn’t know why, but she felt safer with it on. Just as she turned to head to the ladies room, she saw Oliver heading her way, and, once again, she was blown away with how attractive he truly was. Seeing how he just left after speaking with Diggle, Felicity was nervous – so nervous she began to twirl the stem of her wine glass so hard that she had to put it back down on the bar so as not to let the red liquid stain her dress or, worse, the beautiful hardwood floors beneath her.

As Oliver continued to approach, those butterflies came back in full force, and Felicity began to count down from ten in her head so as not to start hyperventilating. It was a trick her Mom had once given her before she had to give a speech in third grade. It was one of the few pieces of advice Felicity had found useful from her Mother.

“Felicity.” She heard him say, once again in that way that made her knees go weak and made her want to throw her arms around his neck and start kissing him.

“Oliver,” she returned, her voice more throaty and unsteady than she would have liked. She watched his irises darken as he fixedly gazed into her eyes.
“Felicity,” his voice now husky as he repeated her name.

“Alright, you two, we’ve established you both know each other's names. Now, move on already,” Thea exclaimed exasperatedly.

Felicity and Oliver couldn’t help it. They both started to smile. Of course, it would be Thea to break the ice.

“We need to talk,” Oliver said directly to Felicity leaving no room for argument.

“Why don’t we dance,” she suggested to an obviously surprised Oliver. Felicity even surprised herself with that one, not sure where the words had come from, but, once they were out, she figured he would make less of a scene out on the dance floor than anywhere else. So, even if she hadn’t meant to ask him to dance, she reasoned with herself that it was a good idea.

“Uh...”

“Come on, Ollie, don’t be a chicken. I’m sure Smoak will be nice and not step on your toes. Although, I can’t say the same about your dancing skills,” Thea cheekily goaded him.

Seeing him not answer right away, Felicity nervously wrung her hands in front of her body, kicking herself for even asking. Just as she was about to retract the offer, she felt Oliver’s large, calloused hand reach over and grab one of hers, engulfing it in his grasp as he intertwined their fingers and lead her to the dance floor. As he pulled her into his arms, she placed her free hand on his shoulder as she felt Oliver’s other hand reach around to settle on her bare back, the heat of his hand hot against her skin and causing her whole body to flush at the contact as a shiver ran up her spine.

“Cold,” Oliver softly asked.

Looking down, Felicity whispered back, “no.” But then, with a her newfound bravery or her naïve stupidity – she wasn't sure which one, she continued, “in fact, I think it’s pretty hot in here.” Yet, despite her boldness, she couldn’t help but look away embarrassed at what she had just admitted.

Felicity felt Oliver remove his hand from hers for just a moment to lift her chin so she was once more looking at him before returning his hand to again intertwine their fingers. “You look
beautiful tonight,” he gently said.

Embarrassed once more, she looked away, only to hear him ask, “please look at me.” Felicity voluntarily did, especially since he had said please. When she looked into his eyes, she knew he meant every word. “I need you to be honest with me, Felicity.”

She could only slightly nod, her thoughts so distracted by the lazy circles he was now making on her back. She licked her lips before managing to say, “I’ll try.”

She watched as Oliver closed his eyes for a minute, appearing to revel in the feel of her skin, and then he confirmed her thoughts by quietly blurting out, “God, your skin is so soft.”

A small smile formed on her lips as her whole body was warmed even further by his words. “Oliver,” she tried to ignore his comment. “What did you want to talk about?”

Opening his eyes, he stared so searchingly into hers it made her wonder what he saw... or, more so, what was he looking for.

“I want to know what happened yesterday, but, right now, all I can think about is how wonderful it feels to hold you. I only wish all these people weren’t around, that we were alone and I could pull you even closer.”

Felicity looked away before whispering, “I wish that too.”

“Felicity,” he softly countered. “Please don’t look away. I don’t want you to ever be embarrassed by what you say to me.”

She used all the assertiveness she could muster before moving her gaze back to his once more. “It’s hard. This is all so new. Well, not new that I have feelings for you, but new that I know you have feelings for me, and, as happy as that makes me, it’s still something I’m not quite used to yet. And your hands are really distracting. And you look really good in a tux. And I’m trying not to embarrass you or your family...”

Felicity stopped as she felt his hand slowly, almost reverently move up her back to cup her neck. “Shhh, it’s okay. I understand,” he said as his lips hitched upward. “Can you tell me what
happened yesterday, but, before you do,” he emphasized as his touch – so gentle – moved back down to lay on the small of her back. “Just know that there will be consequences for not telling me right away.”

A small grin formed on Felicity’s lips before replying, “consequences, huh?”

Oliver’s own grin grew wider as he countered, “yes, consequences.”

Nodding her head slightly, she said, “I can live with that.”

Squeezing her hand, he asked again, “so tell me what happened.”

Licking her lips, Felicity looked directly into his eyes, trying to keep her voice level and calm before answering. “I don’t know. I came back from shopping with Thea. John was waiting outside for me. We went up, and, when I opened the door, that’s when we found my apartment trashed. The whole place had been ransacked. Everything, Oliver. My clothes were ripped; my make up and nail polish all broken into a million pieces. My couch ripped, my coffee table broken.... It was pretty terrible.”

“I’ll replace everything, you know.”

Looking at him seriously, Felicity knew he would do just that, but that wasn’t what she wanted from him. “I’m sure you would, but that’s not what I want, Oliver.”

“Felicity...”

“No,” she stopped him. “Let me say this. I know you have money, Oliver. I know you can buy me whatever I could possibly want, and that’s nice, but – and I hope this doesn’t sound like I don’t appreciate anything you’ve ever bought me in the past, because you know I do – but I don’t need you to buy me things. I don’t lo... care about you because of your money; I care about you because of you.”

She felt him move his hand from her back around her body to cup her cheek, running his thumb up and down her skin. “And that’s one of the reasons I lo... think you’re so special. But that doesn’t mean I don’t want to do it. Okay?”
She nodded in acquiescence. “There’s something else I need to tell you.” Felicity noticed that her voice was now more nervous than before, than she had hoped it would be.

“More,” he asked.

“It’s nothing major, but I want to be honest with you. So, after Digg and I left my place, I gathered what I could and we went to his place. While I was there, I got a call from my mom. She’s visiting my aunt in Central City and wants me to come and see her for the night. I figured now might be a good time to get out of town, and... and I might stop by to see how Barry’s doing.” She felt his hand tightened around hers. “I just didn’t want to lie about it and not tell you. I asked Digg, and he thought it was a good idea.”

“I don’t like it. I want you here where I,... where we can protect you.”

“Oliver,” Felicity implored. “I’ll be fine. I’m going to drive up tomorrow morning, and I’m staying one night. Trust me, after a two days with my Mom, I’ll be running back to Starling... long before you could even miss me.”

“Promise me.”

“What,” she asked.

“Promise me you’ll come back,” Oliver whispered.

All Felicity could do was stare at him, remembering she had said those exact same words to him a few months ago when he went after Cyrus Gold. Before she could promise him anything, though, Sara appeared, tapping Felicity on the back of her shoulder. “Can I cut in?”

“Su...re.” Felicity said, letting go of Oliver’s hand. “I’ll email you an itinerary before I go.”

“Don’t leave without saying goodbye,” Oliver said as he watched Felicity walk over to once more join Thea, Roy, and Diggle.
As the night continued, Oliver became increasingly frustrated. No matter how hard he tried to get back to Felicity, it seemed impossible. After a few dances with Sara, Laurel actually came over and asked him to dance. Not wanting to seem rude, he did, asking her about Adam Donner. She just casually responded that they were just co-workers and friends. He didn’t believe her, but he didn’t press the issue either. After his dance with Laurel, the speeches came.

His mother thanked the anonymous donor whose funds helped to sponsor the event. Of course, the donor was nowhere to be found, but that’s what makes them anonymous. After that, there were constituents his mother wanted him and Thea to speak to, and, by the time he was finished, it was late, and he was worried his Girl Wednesday had already left.

He spotted her heading towards the stairs, most likely to get her things before heading back into town with Digg. He reached her just before she could head up. “Wait, Felicity,” he said as he gently grabbed her wrist to keep her from moving. “Are you leaving?”

She smiled up at him. “Yeah, it’s late, and, as beautiful as this gown and shoes are, I’m craving my comfy pj’s.”

He smiled back at her. “Comfy pj’s?”

“Yep.” Her smile growing as she nodded.

“Well, far be it from me to keep someone from their comfy pj’s, but there is one thing I wanted to talk to you about before you left.” He nervously rubbed his thumb along the inside of her wrist before continuing. “I want you to take Digg with you to Central City.”

Felicity pulled against him hard enough so that he was forced to let go of her arm. “Absolutely not. You need him here, and I’ll only be gone for two days. I promise that I’ll be careful. I’ve been upping my training, and I agreed with Diggle that I would carry a gun – not that I want to, but I said I would.”

“Felicity...”
“No, Oliver. I won’t back down on this.”

It was then that he heard a voice behind him. “Lover’s spat?”

Oliver turned to see his partner at Queen Consolidated standing there. “This is not of any of your concern, Isabel.”

“Oh, Oliver, I just want to help if I can,” she coyly replied.

“You could leave. That would be the most helpful,” Oliver said before turning his back on the brunette, officially dismissing her. He heard her high heels click on the hardwood floors as she walked away.

“Do you think that was a good idea,” Felicity asked. “That woman kind of scares me.”

“It’ll be fine,” Oliver reassured her as he grabbed for her hand versus her wrist this time. He once more began to use his thumb to rub lazy circles on her skin. Every time he swiped across the ring he gave her, his heart began to beat a little faster. “I really want to kiss you,” he whispered.

“Now, that is really not a good idea, Oliver,” Felicity whispered back.

He shrugged. “Doesn’t mean I don’t want to.” Then his eyes got serious. “Just promise me you’ll be careful.”

Felicity squeezed his hand as her gaze locked with his. “I’ll check in frequently. I’ll text you when I can, and I’ll call the minute I arrive.”

“I don’t want you to go,” he sadly said as he pulled her into the shadows of the foyer.

Before she could stop him... or even know what he was about to do, he kissed her. Her lips were so soft against his, so willing, and, even though he meant to keep the kiss quick and chaste, it quickly spiraled out of control. Her lips opened for him, allowing Oliver access into her mouth.
Their tongues dueled as he gently grabbed her hips and pulled her flush against his body. He quietly moaned at he felt her hands move up the lapels of his jacket and wrap around his neck, her fingers digging into his scalp. And then he heard her moan when his hands traveled around to her back, moving her even tighter against him. His hand started to slide downward towards her butt, the soft smooth material of her dress allowing his hand to feel every curve. This kiss so different from their first, but both meaning so much. All too quickly, though, he felt Felicity grab his hand, slightly pulling back.

Their breaths were labored as he heard her whisper, “not here.”

He nodded in understanding, thankful and yet not that she had stopped things. “I’m sorry,” he softly said once he got his breathing under control.

He felt her lightly cup his jaw, gazing deeply into his eyes, her own slightly darker than the beautiful blue he normally saw. “I’m not. I just don’t want it to be here.”

Moving her other hand upward she tenderly slide it along his rough stubble, before speaking. “I’ll see you soon,” she whispered and then lightly brushed her lips against his before heading upstairs in order to collect her things.

As he watched her leave, Oliver realized she had never promised to be careful, and it was then he knew how she felt every time he went out into the night. He sighed, running a hand down his face. The next two days were going to be the longest of his life.

Resolute, Oliver headed back to where to the party was being held to collect Sara and take her home.

Chapter End Notes

For any who are interested. Here’s a link to the dress I envisioned Felicity wearing. Again, I changed the color because as always it’s all about the green :)!

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

The next day after the party.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all of you who continue to stick with me and my Olicity story. I am so sorry that it's been so long since my last update. I can't believe it's been 2 weeks! Things in my life have been CRAZY! Most of it good, but very stressful and busy. I promise this story will be finished... and hopefully in the next few weeks. I hope anyone reading will continue to do so. In this chapter I think a lot of questions will be answered, but I hope to still have a few more surprises coming. Thanks again for all who continue to support me and my Olicity love!

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Nine

Oliver was sitting at the bar drinking some water when Thea entered the club. He had already been at Verdant for a few hours prior to her arrival. He’d been restless ever since leaving Felicity the night before, and, after she’d texted him early that morning letting him know she’d left for Central City and promised to check in when she arrived, he decided a good workout was needed. So, after he pushed his body to it’s limits, he took a shower and waited until his baby sister arrived. He now watched as she headed towards him, her every step making him more and more on edge. Anxious, he took another swig of his drink, wishing it was something way stronger but knew that would not have been a good idea. As much as he dreaded his upcoming conversation with Thea, Oliver trusted Felicity’s judgement and had decided to take her advice and tell his sister everything.

Standing as she reached him, Oliver kissed her cheek, pulling her into a hug. “Thank you for meeting me.”
Pushing away gently, Thea eyed her brother, “of course, Ollie. I will admit to being a little... well, maybe more than a little... curious as to what this is about.” Oliver took another gulp of his drink before answering. Thea beat him to the punch, though. “A little early for drinking, wouldn’t you say?”

He lowered the glass, shaking it back and forth as he replied. “Water. But even if it wasn’t,” he smirked, “it is five o’clock somewhere.”

Thea laughed, slapping him fondly. “Sometimes, Ollie, I think you’ve changed, and then other times, times like this one, I wonder.”

Oliver then got serious, the smile wiped from his face. “I have changed, Speedy, and it’s time I showed you how.”

“O-kay?”

“Come on,” he said as he grabbed her hand. Oliver led Thea over to the locked door that would take them down to the basement of Verdant. As he punched in the code, he heard his younger sister comment. “I always wondered what was down here.”

He glanced back at her for a moment before opening the door. “Well, now you’ll know.”

Oliver couldn’t stop the increased beating of his heart and the wetness that surfaced on his palms as they entered the space. He just didn’t know how this was going to turn out – good or bad. As he wiped his hands on his jeans, he continued to lead Thea down into the ‘Arrow Cave.’

Once at the bottom, he left Thea to walk over and flip on the lights. As everything slowly came into focus, he watched his sister’s reactions as they flickered over her delicate features. He saw her expression go from surprise, to confusion, to anger, to what must have shocked him the most: the glimpse of fascination and pride that she let slip.

“What... what is this place?”

“I think you already know the answer to that, Speedy,” he replied as he headed back over to her position. She still hadn’t entered the lair itself. He motioned for her to do so. “Go ahead, take a
look around, and then I’ll explain everything.”

Oliver watched as his younger sister started to slowly move around the space. She first went over to the glass where his uniform was stored and cautiously reached out to touch the case, quickly retracting her hand before actually touching anything, however. From there, she crossed the room to where he kept his row of arrows. She gingerly extended her hand and touched one, before pulling back and glancing his way.

“Ollie,” she said before taking a breath, her voice rising as she continued to talk. “I’m trying really hard not to be mad at you right now. I really am. But this....” She moved her hand around the room. “This is a big deal and a big lie you’ve been keeping. Why?”

As Oliver took in the word why, he knew that one word held so many meanings. Why was he doing this? Why did he lie for so long? Why tell her now? He knew she was asking all those questions in that one word... and more.

Walking over to her, he gently grabbed her hand, immediately feeling her resistance to his touch, but Oliver remained firm as he kept their hands clasped and led her over to the leather couch just a few feet away. As they sat down together, he quietly asked, “please, Thea, just hear me out? That’s all I want. Ask all the questions you need, and, if in the end you want to hate me or remain furious with me, I’ll have to live with that. But I can only wish that you’ll understand the whys and still want me as your big brother. At least I’ll know that I’ve finally been totally honest with you.”

He waited for several seconds before she finally met his gaze and nodded her concession before he continued. “I... I’d like to be able to tell you that I thought it was time you knew, that I felt it was okay to bring you into this world I lead, but that would be a lie, and I promised myself that from now on I wouldn’t lie to you anymore.” Looking away, he tried to gather his thoughts, making sure he explained himself so she would truly understand. “This all....” He allowed her hand to fall from his as he gestured around the room. “This all started out as a way for me to right Dad’s wrongs.”

Reaching for his hand this time, Thea remarked, “I don’t understand, Ollie.”

Turning to face her once more, Oliver tried to explain. “When the Queens Gambit went down, Dad didn’t immediately die. We made it to a raft, along with one of the crew. There was very little drinkable water, and, all of a sudden, Dad was giving me this book, telling me to live. To right his wrongs. I had no idea what he was talking about, but, before I could ask him anything further, he shot the crewmen and then himself.”
“Oh my god,” Thea exclaimed as tears started to pool on the edges of her big green eyes.

Pulling her into a hug, Oliver tried to console her. “I’m so sorry. I know I should probably have been a little more tactful, but there was no easy way to tell you that truth.” Pulling back he asked, “is this too much for you?”

Wiping away the few tears that had fallen, Thea urged him to continue. “No, Ollie. I want to know everything.”

Taking a deep breath, Oliver stood and paced in front of his sister before sitting back to face her again. “After I was rescued and came back home, I knew I had to honor Dad’s wishes and take care of the people who had wronged this city. That’s why I became the Vigilante. Things, as you know, have progressed since then.”

Staring at him now, Thea asked, “is that where all your scars came from?”

“You know I regret the day you walked into my bedroom and saw those,” he answered as he grabbed her hand and squeezed it tenderly. “But, no, those scars are from my time away.” He watched as her mouth began to open to ask another question, but he held up his free hand to stop her. “And, before you ask, that’s one area I’m not quite ready to share yet – with anyone, really.”

He knew that was hard for her; she wanted to know everything... as Oliver was sure he would feel if something had ever happened to Thea, but he just wasn’t ready or prepared to share what had happened on Lian Yu. He could tell when she gave a slight nod of her head she accepted his decision, and he was grateful. He gave her a small smile, letting her know he appreciated her restraint. “I will answer any questions you have about this, though.” He gestured around the foundry’s basement. “And I’ll tell you what’s going on here in Starling City, but the island...? The island for now is off limits.”

She nodded again, acknowledging his parameters. “Fair enough.” He watched as Thea once more took in the room around her, finally honing in on all the high tech equipment and asked, “who else knows about you?”

Sighing, he dragged a hand over his face before giving her one of his big brother smirks. “Probably more people than I’d like, but, in the end, I have to admit it’s really helped to have others assist in my crusade. What started out as a way to help Dad became something so much bigger.”
Thea gave Oliver her own ‘Queen smirk’ before pointing out, “you still haven’t answered my question.”

Still holding onto one of her hands, he nodded. “You’re right. Let me ask you this: who do you think already knows?”

He watched as his younger sister tapped a finger on her chin, contemplating his question. “I can only assume Mr. Diggle knows as he’s by your side pretty much all the time.” Oliver nodded, concurring with her assumption. “And then there’s all this equipment. I mean, Ollie, you were never very tech savvy, so I’m pretty sure Felicity does as well.”

Rubbing his chin, Oliver smiled as he thought about the night his Girl Wednesday discovered the truth. It was the day his mother - his and Thea’s mother – had shot him. “Yes, she knows, and maybe one day either she or I will tell you that whole story.”

“So who else,” Thea inquired.

Nervously, Oliver looked directly at Thea before answering. “Roy.”

“Roy knows...? How is that possible that Roy knows and I don’t? AND that he didn’t tell me,” she exclaimed.

Letting go of her agitated hand, Oliver reached up and lightly took hold of her shoulders as he tried to smoothly explain the details about her boyfriend. “Do you remember when you, Roy, and your other friend... What was her name?”

“Sin?”

“Yes, Sin,” he nodded. “When the three of you wanted to find out what happened to Sin’s friend? Well, Roy got too close to the truth, and he was injected with this drug called Mirakuru. Even you, I’m sure, have noticed how he’s changed in the past few weeks.”

Thea gave another slight nod, acknowledging that, yes, she’d seen the changes in Roy.
“Well, this drug has done things to his body that’s hard for him to control. I'm familiar with this drug from the island, and I thought... I thought I could help him. But, to help him, I had to share my secret.” He waited as Thea processed all he had revealed to her. “I want you to know, Speedy, that I don’t willingly share this secret. Only those closest to me know.”

She looked at him, her eyes wide – a wariness now there that he wished wasn’t. “Does... does Mom know?”

“No,” he declared with a little more vehemence than he planned. “At least, I don’t think she does. I have not told her.”

“What’s going on with you two,” Thea asked, searching his face for answers.

Blowing out a breath, he again eyed his sister carefully, meeting her direct gaze before answering. “That’s the other reason I decided to show you this. I felt, if I was truly going to be honest about... things, I needed to be completely honest about everything. I’m going to be straight with you, Speedy. I don’t know when or really if I ever would have told you about being the Arrow if Felicity...”

“Felicity?”

Smiling as he thought of his executive assistant, Oliver confirmed, “yes, Felicity. She discovered something accidentally about our family that I didn’t even know. Something that involved you and mom, and, against our mother’s wishes, she told me. She... Felicity, that is, recommended that I, in turn, tell you. She told me that lies always have a way of coming out and that it would be better for you if it came from me instead of someone else.”

“Well, I have to agree with her on that one.”

“It’s not something I really want to tell you, though, Thea,” Oliver warily shared.

“What is... what is it,” Thea stammered.

Oliver blew out a harsh breath. “This is hard for me to say.”
“Just say it, Ollie.”

Oliver looked directly into his sister’s eyes as he told her the truth. “Malcolm Merlyn is your biological father.”

Thea jumped up, pulling away from him as she breathed out, “that’s... that’s not possible.”

Oliver stood and held her shoulders to keep her close even as she resisted. “It is, Speedy. I’m sorry. Felicity showed me the documents to prove it, and, when she confronted mom, she didn’t deny it; she only threatened her not to reveal it to me.”

“How... how can this be true? It can’t be. My father can’t be Malcolm Merlyn.” She crumpled into Oliver’s arms as she started to cry.

Rubbing her back, Oliver softly whispered, “it’s going to be okay. This doesn’t change how I feel about you, and I hope... I hope it doesn’t change how you feel about me.”

Pulling away and wiping futilely at her eyes, Thea stared pointedly at her big brother. “How could she lie about something like this?”

“I don’t know,” Oliver honestly replied. “But she did, and now you get to decide what you want to do with this information. When Felicity told me, I hated her – mom – for her lies. We argued, and I pretty much told her that I wanted nothing to do with her from now on. I initially said I would keep her secret, for your sake, but it killed me inside to lie to you. And then Felicity pointed out that I already was a liar. I have lies – big lies, and what makes lies worse than mine? I don’t know if I’ll ever forgive her for not telling us. I’d like to think that I could one day, but I just don’t know. But you, Speedy, you get to make that choice for yourself.”

Sitting back down on the couch, Thea looked up at Oliver. “I guess I could use that drink now.”

Oliver smiled down at her. “Me, too.”

She shrugged. “Like you said, it’s five o’clock somewhere, right?”
Joining her on the couch, Oliver pulled Thea to him, wrapping his arms around her as he asked, “are you going to be okay?”

She whispered back, “I don’t know.”

Rubbing a hand up and down her back, he questioned voicing his next inquiry in that moment but still needed to know, “are we going to be okay?”

Pushing gently away, Thea fixed her gaze on his. “It’s a lot to take in right now, Ollie, but give me time, okay?”

Thankful she didn’t say no, and Oliver nodded in agreement. It was then that he heard his phone ring. Checking the time, he suddenly realized that he and Thea had been down in the basement for a while and that he hadn’t heard from Felicity. Hurriedly he pulled his phone out of his pocket and answered it. “Hello.”

It wasn’t his... it wasn’t Felicity’s voice that greet him, however. Instead, what he heard – who he heard – in response made his blood turn cold. “Hello, kid.”

Oliver stood, not believing the voice on the other end of the phone. “Who is this,” he vehemently asked – denial and self-preservation setting in.

“Has it been that long, Mr. Queen, that you don’t recognize the voice of an old friend?”

“You’re dead.” Oliver whispered.

Next to him, he could hear Thea ask who was on the phone and what was this about, but he couldn’t focus. All he could think about was the man on the other line – the man he thought he had killed five years ago.

“Ah, but that’s where you’re wrong, kid. I’m very much alive. I made a promise to you five years ago, and I plan on keeping that promise.”
“What do you want,” Oliver spat out. All he heard was laughter, and that sound, that taunting sound, caused him to grip his phone a little tighter in his hand.

“Oh, it’s not what I want, kid; it’s what you want. I have something of yours, and I’m pretty sure it might be something you want back.”

Without even questioning what that might be, Oliver knew: Felicity. In that moment, he felt true fear, for he, out of anyone, knew what Slade Wilson was capable of. “Tell me she’s okay.”

“She’s fine. For now. But I can’t guarantee how long that will remain the case.”

Oliver, his patience gone, clenched his jaw and, through gritted teeth, quietly yelled, “you hurt her in any way, and I will kill you.” All he heard in response to his threat was Slade’s continued laughter, which only infuriated him more. “Tell me where she is!”

“Goodbye, Mr. Queen. Oh, but before I hang up, there’s two things you should know. First, don’t try to track Blondie’s cellphone, because, after this call, it will be destroyed. And, secondly, I’m going to give you a piece of advice and recommend that you talk to your mother about your pretty little assistant.”

Before Oliver could say another word, the phone went dead.

He felt Thea pulling his arm, frantically pulling at him. “Ollie, what’s going on? Who was that?”

Oliver couldn’t take the time to explain; he had to see their mother. Grabbing his coat, he looked back at his sister. “I’m sorry, Thea. I don’t want to leave things unfinished, but I have to go. I promise that we’ll talk more, only right now this is more important.”

“Where are you going,” she asked as he walked away.

Sparing her a glance as he continued to move, Oliver answered, “to see our mother.”

Thea ran to catch up to him. “I’m coming with you.”
“No,” was his only response.

“Yes, Ollie. I need to come with you. It’s time I talked to our mother as well.”

“Fine, but I’m driving,” he countered as he reached out to take Thea’s keys from her.

Still hurrying to keep pace with him Thea asked, “who was that on the phone?”

“Slade Wilson”

*****

Thea had no idea who Slade Wilson was, and Oliver really didn’t have the patience to explain. All his thoughts were centered on finding Felicity and making sure she was okay, but his sister, as only Thea could be, was relentless in her pursuit of knowing what was happening, and, in all honesty, Oliver wasn’t surprised by her insistence. She and Felicity had grown to be friends recently, and Oliver could tell Thea was worried about her as well. So, in keeping with his promise to be honest with those he loved, Oliver explained to his baby sister who Slade Wilson really was.

Oliver knew it was just another shock to Thea's already overloaded brain, but he was grateful that she listened, didn't interrupt, and remained fairly calm when she realized he hadn’t been alone on Lian Yu for those five years he was gone. There were questions – way more questions than he was prepared to answer, for he could see it in her eyes when he glanced her way, but, thankfully, the questions were left unsaid. They took Thea’s car even though his bike which had been parked outside the club would have been faster – partly because he didn’t want Thea driving after all the information he had bombarded her with that morning and partly for the fact that he knew she had more questions and figured the best way to get through that was in the car on the way home, for, once they arrived, he was going to be solely focused on their mother and what she knew about Felicity and Slade Wilson.

How could Slade Wilson be alive was the question Oliver kept asking himself over and over again as they continued to make their way home. And how the hell did he get Felicity? Cursing in his mind, Oliver punched the steering wheel, purposely not looking at his sister, for he knew his sudden burst of aggression would startle her. He should have insisted Diggle go with her to Central City, but, now, none of that mattered. All that mattered was getting her back safely, and, as they pulled up the long drive to their home, he planned to do just that.
Before the car was barely in park and the engine disengaged, Oliver and Thea bolted out from their sides of the vehicle and hurried into their home. Before either made it past the foyer, the pair knew something was deadly wrong. The round table in the middle of the room was turned over, the center leg broken. All the pictures that had sat on top were strewn all over the room – broken glass everywhere, and the vase of flowers that usually adorned the antique piece of furniture had been thrown against the wall, water everywhere and flowers crumpled into a small pile on the floor.

Oliver immediately went on alert, blocking Thea from entering further into their house. Without turning his head, keeping his focus forward, Oliver intently whispered back, “Thea, I want you to slowly, without making any noise, go out the front door and call 911. Let them know there’s been a break in, and we’re unsure if anyone is injured.”

“But Ollie...”

“Now, Thea,” he sternly said through clenched teeth.

His body remained tense as he listened to her foot falls head towards the entryway of their home and, only when he heard both doors softly close (thankfully, she had the foresight not to slam them), did his body slightly ease its stance. He remained vigilant, though, scanning the area for any signs of unwanted guests. When he noticed nothing, he began to slowly edge his way further into the house. He was itching to have his bow in hand, but, since that and everything else he had was still at the Foundry, Oliver had to focus solely on his self defense skills for protection.

Staying close to the walls, he made his way down the hallway towards the sitting room where the family usually hosted guests. If Slade Wilson had entered his home under the pretense of being Oliver's friend, that’s the room he most likely would have been shown to. He reached for the doorknob and gradually turned the handle as he gently pushed the door aside. As it opened, Oliver saw but only one person in the room – his mother, and she was badly hurt.

Her blood, crimson red, coated the floors and expensive persian rug below her. Oliver rushed to her side, immediately checking for a pulse, which he noted was present but weak and thready. After he determined she was still alive, he cautiously touched her cheek, gently calling for her, “mom?”

He watched as her eyelids slowly started to flutter open as she barely managed to say, “Ol... Oliver?”
Breathing a sigh of relief, he brought his face a little closer to hers and asked, “where are you hurt?”

“My... my chest.”

It was then that Oliver looked down and saw blood pouring out of his mother’s chest, a long sharp saber covered in her blood by her side, and her hands desperately trying to stop the bleeding.

Even knowing, he still asked the question, “who... who did this to you?”

She coughed roughly several times. “It was... a man. His name...” Her words were cut off by more painful, foretelling coughing. “... was Slade... Wilson.”

Oliver bowed his head in acknowledgment, a slight shake barely evident. How could this have happened? When would the pain and suffering from the island ever end? Yet, he didn’t have time for his own guilt to overtake him right then. Rather, he needed to help his mother, no matter how mad he was at her. Without a minute to spare, he placed his hands over hers, adding pressure to her gaping wound.

“Mom, I need you not to talk okay? We have to stop this bleeding. Thea called 911, so a police officer and hopefully an ambulance should already be on the way.”

He felt his mother move her hand to grasp his. “Oliver, I don’t have much time.”

“No,” he quietly screamed, fighting the tears that were now on the outer edges of his visibly tormented blue eyes.

“Listen to me,” Moira continued before taking a much need breath. “I need to say this before... before I can’t. Oliver, you need to listen.”

He moved his gaze to his mother’s now listless green eyes.

“Slade Wilson... he... he was the anonymous... benefactor that I... I told you about. He told me he knew you, and that... and that you two were friends. He said that he... wanted to help... my campaign.” Everything his mother said was punctuated by coughing.
More blood flowed from her wound as she continued to speak, her body now coughing up blood. Oliver silently willed her to stop talking, but she kept going. He watched as tears started to slide down the side of her face. “I’m so, so sorry. This is all... my fault,” she cried.

“Hey,” he whispered out as he took one hand away to cup her face, only to realize it was covered in blood before quickly moving it back to her chest. “How could any of this be your fault?”

“I asked Slade Wilson... I asked him... to do... to do something for me, and, when... when I told him I had... changed my mind, he... he was furious. He seemed to snap.”

With each word she spoke, her breaths continued to become more and more labored. “Mom, please, you need to stop talking,” Oliver softly pleaded with her.

“No Oliver,” she said with more conviction than he thought possible. “I’m going to finish this. You need... I need for you to know... the truth.” He remained silent, allowing his mother to finish. “I was... so angry... at your friend... at Felicity... for telling you... about Thea, although I... have to admit... being impressed... with her tenacity... and honesty.” Her voice continued to become more and more strained, the words coming out softer and softer as she continued. "I asked... Mr. Wilson to... take care of... your friend, Ms Smoak, for me."

His brow furrowed in confusion, "what are you saying?"

"I wanted... Felicity gone – gone from your... heart, gone from... your life, gone... from this world. I... I was hoping, if she... were gone, you... would come back... to me."

"But you were wrong," he whispered softly, realization coming into focus.

Moira gave a slight nod. " I was... wrong. And... then... last night, you... told me... what she... said, and... I knew... I had... to stop him."

Oliver felt his mother try and squeeze his hand once more, but she was becoming too weak from so much blood loss. "Oliver, I... need to... know that... you forgive... me. Please, forgive... me."

"Mom," he stuttered before licking his lips and taking a deep breath. "Where is she?"
He watched as she was barely able to shake her head back and forth. "I... don't... know. But... you can... ask Sara."

"Sara," he repeated, confused.

"Yes. Oliver. Sara. I asked... her... to... help... get rid... of Felicity... as well."

Oliver’s whole body went still. If it wasn’t for the fact that he could hear his now quickening breaths in the suddenly eerily quiet room, he would have believed he had stop breathing, for all conscious feeling left his body. He was desperately trying to process what his mother had just said, but he... couldn’t. How could Sara be involved? It didn’t seem possible, and, if it was true, he couldn’t fathom the fact that she might be working with Slade.

He felt his mother’s hands slowly start to slip away from his. Her eyes started to flutter closed. He knew he was losing her and was helpless, just like with Tommy, to stop it. Guilt ate away at him for all the pain and suffering he’d brought back to the ones he loved since returning from the Island. Why did he ever think his nightmares would ever be over?

Before the guilt ate him alive, he heard a voice that broke him from his own self-loathing judgement, a voice that steered him back to reality. “Mom,” Thea’s confused voice rang out. “Oh my god, Mom,” she cried as she realized what was happening and ran to Oliver’s side, collapsing onto her knees. “No, Mom,” she sobbed.

Oliver tried to stop her from coming closer, but he only managed to get blood all over Thea’s clothing, the crimson red color bleeding into her white silk shirt.

“Thea, you shouldn’t be here to see this,” he pleaded with his younger sister.

“You can’t leave her,” she wailed. “Mom,” she whimpered, “can you hear me? Open your eyes, Mom.”

Thea and Oliver both watched as their mother struggled to open her eyes. As her lids moved upward, Thea moved in closer so her Mom could see her better. “Mom,” she softly uttered, “it’s me, Thea.”
Moira tried to grab Thea’s hand, but it only fell back limply to her side. Thea, without thought, took her mother’s now fallen hand within her own, clasping them together and holding on tight. “Thea, my… beautiful… girl,” Moira barely rasped out. “You… and… your brother… be good… to… one another. I’m sorry. I’m… so sorry. I need… to tell… you…”

Oliver silently watched as Thea grasped their mother’s hand tighter, stopping her from saying more. “Mom, I already know. Oliver told me… about Malcolm Merlyn. He’s… my father. I… I want to be mad, but…”

“I… understand… sweetheart, but… I want… you… to know… I kept… this… from… you, because… I… love you. Try… to remember… that, Thea. I… love you.”

Before either Oliver or Thea could say anymore, could return the sentiments, Moira’s eyes fell shut, the last vestiges of animation fleeing limply from her body as brother and sister both clung to her, hoping to will her back to life.

“Nooooo,” Thea wailed as she bent down to hug their mother. “Please come back to me. You need to come back to me.”

Oliver grabbed his sister, gently pulling her away from their mother and encasing her in his embrace, whispering words he only hoped gave her some comfort. He felt her grab his leather jacket, crying uncontrollably, reciting the same words over and over again. “She can’t be dead; she can’t be dead; she can’t be…”

Hearing the cops enter, Oliver moved Thea further away from the body so the police could do their job. It didn’t really matter what they did, or what they found, though, because there was only one way this was going to end, and, the sooner Oliver allowed the officials to do their job, the sooner he could do his.

He saw Officer Lance come through the doors, a look of shock cross his face as he took in the scene before him. He met Oliver’s eyes, and Oliver only slightly shook his head back and forth, letting the man know this was not the time or place for him to be asking any questions. Lance seemed to understand Oliver’s silent message, for he left the two siblings alone in their grief as he went over to get briefed by the cops who had first arrived on the scene.

Continuing to hold Thea in his arms, Oliver pulled out his cell phone and called Diggle. Trying to keep his voice neutral, calm, and as quiet as possible so that he wouldn’t be overheard, he began to
speak as soon as his right hand man picked up. “We have a situation. I can’t explain it now, but I need you to find Sara and keep her at the Foundry until I get there. I don’t care how you do it, but make sure she comes and doesn’t leave. I promise to be there as soon as I can.”

He hung up the phone, replacing the device back into his pant’s pocket after receiving Digg’s assurances that it would be taken care of. He appreciated John’s willingness to carry out his wishes without asking any questions. Maybe he had heard something in Oliver’s voice to clue him into the fact that something was really wrong. Either way, he was grateful for the man’s undying loyalty to him and to those close to Oliver.

As he gathered Thea tighter against him, Oliver’s thoughts went back to what his mother had confessed. Sara was somehow involved in... Oliver couldn’t believe it. Why would she agree to help his mother get rid of Felicity, and was she working with Slade? Unfortunately, he knew he wasn’t going to be getting those answers anytime soon. He had to deal with the police so as not to raise any suspicions about what was really going on. If Oliver Queen bolted now, it would not be good. So, he held his sister close, gritted his teeth, and prayed that the preliminary investigation would end soon, for he needed to get to the Foundry, he needed to deal with Sara, and, most importantly, he needed to find Felicity and bring her home safe.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

What happens when Oliver confronts Sara

Chapter Notes

To all my readers thanks again for all the continued support! It is so appreciated. I'm hoping to get one more update in before my family and I go on vacation on Friday....fingers crossed. After that I'll have limited online time for a little over a week. I'm hoping I can still surprise you all as this story continues. Thank you again!

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Ten

Finally, the police had finished their preliminary investigation of the murder scene. They had quickly ruled Thea and Oliver out as potential suspects of the crime. After the pair was told that they were free to leave, the Queen heirs did so, having been assured that Moira’s body would not go to the city’s coroner’s office but to Sacred Hearts Funeral Home where the mortician there handled all the Queen’s afterlife needs. The siblings had explained that they did not desire for their mother’s body to go through an autopsy as they were confident on how she had died and who the perpetrator was. After a little discussion and a promise of a donation to the Starling City’s Wounded Warrior Fund, their request was granted.

Now, as Oliver raced back to the Foundry, his focus returned once more to the problem at hand: finding Felicity and getting her home safely. He had no idea what to expect once they arrived at the lair, especially since he needed to confront Sara about what his mother had said, and that alone left him restless. Diggle had texted him earlier, as per Oliver’s request not to call, to let him know Sara was with him and had come immediately, no questions asked. A short time later, the man sent another message informing him Roy, too, had arrived and asked when he would be there. He quickly shot back a reply, telling his right hand man that he would be there as soon as he could and would explain everything then. That was over three hours ago, however, but, unfortunately, it couldn’t be helped.
He knew the team was getting antsy, because he had received numerous texts from Sara, asking where he was and what this was all about. That was after he refused to answer several phone calls from her. After Sara’s fifth text, he sent a message to Digg, telling the man to take the team through some training exercises to keep them busy. He wasn’t sure if that worked, but he hadn’t heard from any of them since.

As they entered the Glades, Oliver snuck a quick glance at Thea while keeping an observant eye on his surroundings. He was so worried about her. She had been through so much in just a few short hours, and he wasn’t sure if it was all too much. She had become so quiet and lifeless since leaving their home, and that was not like Thea. He reached for her hand, which he was grateful she accepted.

They finally made it to Verdant, and, as the pair headed to the Foundry’s locked door, Thea turned to him, anger now showcased in her big, green eyes as she said, “I need the code to the door, Ollie. I’m not walking away from any of this, and don’t even ask me to.”

Oliver just nodded in acquiesce. He couldn’t say he liked her command, and the anger in her eyes bothered him, but he was thankful to see some type of emotion... even if it was an aggressive one.

Once the door was opened, Thea rushed passed him, racing down the stairs. He followed quickly behind her, but she was moving fast, a determined step to her gait. He watched from afar as she approached the three team members who were all positioned around Felicity’s work station. He could see the surprise in each of their faces at her presence in the lair. But, before any of the team members could ask what was going on, his sister, Thea Queen, marched right over to where Sara stood and slapped her hard across the face, screaming, “how could you!”

The blonde, clearly shocked by Oliver's sister's actions, slowly raised her right hand to her now burning cheek, and rubbed it gingerly, before repositioning herself into a defensive stance. Yet, before the situation could escalate, Oliver, finally reached Thea and lightly grabbed his baby sister’s shoulders and gently steered her over to Roy, who immediately pulled his girlfriend into a comforting embrace.

“What the hell, Ollie,” Sara exclaimed while still gently rubbing her now reddening jaw.

Oliver glanced at Sara as he left Thea’s side, advancing on the woman as his self control reached its breaking point. Her hair was damp... just as was Diggle's and Roy's, which told him that, while waiting for he and Thea to arrive, the three had been training as he had suggested to Diggle.

“What is she,” he forcibly asked his ex-girlfriend before roughly grabbing the hand she held to
her face.

“What are you talking about,” Sara returned his question with one of her own. As she tried to free her hand from his firm grasp, she added, gesturing with her free hand around the large, open space, “and when exactly did Thea learn about all of this?”

“That isn’t what’s important right now, Sara,” Oliver growled, moving his hand upward and gripping her arm a little tighter. “You need to tell me where he has her.”

“Who has who, Ollie? I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Sara countered, her tone clearly frustrated and upset.

“No more games,” Oliver quietly growled as he pulled Sara closer, looking directly into her eyes, hoping to see the answers he so dearly desired. He saw nothing, however... except maybe a little fear. And if that didn’t frustrate him even more....

Though before he could question her further, Oliver heard Diggle’s rational voice permeate through the tension filled room. “Oliver, back off, man” he said as he lightly but firmly pulled the him off of Sara. “Tell us what’s going on, and, please, start from the beginning. I can tell that you need answers, and maybe Sara has them,” John said, gesturing towards the woman in question. “But manhandling her is getting you nowhere. So, step back, take a deep breath, and explain.”

He wasn’t sure which words broke through his intense rage, but Oliver heard Digg and realized his friend was right. He needed to calm down... for Felicity's sake. If there was any chance of finding her – and alive, at that, he needed to elicit Sara's help, and yelling at her, although it felt good, wasn't getting him anywhere closer to the answers he sought. Rubbing his hands over his tired, worn face, Oliver felt like he had aged ten years during the past few hours. From his confessions to Thea, Slade’s phone call, to his mother dying.... He turned and walked a few feet away from the group, working on composing himself before trying to explain what was happening.

Yet, as soon as he turned around to readdress Sara, he heard Thea’s shaky voice echo through the concrete space. “A man... a man named Slade Wilson took Felicity.”

"What," Sara replied, turning to look at Oliver. "How can that be? Slade Wilson is dead. You... you killed him five years ago."

"It's true, Sara," Oliver's weary voice rung out as he looked at her. "He called me today and told me that he has Felicity. And we both... we both know what that means," he continued to speak as he made the slow trek back to where she was standing. "What I need to know is what you know about it, and how we can find her."

"Me?" Her surprise evident by the tone of her voice and the shocked expression on her face. “Why would you think I had anything to do with Slade? You know how I feel about him Ollie,” she continued as she reached for his hand. But Oliver couldn’t take Sara touching him, so he backed away before she could. He saw the hurt in her eyes, but he couldn't gather the energy to care, not now. Swallowing before she spoke, Sara looked down at her feet, softly whispering as she asked again, "why... why would you think I had anything to do with this?"

Oliver eyed the blonde carefully before speaking. He wanted to believe she was innocent, that his mother once again had crafted another very elaborate lie to hurt him. For what purpose, though, he had no idea, for she had been dying at the time, and deep down he knew his mother loved him. That was why he knew it had to be true. Whether it was about Slade or not, Oliver wasn’t sure. What he was certain about was that Sara knew something, and hopefully that something lead him to Felicity.
He was finally ready to answer her question when, once more, Thea, who had pushed away from Roy’s grasp, spoke before he could. “Because our mother, with her last dying breath after having her chest sliced open with a saber by this psycho, Slade Wilson, told us to talk to you. That you would know what happened to Felicity.”

Sara incredulously looked over at Oliver, an expression of disbelief on her face. “Ollie, I’m so sorry about your mother, but you can’t possibly believe I would have anything to do with this?” She pleaded her case, while she reached for Oliver’s hand once more.

He let her grab it and didn’t release her hand as it gripped his tighter, but he also didn’t grip back as he sensed she had hoped. Swallowing hard, he licked his lips before answering. “Why...” Taking a deep breath before continuing, he pondered, “why would she say it, Sara, if it wasn’t true. It was one of the last things she said to Thea and I. Before she died.”

Oliver watched in his periphery as he saw Roy grab Thea by her arms and pull her back into his embrace, gently stroking her hair as he spoke. “You were there?”

Thea could only nod in response, the tears now taking over – tears Oliver noted she hadn’t shed since vacating their home. She had been so stoic and quiet as they had made their way to Verdant. It wasn’t until they entered the foundry and she saw Sara that her emotions had once more taken over.

Oliver then looked at Diggle, whose eyes conveyed the remorse and sympathy he felt for him over his mother’s death. Oliver nodded to John, acknowledging his support.

He then preceded to fill the others in on what had transpired during the past several hours. Releasing Sara’s hand, he began to pace as he talked. “I was here,” he said as he motioned around the room. “Here... at The Foundry, with Thea. I... with Felicity’s encouragement, I told Speedy everything – about how I became the Arrow, Malcolm Merlyn being her father, and... Roy.” He finished by glancing over at the younger man.

Roy immediately looked at Oliver, his shock evident, but, after a few moments, he gave a gentle nod, telling Oliver he understood why he did it and that it was okay. Oliver nodded back in acknowledgment. Roy then turned his attention to Thea and asked, “are you okay with this?”

Thea looked at her boyfriend and reached up to stroke his finely chiseled face. “I wasn’t at first. I was pretty mad, and there’s still a part of me that is not okay with this, but... but, right now, all I can think about is how glad I am that you’re here, holding me, when everything else is falling apart.”

Roy pulled Thea into an even tighter embrace as he whispered in her ear, “thank you.” She reciprocated his hug before they both turned their attention back to Oliver.

“While the two of us were here,” he continued as he motioned between him and his sister, “I got a call from Slade. To say I was shocked to hear a dead man’s voice would be an understatement. He said he had Felicity and that she was....” He swallowed the large lump that had formed in his throat before speaking again. “… That she was alive – for now. He told me not to bother trying to track her down, because he planned to destroy her cell phone. He... he then said to go see my mother, that she would have answers.”

Taking a breath, he began pacing once more, not able to look at any of them, his frustration level so high he needed to keep moving. “When... when Thea and I arrived, the Manor had been
ransacked. Not knowing what to expect, I sent Thea outside to call 911, and then I started to look around. That’s when I found her.” Oliver paused to look at his sister. “That’s when I found our mother... bleeding to death on the floor of our own home. Slade Wilson had taken a saber and cut her chest in two.”

As he said the words, Thea ran to her brother, taking him in a strong embrace, possibly, he thought, to give him some measure of comfort. What she didn’t understand was that he probably wouldn’t feel anything until Felicity was home safe.

“She died soon after I... and then Thea,” he said as he emotionally looked down at his sister, “arrived. The one thing she said that I’ve held onto since the moment Slade called and told me he had Felicity was that I should ask you,” he choked out before placing his hard gaze on Sara. “Why should we ask you, Sara, about what happened to Felicity,” Oliver coldly asked.

“Ollie, I don’t know why she would...”

“STOP. LYING,” he shouted. Calmling down slightly, Oliver beseeched, “please, Sara, just tell me the truth.”

He watched as the woman he’d been sleeping with, the woman he thought he knew so well, stepped away. He could tell she was trying to gather her thoughts, but Oliver wasn’t deceived; he knew there was a chance she would try and leave without telling them anything, and that she might not tell the truth at all. He hoped neither was the case.

Sara turned to face them, but the only one she looked at was Oliver. “When I got back to town and decided to stay, Ollie, I was so lost. Laurel wanted nothing to do with me. I had just left essentially the only family I had known for the last five years, and then we... happened. I clung to it. You were the one constant in my life, the one thing I knew I could count on, the one person who knew everything I had been through and still wanted me around. I needed you. But even I could see what you didn’t. As much as I wanted you to need me back, you didn’t.

Oliver released Thea as he moved towards Sara, opening his mouth to say something, but she held her hand up before he could, requesting his silence. “No, don’t say anything. Please, just let me get this out,” she pleaded. “I don’t expect you to forgive me for what I’ve done, but... but I want you to understand.”

As she spoke, Sara moved closer to Oliver. Once they were just a few inches apart, she gently grabbed his hand. He let her, knowing it needed to be done if he was to get the answers he so desperately desired. “You didn’t see it, Ollie... or at least not at first, but I did. It was always Felicity that you needed, that you wanted, and I know it was wrong to feel this way, but I hated her for it. You were with me but wanted to be with her.”

“I...”

“No. It’s okay. I know you didn’t do any of this to hurt me. I let it happen just as much as you did, but it hurt just the same. Your mother,” she nodded to him as she continued to speak, “she called me and asked me to meet her.”

Sara then released Oliver’s hand and started pacing, just like he had been moments prior. “She knew, Ollie; she knew I had been with the League of Assassins. I don’t know how, but she did. When we met, she asked me... she asked me to ‘take care’ of Felicity.”

Oliver’s hands clenched at his sides, the muscles in his jaw contracting hard as he tried to tamper down his anger. Even in her death, his mother still had the power to shock and disappoint him.
Thea gasped as she heard Sara’s words. “It’s not true,” his sister denied. “My mother would never
do that.”

Sara turned her gaze towards the younger Queen. “I’m sorry, Thea. It is true, but you have to
believe me,” she pleaded once more as she turned her eyes back to Oliver’s. “I never would have
physically harmed Felicity. I told her I would help her, but all I wanted was to scare Felicity
enough to leave town.”

“You... you were Felicity’s stalker,” Diggle said. Not a question, it was a statement.

Oliver’s attention went from Sara to John as everything became so much clearer.

“Yes,” she nodded in confirmation. “But... but I didn’t send her black roses. That must have been
Slade. I swear. I vandalized her apartment, and her car, but only when she wasn’t around. I never
planned to hurt her. I... I just wanted her gone.”

She turned her blues eyes directly onto Oliver’s as she asked, “do you understand?”

Oliver stared at Sara for a long time, saying nothing. When he did finally say something, he knew
his words were what she most likely was expecting to hear. “I do understand, Sara, but I don’t
think... I don’t think I’ll ever forgive you for what you’ve done.”

A lone tear fell down her cheek as he spoke, and Oliver wanted to feel something for the girl he
once knew, but he didn’t, and, for that, he was truly sorry, because so much of what was
happening was his own fault, and, now, he needed to figure out how to fix it. He only hoped he
could. Frustrated, he rubbed his hands over his face. “It still doesn’t help us find Felicity.”

“Let me help,” Sara offered.

“No,” Oliver vehemently said. “You’ve done enough.” His anger was finally taking over as he
motioned for Sara to leave. “I don’t want your help, and I don’t want you back here. Do you hear
me? You are never to return.”

“Ollie...?”

“Sara just go,” he quietly but forcibly said as he turned his back on her and headed over to
Felicity’s desk, dismissing her without a second glance. He heard her go but refused to watch. His
only focus now was on figuring out how to find Felicity and getting her home safely.

Suddenly, he felt a strong hand on his shoulder, and all the tension he had been holding in
minutely evaporated as he heard Diggle speak. “We’ll find her, Oliver. You are not alone in this.
We’ll get her back.”

Defeated, his whispered to his friend, “I don’t know how.”

Moving around Oliver, John booted up Felicity’s computers. “Lucky for you, when Felicity’s
stalker showed up, I made a move of my own. You know that watch I gave her for her birthday?
Well, it’s bugged with a high powered tracker I got from Lyla.” Oliver’s lips quirked upwards just
as Diggle’s own mouth did the same. “You know you’re not the only one looking out for her.”

Oliver looked at John, his eyes expressing the words he couldn’t say himself. “Thank you,” was
all he said.

Digg looked at his friend as he grabbed hold of his shoulder, “we’ll find her Oliver.”
In the background, the pair heard Thea and Roy join them. “What can we do to help,” Thea asked. Oliver turned towards his sister, but, before he could speak, she said, “and don’t even think about saying nothing, Ollie. Roy and I care about Felicity, too, and we can’t just stand around and not do anything.”

“It’s too dangerous, Speedy.”

“No, Ollie. You are not going to stop me from doing this.”

Defeated, Oliver looked at his younger sister. “I can’t see you hurt.”

“I’ll protect her,” Roy spoke up.

Before Oliver could say anything more, the three heard Diggle call them over. “I’ve found something, and you are not going to believe it.”

Felicity’s eyes slowly fluttered open as she groaned due to the pain she felt in her ribs and hip but mostly in her head. What the hell happened, she thought. This did not feel like her comfy mattress and down comforter at home. And then she looked down... which definitely confirmed her conclusion, for beneath her was metal and dirt, and, yeah, it really was not very comfortable. Where the hell was she, and how had she gotten there? Then she heard a voice, a female voice, and her muddled brain started to remember.

“Looks like Sleeping Beauty is up,” Isabel Rochev coyly said.

“Well, it’s about time,” came a voice Felicity didn’t recognize, one that was heavily accented.

“Where am I,” she asked groggily. “And what the hell do you have to do with it, Ms. Rochev?”

The brunette just laughed – a really sick, sinister laugh that did nothing for Felicity’s headache as she painstakingly tried to sit up.

“Oh, I would try to remain as comfortable as possibly, my dear,” the unnamed man said. “We’re most likely going to be here for a while. I hope the accommodations suit you.”

Felicity looked around as she took in her surroundings. As she did, the IT specialist realized she was in an old beat up plane. There were some boxes and netting clearly visible, but all she could think about was how hard the ground was and how cold she felt. If she didn't know better, Felicity would have said her surroundings looked like the placed where Oliver had failed to offer a coconut, like the island – Oliver's island.

“What is this place?”

The man came into the light, so she could see that he was big – very big – and had a black patch over his right eye. He still had not identified himself as he sauntered over towards her. He took her chin, none too gently, within his grasp and answered. “This, my dear, is where you are going to die.” And then he, too, laughed, a sinister laugh, as Felicity’s body grew even colder.

Wrapping her arms around herself, she swallowed the lump in her throat, desperately trying to
“Your precious Oliver Queen has never talked about me? How disappointing,” the man said.

“You know Oliver,” Felicity asked.

“Oh, yes, my dear Ms. Smoak, your boss and I go way back. My name is Slade Wilson, a name you will now never forget... well, for as long as you're still alive which isn't saying much.”

“I don’t understand,” Felicity said as she rubbed her head. “What is this all about.”

“This,” Slade continued as he moved right in front of her face, “is payback.”

Felicity stared at the man warily. She looked into his eyes and saw nothing but emptiness. Who was Slade Wilson, and what did this have to do with Oliver?

“What do you want from me?” She grimaced as once more she tried to find a comfortable position.

“You, my sweet girl,” he said as he stroked her ponytail, reminding Felicity of when the Count did that very same thing, and she cringed just as she had with the deranged drug dealer. Her repulsion towards his touch only seemed to amuse the man before her. “… are going to help me exact my revenge.”

Felicity looked over at Isabel Rochev, the brunette looking oddly not out of place in Black Fatigues and combat boots. “And what do you have to do with this?”

The woman again laughed. It really was getting annoying. “Oh, I have my own revenge to extract on the Queens, and you made this so much easier.”

The man named Slade arose and headed over to Isabel, endearingly placing his arm around her shoulders. “Yes, if it wasn’t for Ms. Rochev here, I probably would have taken the wrong woman. But, thanks to her, your Mr. Queen is going to know true despair.”

“What are you talking about,” Felicity expressed, her frustration evident. She watched as this big and, yes, dangerous man stalked back over to where she sat. Holding her ground but so wanting to scoot away, Felicity met his gaze head on.

“You see, Ms. Smoak, I don’t know how much Oliver has told you about his stay on Lian Yu...”

“Nothing; he’s told me nothing. Well, just that nothing good happened.”

He continued his trek towards her as he started to speak again, his annoyance evident at being interrupted. Pulling hard on her ponytail, through clenched teeth he said, “Here, Ms. Smoak. Nothing good happened here, because that’s where you are: Lian Yu.” He paused, waiting a moment for the words he spoke to sink in before he continued, “and don’t interrupt me again.”

This time, Felicity did scoot away as he released her.

“We met on this island, Oliver and I. I almost killed him that first time, you know, and not a day goes by that I don’t regret not doing so. But I didn’t, and we became like brothers, him and I. That was until he chose that bitch Sara over Shado.”

Felicity wanted to ask about Shado. She remembered when Oliver had talked about her but knew it was best to keep quiet.
“You see, Oliver made a choice, and that choice cost me what I loved most in this world, so I made him a promise, a promise that he would suffer the same fate as I did. At first, I planned on taking his beloved Laurel. That was whose picture he stared at constantly when we were here together, but it seems your Mr. Queen, for all his talk of being in love with her, didn't even know his own heart, because they aren’t together. Then it was Sara, but even I knew that was never love. It wasn’t until my partner, Ms Rochev here, told me about you, and, after watching the two of you together, I knew it was true. You will be the one that will make Oliver suffer.”

“You're wrong.”

He just laughed at her, and, as he did, Felicity began to get mad, for all this laughing was really starting to get on her nerves. Yes, she was scared, but now she was getting pissed. She needed to calm down and try and think of how she was going to get out of yet another mess.

“Don’t even bother trying to escape,” Slade said as if he knew what she was thinking. “You would not want to be on this island alone.”

Now, that Felicity knew to be true. She remembered quite clearly what happened the last time she was there, and she definitely didn’t want to go through that again... especially not with a sweaty Oliver and his trusted bow to swing her to safety. “So, what happens next?”

Slade bent down once more, taking her chin within his grasp. She shivered at his touch, and she could tell he noticed, because an evil smirk spread across his face as he spoke. “Now, we have a little fun.”
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry for the delay in posting this Chapter. My husband hurt his leg and it's given me less time to write. I'm hoping to get more updates posted sooner than this one. Thanks again to everyone who is reading my story! I appreciate all the support!

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Eleven

Fun, that’s what he had said. Fun. Well, Felicity could honestly say there was nothing fun about this. Even though, thankfully, it had ended up not being the type of fun she had originally thought, yet it still was not fun... by anyone's definition, crazy psychopaths included.

Night had fallen on Lian Yu, and it was cold - very cold, and, as she continued to shiver on the unforgiving, damp, hard ground, Felicity thought to herself (And, yes, it was a random thought, but sue her. Please. She’d gladly hand over her plane shelter.) that people sure did lie... and not just a little white lie. No, this was a big doozie of a lie.

The brochures she used to skim through when she was in college getting ready to graduate and dreaming of that romantic, beach getaway with some hot guy bringing her delicious drinks and seductively helping her with her sunscreen always promised beautiful white sands, clear blue water, and balmy weather – you know, tropical. It seemed, though, that Lian Yu hadn’t get the memo (or brochure), because the only time the place was remotely tropical was during the day... which she didn't get to see since she was prisoner in an old, beat up aircraft. Plus, those sunny moments didn’t seem to last as long as Felicity would have preferred either, because, when the sun went down, that’s when it hit: the below freezing temperatures... and not just I’m-shivering-here-a-little-bit-after-eating-this-delicious-ice-cream-cone-too-quickly freezing. No, this was 'I need to have some hot chocolate, three heated blankets, and a roaring fire to stay warm' type of freezing. A hot, hot body next to her wouldn't hurt either. Although, in the grand scheme of things, she conceded that it was better to be cold than dead, but damn if she didn’t hate being cold.

It was one of the reasons she almost didn’t take the job in Starling City, because, even though the job was exactly what she wanted when she graduated from MIT, the climate there, along with the three hundred and fifty days of rain, left something to be desired. But, in the end, the job itself had won out. Now, she thought, maybe she should have taken that job in Southern California with Ingram Micro, because then she wouldn’t be here freezing to death, waiting for some psycho to end her life, and, even though she wasn’t per se a ‘SoCal Girl,’ at least she now had the blonde hair to look the part. Yet, as Felicity really considered her previous options, she realized if she had gone to Santa Ana, she never would have met Oliver. Or Diggle. Or Roy and Thea. And nothing – not even the sunny skies of Orange County – could make her regret that. Regret them.
At least the last time she was here, she vaguely remembered a small cot in the far corner of the plane’s fuselage that Oliver had been nice enough to let her use since they had ended up spending the night, waiting for yet another too small, too old plane to take them home. She swore then that she would never do this – ‘Lian Yu it’ – again, and, technically, she wasn’t, because she wasn’t on that cot, and this wasn’t her choice, but, either way, it still sucked.

Blessedly, Slade and Isabel had left her alone for the past few hours. The pair were seemingly in their own little sociopathic world. Although, at times it seemed like Slade was losing it, because Felicity had caught him talking to someone who wasn’t even in the area. Isabel, the crazy bitch, didn’t even seem to notice, but Felicity did. It appeared as though this Mr. Wilson still saw this Shado girl as a walking, breathing person. If that didn’t make him even more creepy....

She really needed to somehow get out... off?... of this place.

Thankfully, the two had not stripped her of her clothes, for, again, the fun Slade had referred to had not been that. He really did seem to have this unrequited obsession for some Shado chick. Felicity was grateful – at least for that and especially since it meant she still had on her blue trench coat, the one with the extra lining in it to ward off the cold, rainy Starling City days. Even though it wasn't green, it was still one of her favorites... probably because it was one of the first gifts Oliver had ever given her. Well, one she wouldn’t let him take back, because she loved trench coats. She never did ask how he knew that, and, now, sadly, she may never get the chance... although, when your life was hanging in the balance, thinking about how your two years and running, not-so-secret crush knew what gift to buy you probably shouldn't have been very high on the priority list. At least it gave her something else to focus on, however, because dwelling on the alternative certainly held no great appeal.

Even though she was cold – freezing really, and hungry – so hungry even a salad seemed appetizing in that moment, and tired – oh so tired because sleeping on a mound of cement like dirt honestly was not that comfortable, at least the coat kept her warm enough to stay alive – if not for the lining in the fabric itself because of the person she thought of when she wore it. So, in that respect, her attire helped, although she was still unbelievably cold. Plus, this Slade Wilson, evil person that he was, gave her a blanket to use, too – not one of those soft fluffy ones that you could snuggle into but one that did help ward off the chill of the night.

However, the oh-so-generous gift might have been better received if it hadn’t been for the fact that he had stipulated it was only to insure she didn't die from hyperthermia and stayed alive long enough for Oliver to watch her die. Now, that wasn't a pleasant thought. Not. If that didn't take the wind out of her sails, then watching him and Isabel gleam with satisfaction at the prospect of her death and Oliver's subsequent suffering sure did. They really did make a compatible team... not that she cared about them or their relationship, because any relationship between those two really grossed her out and was nothing she wanted to witness.

At. All.

Damn, she really needed to get out of there.

Unfortunately, she had no idea how.

Felicity was at a loss. Her IT skills were of no use to her on Lian Yu, and, although she had upped her training, there was no way she could take on Isabel and Slade at the same time... or individually, for that matter, if she was completely honest. Maybe just Isabel, because that leggy, brunette bitch really pushed her buttons, but, even if she managed to disarm her, there was no way Mr. Wilson would be that easy to take out, because, during the course of the day, Felicity had learned that Slade Wilson was the reason for the Mirakuru... well, was the Mirakuru, in fact.
Plus, she had no clue how much time had passed since she'd woken up on the god forsaken island or if Slade had made her whereabouts known to Oliver yet.

If that was the case, if she somehow got out of this plane and was able to make it somewhere safe on the island (not likely, but maybe), how would Oliver know where to find her? There was no way he could track her, so maybe it was best for her to just stay where she was and take her chances, because, even though her death was the plan, she knew it wouldn’t happen until Oliver was lured back to Lian Yu so he could actually witness said execution.

Of course, she was crossing her fingers that things wouldn’t quite go down that way... like perhaps Oliver would be able to stop, you know, the part where she died. Even if the idea of dying didn’t upset her, the fact that Oliver had to come back to this godforsaken place definitely did, because, yet again, she had put Oliver in a position where he was going to have to do something he swore he would never do again. Well, okay. Maybe he had never promised never treat Lian Yu like the Bermuda Triangle it was and plan his international travel accordingly, but Felicity had hoped that was the case. However, he had sworn not to kill anymore, and, now, here she was, stuck in the middle of something that threatened that promise. Yet again.

Man, she really did hate this stupid island.

And Isabel.

She really hated Isabel.

She began to try and think about how long she might have been there. Felicity knew it had to have been at least a day, because it was now nighttime, and, when she had first woken up, the sun was still shining. But she knew it couldn't have been more than two, because she still didn't smell that bad, and she wasn't going through technology withdrawal yet from not having her phone, or tablet, or one of her laptops in her hand. So, most likely, it had only been just a day of two. That, at least, was her best guess. Honestly, she wasn’t certain if even that was close to being correct.

What she was certain of, however, was that both her captors were sick in the head. She was talking insane in the membrane. When Slade had said he wanted to have some fun, Felicity feared the worst, but all it really amounted to was him telling her about all the things Oliver was forced to do while there on the island. Maybe this Mr. Wilson thought it would turn her against Oliver, disgust her in some way, make her stop loving him, but all it really done was make her love him even more, because, despite everything Slade had told her, Felicity had only been able to see the man Oliver had become despite all he had been through.

And, yes, she can admit that she loved him – loves him – was in love with him... if only to herself, because, if she’s going to die soon, she might as well finally be honest about that.

Tired of thinking about her possible demise, Felicity began to feel around in her pockets for anything that might be of some use. Nothing. Not even a lipstick tube that she would gladly smash into Isabel’s eye if she got the opportunity. But then she felt her faux diamond clad watch and sighed at the comfort the piece of jewelry gave her, because, even if she was going to die, at least she could do it with some style.

Not that she wanted to die or anything, but it did give her some measure of comfort.

Inconspicuously, she managed to take a quick peek at the device. Although the time wasn’t clear, she was able to see that she was correct, and it had been two days since she had been taken. She still wasn’t quite sure how that had happened, but did it really matter at that point? Probably not.
Although, since she was someone that pretty much needed the answers to just about any and every question, she decided now would be a good time to ask. Sleep definitely wasn’t going to come anytime soon. So, with that thought in mind, Felicity pulled herself up into a sitting position, making sure she kept the blanket tightly wrapped around her body before addressing her captors.

“Excuse me, Ms Rochev,” Felicity said, trying to keep the sarcasm out of her voice. “I have a question for you.”

She watched as Isabel rotated in her direction with a quick glance before turning back to whatever she was doing. “And what makes you think that I would answer anything you have to ask?”

“Humor me. I mean, I am going to die, right? So why not just put the bitch routine aside for a few moments and act like some sort of human being.”

Felicity wasn’t sure, but she swore she saw the rather stoic Slade Wilson tilt his lips upward in a smirk... even if only for a very brief moment. “You know, Ms. Smoak,” the man spoke. “You may not look that tough, but you’ve sure got a lot of spunk in you. I admire that.”

Felicity just shrugged. “Can't say that I particularly care if you admire me or not, Mr. Wilson.” And if that didn’t make the man laugh – that horrible, sinister laugh sending chills once more down Felicity’s spine.


She shrugged again, realizing she didn’t care who at this point answered her question. “How did you know where to find me?”

“Oh, that was easy, love. Isabel here,” he said as he gestured to his fellow sociopath in crime, “overheard you and Oliver quibbling about your trip to Coast City to visit your Mom, and that’s when we both knew it was the perfect opportunity to put our plan into motion.”

Felicity nodded at the man, acknowledging his statement, before once more directing her attention back to Isabel. “And why do you have it in so much for Oliver Queen? Not that I understand why he does either,” she countered as she glanced at the Australian beside her, “but this seems a little extreme... even for you. I mean, I know you were pissed when you didn’t get full control over Queen Consolidated, but are you that vindictive that kidnapping and murder seemed like an appropriate response?”

At that last comment, Felicity knew she had struck a nerve, because she watched as Isabel straightened up and stalked over to her position. Putting her face directly in Felicity's line of sight, Isabel angrily replied, “you have no idea what the Queens have done to me, and that smug boyfriend of yours, Oliver Queen, will get exactly what he deserves. Soon, you’ll be dead, and Queen Consolidated will finally be completely mine.”

“Really,” Felicity asked. “And how do you plan on doing that?”

Turning away from her, Isabel stalked back over to Slade before briefly looking over her shoulder towards Felicity. “Soon, that will be no concern of yours.”

“Humor me.”

Sharply turning to face the blonde, Isabel spat out, “Oliver Queen’s father was my lover. And this wasn’t just some company affair between the CEO and his young intern. Oh no! He promised me that he was leaving his family for me,” she screamed as she brought her hand up to her chest in emphasis. “Then he got a call from the airport as we were about to run away together, telling him that Thea was hurt and he needed to return home. I begged him not to go, but Robert was
insistent. He said that he would meet me the next day. Well, instead, I got a call terminating me from my internship with an order to never contact him again. So, you see, Ms. Smoak, Queen Consolidated should be mine, and no one – not you and certainly not your college dropout of a boyfriend – is going to take that away from me.”

Muttering under her breath, Felicity said, “man, you really know how to hold a grudge. And he’s not my boyfriend.”

“What was that,” Isabel asked.

Felicity just cheekily grinned up at the brunette. “Nothing you need to worry about.”

“Enough of this,” Isabel growled. “It’s time we start implementing the next part of our plan.”

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Oliver was working hard to remain calm as he waited for Slade’s next move. He knew their plan was a sound one – the best one they could come up with as a team on such quick notice, but there were still too many variables, and that had Oliver on edge... especially when Felicity’s life hung in the balance. He would do whatever it took to make sure she came home alive.

“What time is it,” Oliver asked as he turned to look at Diggle.

“It’s five minutes past the last time you asked me,” Diggle responded, giving Oliver a pointed look. “He’s going to make contact, Oliver. You just have to be patient.”

“Not one of my stronger qualities,” he countered. “As you know.”

John smirked slightly before sobering up. “Don’t have to tell me twice.”

Just then Oliver’s phone began to ring. He looked around at his team: Roy, Thea, Digg, nodding at each of them, asking silently if they were ready before answering. The trio all nodded back simultaneously, telling Oliver that they were. “What,” he growled as he answered the phone.

“A little on edge, I see, Mr. Queen. Well, I’d calm down if I were you, or I just might kill this sweet, little blonde before you get here.”

“Just tell me what you want, Slade.”

“What I want?! What I want is to see you suffer the same way I’ve suffered,” Oliver’s former friend yelled into the phone. “Which will happen soon enough. It’s time you came back to where it all started, kid, and I know you know where that is. See you soon.”

“Wait,” Oliver quickly yelled into the phone before Slade could hang up.


“I want to talk to Felicity.”

“I don’t think so.”

“I won’t show if you don’t,” Oliver countered.
He knew he was taking a chance with Slade and hoped like hell he didn’t call his bluff, because of course he would show, but he wanted to hear Felicity’s voice first. He needed to hear it – to know that she was okay.

There was silence on the phone for a moment, and then he heard her, speaking into the phone, and nothing could have stopped the sigh of relief that crossed his lips or how his eyes closed when her heard her voice ring out over the line. “Oliver?”

“It’s me, Felicity. Are you okay?” He felt like an idiot asking, but he had to hear it from her.

“Yeah... yeah, I’m okay.”

He could hear the stutter in her speech and the throatiness of her words, and it made him sick to think how scared she must be. “Don’t say anything that you wouldn’t want this psycho to hear, because you’re on speaker. Oh! And, if Slade hasn’t mentioned it already, he has a psycho partner with him, and you’re not going to believe it, Oliver. It’s the same psycho partner you have... at Queen Consolidated.”

He could hear in the background, “you bitch. You’ve spoiled my surprised.” And then he heard a hard slap that vibrated through the phone.

“Yeah, I guess I was right when I told you that Isabel Rochev didn’t really like me too much.”

Oliver was seething. Isabel Rochev was working with Slade Wilson. It actually made things a lot clearer, but it still didn’t tamper down his anger. Although, without even knowing it... or maybe she did because his Girl Wednesday was smart like that, she alerted him and the rest of the team that there was another player involved with Slade on the island, and that for sure changed a few things.

“Felicity, I hate asking this again, but are you okay?”

“Yeah, the surroundings here aren’t so bad. They’re homey. Well, homey for you..... For me well, nothing that a little ice and a great bottle of red wine won’t cure... which you still owe me, by the way.”

Oliver's lips quirked minutely upward at her reference to when he'd promised her a bottle of wine after that made up story of a scavenger hunt. She’s never reminded him of that until just now, though, he realized, and he desperately hoped there was an underlying reason as to why she chose that particular moment to do so. It was so early on in their ‘partnership’ when he had made that promise, but he knew he really did owe her that bottle. Although, at that point, it more likely should probably be an entire case of 1982 Lafite Rothschild.

“I promise, I will make sure you receive that bottle of red wine.”

They both got quiet for a moment, knowing the implication of that statement, for the two of them knew there was no guarantee on how their present mess would play out, but Oliver swore, if only to himself, that he was going to get her out alive, no matter what the cost.

“Oliver...?”

“Yeah?”

“I... I want you to know...”

“What,” he softly asked.
“I... I lo... I believe in you.”

He closed his eyes once more at her last statement, gripping his phone a little tighter. He knew there was so much more to say, so much more he wanted to say, and he could feel it over the phone that she did, too, but it wasn’t going to happen now – not like this, and they both knew it.

“I’m coming for you, Felicity. You have to know that. I’ll always come for you.”

“I do,” she replied as he heard her swallow hard. “But is it wrong of me to say that a small part inside of me wishes you wouldn’t?”

“Why?”

“Because I want you to be safe, and I know, if you come, there’s a chance you won’t be, but... well, I don’t want to die either, of course.”

He slightly smiled at her last remark, because deep down he knew she was trying so hard to be strong and to put him first, but he also knew the terror she had to be feeling. All he wanted in that moment was to take it away. But he couldn’t. Not yet, anyway. But soon.

“Felicity...”

“Yeah?”

“I... I'll... I’ll see you soon. I promise.”

With that, he hung up, ready to face Slade and whatever else awaited him on Lian Yu.
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Oliver and Felicity continue to deal with what's happening on Lian Yu.

Chapter Notes

So sorry for the delay. I love my beta dearly, but unfortunately she's been a little busy lately so it took a little bit of time to get this chapter back to me. I hope all of you who are continuing to read, give kudos and comments continue to enjoy. We will soon be nearing the end, and I hope to have my next update posted a lot sooner! Thanks again for all the support!

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here....

Chapter Twelve

“I... I..., I’ll see you soon. I promise.”

And, with that, he hung up, ready to face Slade and whatever else awaited him on Lian Yu.

As soon as Oliver hung up the phone, his nervous energy began to take over once more. He was restless, and he needed to move, but he couldn’t – first because it wasn’t time yet, and second because of where they were waiting to make their move. So, instead, he used his mind versus his body to remain active and mentally reviewed the team’s plan once more. It was a relatively simple one: neutralize Slade and rescue Felicity, but sometimes the less complicated plans are the ones hardest to carry out. Yet, Oliver decided he had to remain positive and hope this was not one of those times. He knew there were significant risks, the main one being of course that they could all end up dead, but at least now they had not one but a few advantages. They had already factored the element of surprise to their list of advantages before they even left, because whether Slade knew it or not, the team was right off the coast of Lian Yu, hidden away from detection on a boat Lyla was able to procure from A.R.G.U.S., and, two, they now knew there was another player
involved, one that they hadn’t originally anticipated or factored into their plan. But probably the most significant edge they now had was that Felicity had provided Oliver with the one clue that had been missing: where she was being held.

He counted on the fact that hopefully Slade did not know Felicity and Diggle had been with him on Lian Yu several months ago when his friends had come to retrieve him after he had run away following the Undertaking. If that was the case, then Slade had no knowledge of the three of them staying in the plane’s fuselage before going back to Starling City.

He couldn't help but grin in admiration that even in these extreme conditions his remarkable Girl Wednesday was able to provide him with the missing clues he needed in order to assist in rescuing her off this god forsaken island and away from Slade Wilson for good. Although, he shouldn't be surprised. Oliver was always aware that Felicity was more than capable of coming through even in the most challenging of situations, and this? This one one probably rated the biggest challenge they had faced yet, because they knew going in that, if unsuccessful, death was imminent.

Caught up in his musings, Oliver had not heard Diggle approach until he felt the man’s hand on his shoulder. Reacting without thought, Oliver swept John’s legs out from under him, bringing him down hard on the ship’s surface.

“Hey, man,” Diggle coughed out, having lost his breath from the fall. “You need to take a deep breath and try to gain some control over your emotions.”

“Sorry,” Oliver said as he reached down to grab John’s hand. “I’m a little on edge right now.”

Diggle accepted his boss’s offering without question. “I get it. We’re all a little antsy right now, but it’s more than that with you. I can tell this isn’t just about Felicity. What’s going on?”

Oliver inwardly cursed Digg’s perceptiveness. Sighing he rubbed his hands over his face before responding. “It’s the ship.”

He waited for John to reply, to say something – anything about his admission, but he should have known the man wouldn’t make it easy for him. He would wait it out until Oliver was ready to explain himself further. Taking a deep breath, Oliver explained further. “I swore to myself that, after I was rescued, I would never set foot on another ship for as long as I lived, not after the Queens Gambit and certainly not after the Amazo. But here I am,” he said as he waved his hand around. “I’ll admit it’s freaking me out. A lot.”
Digg moved slowly so as not to startle his friend once more and tentatively replaced his hand back on Oliver's shoulder. “Why didn’t you let me know? ’m sure we could have come up with another way to get here.”

“No,” Oliver quietly but forcibly replied as he moved away from Digg's touch. “This wasn’t about me and my fears; this was about getting Felicity back safely, and the only way we could do that is if Slade was unaware of our arrival. A plane would have been too visible and too predictable. Slade would have heard and saw us the minute we got close. No, we needed the element of surprise, and this was the best solution. It worked, too. Cutting off the engines and using the current to float us to our position kept our approach quiet. That's not to say that Slade doesn't have men watching the coast, but, since we've stayed a good distance from the island, I'm counting on that not being the case. We both know from his phone call that the man has no idea we’re here yet, but he’ll be expecting us soon nonetheless.”

As if his words spurred him further, Oliver glanced at his watch before continuing, “and we now have only a short time before we need to make our move.”

Digg, too, glanced at his watch and agreed with Oliver’s assessment. “So, what do we do about Miss Rochev?”

"She poses a... complication but nothing I don't think we can't handle... as long as we're careful. We need to divide and conquer."

"No, Oliver," Diggle strongly replied, shaking his head as he spoke.

"It's the only way."

John continued to shake his head as he argued his case. "There's no way I'm letting you take on Slade yourself, while I deal with Isabel. We both know that's not going to work. You need me to help defeat him, especially after what you've told me about the Mirakuru. And," he continued as he steered Oliver away from prying ears, "we both know we can't ask Roy to come along as backup, because he needs to stay here with Thea."

Thea and Roy had joined the two on their mission to save Felicity. Oliver had resisted at first, but, as the team plotted out their plan to bring Felicity home – alive, Oliver knew he and Digg needed the two teens to ensure success... as well as to assure Oliver that Thea was safe. Who knew who else Slade might harm. He’d already killed his mother and kidnapped Felicity. With Oliver out of Starling City, it would have been a prime opportunity for Slade to take advantage of his absence and use unknown resources to harm his sister. Oliver wasn't taking any chances.
With Sara gone and Felicity the object of their mission, they were left with two members down on 'Team Arrow.' They needed Roy and Thea for back-up. Oliver was not a fan of involving his baby sister, but neither he nor Diggle could be certain of how many men Slade had on Lian Yu, and they needed to be assured that their mode of transportation off the island was secure. It might have seemed more fortuitous for Oliver to take Roy with him as he confronted Slade, for the younger man was definitely stronger than Diggle, but he and John had been working together and in sync for almost two years, and that's what he really needed right now. Plus, Oliver knew there was no way he was going to be able to stop Digg from coming with him. Felicity meant a lot to Diggle, and he understood the man’s need to be involved. Besides, it was probably best that the strongest, if not the most controlled, was on the boat with Thea. Roy hadn't liked it, but he had understood. There was no way the young man was going to let anything happen to Oliver's baby sister.

Yet, frustration was evident on Oliver's face as he turned to face Diggle. As he spoke, he tried to keep his temper in check. "What do you suppose we do," Oliver asked as he turned away on the ship’s deck and looked towards Lian Yu. "God, I hate this place," he whispered as he felt Diggle join him by the ship’s edge.

Diggle stood close, his arms casually hanging by his sides – not touching or speaking at first but offering his support the best way he knew how. "I know this is tough for you, Oliver – the least being your feelings concerning Lian Yu. But Slade has Felicity, the... the woman you love." As John spoke those three little words out loud, Oliver did turn to look at his friend. "Oliver, I know you love Felicity. Just as I know she loves you. Whether either of you have admitted it to each other or even to yourselves, those feelings exist."

"She shouldn't, you know. Love me. I'm not good enough for her, and I never will be."

"You're probably right about that," John countered in a teasing tone which caused both men to smirk at his bluntness. "But, be that as it may, you mean deeply to each other, and I'll be damned if you both don't get off that island alive so you can finally figure it all out – for good. Do you understand?"

Oliver looked over at his friend, his eyes expressing what words couldn't. "So, what's the plan?"

Digg nodded, acknowledging Oliver's acceptance before answering. "I know it's not ideal, but we need to watch and wait." Holding his hand up before Oliver could argue, Diggle continued. "I know we're on a timeline, but Isabel is going to have to leave Slade at some point to take care of... female things, hopefully with Felicity. But, even if Felicity isn't with her, Isabel will be alone – a threat we can easily neutralize together."
"I don't know," Oliver argued as he rubbed his forehead, his exhaustion over the last few days finally taking over. "What if Slade figures out we've neutralized Isabel before we can get to Felicity?"

"He won't."

"How can you be so sure?"

But, before Diggle could answer Oliver’s question, Thea and Roy appeared. "You two ready?" she asked as she looked between the two men. The pair shared a look before nodding to his sister. "Ok, then. Let's get you two suited up."

As if that was their cue, the four shifted and started to moved towards the ship’s hole where Oliver and Diggle would don their scuba suits. As Oliver reached Thea, she tenderly touched his arm, signaling for him to stop, and waited until he looked at her before speaking. "You know everything is going to be alright, don't you?"

Without answering, Oliver minutely grinned before bending down and gently giving his sister a kiss on the cheek before standing tall once again.

As he stood, Thea eyed him carefully, placing her hands on her hips before speaking once more. "You know, this whole Felicity getting kidnapped thing does not absolve you from opening up to me more." Her tone was teasing, but there was also a hint of seriousness "I'm going to want to know how you learned to scuba dive."

As she finished, this time Oliver gave his sister a genuine smile and answered, "one day Speedy; one day."

"I love you, Ollie."

"I love you, too."

The pair hugged, Thea holding on tight a moment longer than was necessary before releasing her brother and turning to continue towards the stairs that would lead down to the ship's cabin. Roy
moved to follow his girlfriend, but, before he could get past him, Oliver firmly, but not forcibly, grabbed his arm. The two watched as Thea and Diggle moved on ahead without them.

"You know, I don't have to tell you that you are to do anything, and I mean anything, to keep Thea safe."

Roy bravely looked his mentor in the eye before responding, "you don't need to worry, boss. I know what I need to do."

Oliver nodded in acceptance before the two moved to join Thea and Diggle.

It was time to head back to Lian Yu.

******

Felicity knew she should have felt better after talking to Oliver. Normally, hearing his strong, confident, yet caring voice always calmed her nerves but not today. Today... today she knew he was headed into a battle he might not win, and, even though death scared her — a lot, Oliver dying scared her more. Maybe that's what it meant to be in love — to always put the other person's needs before your own? But it really didn't matter at that point what it meant; all she knew was she would do anything, anything, to make sure Oliver got off the island alive, once more.

"So, what's next," she heard Isabel ask Slade, reminding her that there were two very big obstacles in her way from completing her objective.

Felicity eyed the pair carefully and noticed Slade glance at his watch before addressing his partner in crime. "It'll be some time before Mr. Queen arrives, so we should start setting up his surprises. Do you remember what to do?"

Isabel eyed her counterpart as her signature, very evil smile took over her face. "Of course. I'll get started now."

Slade watched as she left the plane before glaring over at Felicity. "Soon, my love. Very soon this will all be over."
"And that's suppose to comfort me," Felicity replied. "And I'm not your love."

"Ah, but you could be," Slade responded as his sinister grin spread across his face.

"Never."

"Even if it meant me sparing your life?"

"I'd rather be dead than be with you!" Maybe that wasn't the right thing to say in that moment, Felicity thought as she watched a clearly frustrated Slade stalk over to her position. He harshly grabbed her chin, forcing her to look directly at him while he spoke. But Felicity wasn't ready to comply with the evil man's demands just yet, so she did what any deviant woman would do; she closed her eyes, denying her captor his obvious wish.

"Look at me, Ms. Smoak."

But Felicity refused.

This time the man bellowed his request. "Look. At. Me." Felicity finally decided that maybe provoking a super charged human might not be the best plan, so she acquiesced and opened her baby blues. "Always Oliver Queen. You women are always choosing him," he spat out. "Well, sweetheart, you don't have to worry. Your wish will be granted soon enough." And, with that, she watched Slade stomp outside.

She knew he didn't go far. He wouldn't take the chance that she might stupidly try to escape, but she was so very grateful for the peace... if only for a few minutes. And, with that thought, she slumped down to the floor, giving herself a moment to really reflect on her situation. She wouldn't cry, though – refused to. She knew Oliver would be there soon, and she meant what she had said on the phone earlier. Felicity believed in him. But, as she thought what was yet to come, she could admit she was very, very scared.

She wasn't sure how much time had passed as she laid there. Neither Slade nor Isabel had returned, and Felicity wasn't sure if she should be happy or worried by that fact. Suddenly, she felt a hand from behind her wrap around her face and cover her mouth, preventing her from speaking. Before she could even react, she heard Sara's distinct voice echoing in her ear.
"Shhhhh," she whispered. "Don't move, and don't say a word."

Felicity, not feeling very benevolent, tried to turn and confront the other woman, but her efforts were to no avail. Once she stopped struggling, Sara removed her hand and shifted to place just her index finger over her lips while mouthing, “not a word."

Firmly closing her lips into a thin line, Felicity obeyed Sara's command, but she was clearly frustrated by not being able to address the other woman. Although, in the end, it didn’t really matter, because, before either could do anything, the two heard Slade's gravelly voice reverberate around the plane's fuselage.

"Sara Lance, how nice of you to join the party."

"Slade Wilson. As charming as ever," the blond replied. "Just so you know, you don't scare me anymore."

He just laughed – his sinister, evil laugh... which was really grating on Felicity's nerves. "Ah, but you should be afraid, Sara. Very afraid."

It was then that Felicity felt Sara put something in her hand as the woman leaned towards her and quietly spoke so only Felicity could hear, "for Slade." Then the blonde stood without further explanation to face her adversary, releasing her staff to its full length.

Slade just smiled. "You think your League of Assassins tricks are any match for me?"

Sara grinned back. "It doesn't matter what you think Slade, because, this time, you're going to lose." Both blondes noticed as the man glanced towards the opening of the plane. "If you're waiting for Isabel to show up, you'll be waiting for awhile."

"What did you do, Sara," Felicity asked.

"What I had to," Sara replied as she looked over at Felicity. "We all do what we have to in order to survive."

Felicity gave a slight nod to Sara, letting her know she understood, and, as she did, she tightly
gripped the small syringe she had just received, resolute. The IT specialist knew exactly what had to be done for them all to survive.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Felicity and Oliver are reunited

Chapter Notes

Thanks to everyone who continues to support my story! I appreciate it so much!!! So this chapter and chapter 12 were divided into two separate chapters. They were too long together, but a little shorter individually, but that's where I decided to go. I have a feeling the rest of the chapters will be a little longer. My goal is to have this done before Season 3 starts! That gives me a little over a month! Can't wait for the new season to begin!!!! So excited for more Olicity!

~ Jules ~

Where To Go From Here

Chapter Thirteen

Oliver and Diggle moved quietly as they ascended the hill that led them over the horizon to where the old plane stood. When the fuselage came into view, the pair immediately slowed their pace so as not to accidentally alert someone of their approach. Up until that point the two had been moving at a fast clip. Oliver would have preferred to travel by way of the trees, but it wasn't something Diggle was comfortable with, so it would have slowed them down. Miraculously, they had not encountered any resistance on their way to their destination and both agreed they hoped their luck held out.

Oliver wordlessly signaled for Diggle to circle to his left so they could flank the plane. John immediately nodded in acknowledgement of his boss's request and began to make his way in that direction. Thankfully, the ex-soldier had somehow been able to keep his military grade, high powered, heat sensitive binoculars for his personal use... or more likely it was another gift from Lyla. Either way, that little piece of equipment was going to be very useful. It would allow them to hopefully scan inside the plane without Slade or Isabel knowing. Both knew it would not be difficult to distinguish between the two females if necessary. Oliver wished the Team had their comms in like with most of their missions, but that wasn't possible with their IT specialist unavailable. That meant the two men were going to have to communicate the old fashioned way (well, relatively speaking): with texts. If all went according to plan, Slade would still be under the impression that Oliver remained several hours away, and it needed to stay that way for their
mission to be successful.

As the two continued to move closer, Oliver became a little concerned that they had not encountered any one since landing on Luan Yu. He was just about to make his concerns known to his second in command when, all of a sudden, he heard Felicity scream. Without thought to what he was doing, he began to run as fast as he could to the plane. He heard Diggle yell after him, but Oliver wasn't listening. His only thought was to get to Felicity as quickly as possible and pray he wasn't too late.

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Sara nodded to Felicity before she ran at Slade full force, but the man was ready for her. He grabbed her by the neck and threw her across the space like she weighed nothing. Felicity wasn't sure what to do next. She knew whatever Sara had given her needed to be injected into Slade, but she wasn't positive on what actions to take in order to accomplish her near impossible task. Later, she would probably think about that moment, because, in a matter of a few seconds, Slade made the decision for her. Before she could contemplate their dire situation further, Felicity watched in horror as Slade pulled out his gun and pointed it at Sara.

Then she heard his rough, gravelly voice yell at the other woman. "You are not the one I need, Sara, but you do need to die, for, if it wasn't for you and your insipid ex-boyfriend, Shado would still be alive. She would be with me now, but she isn’t. So, now it's your turn, Sara. Enjoy your trip to hell."

Without conscious thought, Felicity gathered reserved strength she didn't know she even had and rushed at Sara, pushing her out of the way just as Slade's gun went off. It was then that Felicity screamed, pain ripping through her shoulder as she went down on top of Sara. Struggling to maintain consciousness, she watched through half lidded eyes as horror and absolute fear appeared on Slade's face.

"Nooooooooo!" He screamed. "Not you. It's not time yet for you to die." Slade rushed over to Felicity as fast as he could, and then hurriedly bent over her slumped body to assess if she was truly dead.

Blood was everywhere, and the man was it making a mess, but, that didn’t matter, it was in that moment that Felicity realized that she had her opportunity – his mistake, for, as he leaned over her, she knew this was her chance. So, the minute Slade was a hairsbreadth away, she raised her
uninjured arm and forcefully plunged the needle Sara had entrusted her with and injected the unknown fluid directly into Slade's carotid artery.

For a moment, Felicity thought she had been unsuccessful, for, immediately following her actions, Slade jumped away as he felt the liquid enter his skin. He stood and pulled the syringe out from his neck, smiling at her, his forever annoying, sinister smile. "You can't hurt me, sweetheart. You should know that by now. But I can hurt you." It was then that he pulled his gaze away from Felicity and glanced at his watch. "And that will be soon, very so...."

And then he fell – hard, losing consciousness.

It was as he tumbled to the ground that Oliver rushed in and saw Felicity, her blood everywhere. Quickly she tried to calm his fears. "Oliver, I'm okay," she whispered out just as she rolled off Sara and lost consciousness herself.

*****

Oliver had never moved so fast. He reached Felicity just as her head was about to hit the cold, hard ground. Cradling her face in one hand, Oliver tenderly moved her onto his lap before carefully checking her injury.

"Is she going to be okay?" He heard a familiar female voice ask.

It was then that Oliver realized Sara was lying right next to Felicity. He eyed the other woman suspiciously. "What are you doing here Sara? I swear...."

Sara quickly held up one hand, stopping his tirade before using her other to sit up. "I didn't come here to hurt her, Ollie. I came here to help. I told you that this isn't what I wanted. I didn't want her harmed, just gone. I heard you all in the lair. I heard that she was on Lian Yu, and I was determined to make sure that she would be okay, that she would leave here alive." The woman shifted her position as she looked down at the unconscious blonde before continuing. "I enlisted some help, and we were able to neutralize Slade's small team along with Isabel before I came to confront Slade. You forget, I wanted him dead, too."
"Is he," Oliver asked.

"No," Sara answered as she slowly moved her head back and forth. "He's been injected with a new drug The League of Assassins have developed. It's not a cure, but it will keep him knocked out for as long as we need him to be."

"You... you went back to them?"

Sara shrugged her shoulders at his inquiry. "I tried, Ollie. I really did, but my home is with them now. With Nyssa. And I'm at peace with that decision."

Oliver stared at his ex-girlfriend for a moment until acceptance appeared on his face as he realized they both had come full circle. As if on cue, Nyssa entered the plane's opening just as her name was mentioned. "Are you okay," she asked Sara.

Sara motioned to a still unconscious Felicity as she answered. "I am... thanks to her."

Nyssa placed her hand lovingly on Sara's shoulder as she too looked down at the still blonde. "Then she will be in my debt always." Sara grinned up at her lover as she nodded in agreement.

A moment later, Diggle rushed in, ready to do battle. He immediately saw Felicity lying in Oliver's arms and rushed over. "What happened? Is she alright?"

Oliver gazed up at his partner and friend and calmly answered, "she will be, but she needs medical attention. I need your help to stop the bleeding, and then we’ll move her to the rendezvous point."

Diggle nodded in acquiesce before tilting his head in Slade's direction. "What about him?"

"We'll notify Amanda of Slade and make him A.R.G.U.S.'s problem."

"No, Ollie," Sara countered. "He needs to die."
Oliver reached out and lightly touched her arm. "No, Sara. Slade will not die by our hands."

Nyssa responded before Sara could. "I hope that one day you don't regret that decision, Mr. Queen."

He looked up at the woman, eyeing her carefully, "I won't."

"It's time to go," Nyssa said as she looked down at Sara, not even acknowledging Oliver's reply.

The blonde nodded in acceptance as she stood. She turned to her long time friend and lover, bending down and giving him a gentle kiss on his cheek. I hope you find what you're looking for, Ollie."

He gazed up at the woman who, at one time, had defined so much of him before he adjusted his gaze onto the woman who laid in his arms. "I have, Sara; I have. I only wish the same for you."

She bent down once more and squeezed his shoulder before turning to go, taking Nyssa with her.

Oliver watched as the pair exited and knew he was sincere with the words he spoke to Sara. At this point, he really did wish her well. He then quickly turned his attention back to the woman in his arms. He slowly caressed Felicity's cheek, gazing down at her beautiful face, knowing in his heart that he had everything he wanted and needed.

He looked up at Diggle and asked, "ready?"

"Just waiting on you man," John replied back.

Oliver smiled then – a full smile that spread over his entire face – before responding, "let's get our girl home."

Diggle grinned back as he proceeded to call Roy and Thea, letting them know they had Felicity and were headed to the rendezvous point, and they would be there within the hour. He did mention Felicity was hurt and that it could be slow going. Before he could realize his mistake in sharing too much information, he had to spend the next five minutes calming Thea down, assuring
her that Felicity's injury was not fatal and in time she would make a full recovery. Finally, after he had had enough, Digg cut the girl off, quickly saying that, if they were going to be late, he would call back with a new ETA. As he hung up, he heard Roy trying to continue to ease Thea's fears. Diggle smirked, obviously thankful it wasn't him dealing with the younger Queen. He made his final call to Amanda Waller, giving her the information that Slade was neutralized and where she could locate him.

After that was completed, Digg eyed Oliver who was tenderly stroking Felicity's cheek, moving her hair gently off her face. Diggle's joy was evident in his expression as he watched Oliver take care of the woman he loved. He waited a few moments, giving the man some time to just take care of her, to treat her wound and appreciate the fact they were all alive. Finally, when he felt enough time had passed he said, "time to go."
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Oliver and Felicity are together and finally off the island, but still have things to work out.

Chapter Notes

So so sorry for the delay in updating. It's been a crazy month BUT my goal is still to finish before Season 3 starts, and I have 2 weeks to do it! I can't believe it's almost here. Luckily there is only a few more chapters to go. I promise the next few updates will be A LOT quicker! Thank you to everyone who continues to read, give kudos and comment on my story. It is SO APPRECIATED! And thank you to my beta oyhumbug who I know has been extremely busy. I couldn't do this without her!

Where to Go From Here

Chapter Fourteen

It had taken Oliver and Diggle much longer than originally anticipated to meet up with Roy and Thea. Felicity’s wound had opened twice during their journey back, and the pair were required to stop and redress her injury then wait impatiently until the bleeding stopped. Oliver knew the reason. He insisted on carrying Felicity himself, not allowing Diggle to help. He knew it was stupid and selfish. He knew he had been getting tired and clumsy but refused to give in to his body’s warnings. The terrain had been more challenging with Felicity in his arms during their trek back. It caused travel to be difficult and her small body was jarred in ways it didn’t need to be. Yet, it didn’t matter. He was not going to let her go. He couldn’t. The need to take care of her was too great. He refused to relent even with the knowledge (after two incidents) that it wasn’t in Felicity’s best interest... which made him the bastard he knew he was.

Eventually, though, their long, arduous journey was over, and they finally made it back to the ship. His body craved rest, ready to collapse at any minute, but he refused to give in to his anatomy’s desire. Oliver was determined to make sure Felicity was safe and comfortable before he addressed his own needs. He had never been more grateful to Thea and Roy when he realized the pair had set up a makeshift infirmary for the blonde following their conversation with Diggle.

The room below deck where he and John had changed earlier into their scuba gear had an old
vinyl couch situated on the far side of the space for use by whomever commandeered the ship when out at sea. While not very pretty or comfortable, it served its purpose by providing a place to unwind when the ship went out on missions. What Oliver soon learned upon his and Digg’s return was that the aged, old piece of furniture also pulled out into a reasonably comfortable full size bed. It made the small space even more minuscule, but it allowed Felicity to be able to relax in a reclined position. She had only regained consciousness briefly when he and Diggle had taken care of her wound during their travel back, but, for the most part, she had remained ‘asleep’ and continued to stay that way even when arriving back on the ship. While as much as Oliver wanted to speak with Felicity, he was thankful she was mostly unaware during the journey back.

Along with the bed, Oliver discovered there was also a small curtain that came around at the foot of said piece of furniture which provided a small measure of privacy and quiet so Felicity could rest. He had taken great care when positioning her gently on the now established bed, as well with himself when he settled down next to her, his legs outstretched, one foot crossing the other with his back leaned up against the now makeshift headboard. He was careful not to jostle her, not to disturb her injury once more, but refused to relinquish contact with her... whether it was holding her soft, delicate hand within his own more calloused, harden one or lightly brushing back a flyaway strand of long, blond, wavy hair from her face, caressing her cheek as he tenderly placed it behind her ear. He couldn’t stop himself from touching her. Oliver knew he had almost lost Felicity, and he would do everything in his power to make sure that never happened again.

As time clicked by, though, Oliver became more and more anxious due to ‘his girl' remaining in her slumbered state. In his heart, he knew she was fine. Her body was only receiving the rest it so desperately coveted. Plus, they had managed to give her some pain killers during one of her few moments of consciousness. Yet, he couldn’t stop himself from worrying about her welfare.

As the minutes continue to pass, Oliver never left her side. Thea, Roy, and Diggle all offered to relieve him, but the man refused. He needed to be with her when she woke. He wanted his face to be the first thing she focused on when she opened her baby blues.

Just as he himself was about to nod off, Oliver felt Felicity’s body shift slightly, and, as she did, he in turn adjusted his own position with her, his gaze focused on her serene, beautiful face. She was so pale – paler than normal, and that was saying a lot since her skin was usually an ethereal, natural, creamy white. He lightly stroked her cheek as a sound finally escaped her lips.

It was a only a quick, soft moan, but Oliver would take it – anything that would show an ounce of life in her still too motionless body. Almost a moment later, Oliver watched as her long, lush eyelashes begin to flutter and her eyelids started to open. His heart began to beat a little harder as he watched her fight against the sleep her body still craved, struggling to open her eyes. Waiting, Oliver released a breath he hadn’t realized he’d been holding as a heavy weight lifted off his chest, one that had been there since he received that beastly call from Slade saying he had Felicity. Hope replaced it, and the relief that went through his body was indescribable.
What seemed like hours but was only a minute or two, Oliver finally saw Felicity’s bright blue orbs focus on his own, and he smiled for the first time in what felt like months. “Hey,” he whispered.

“Oliver...” Felicity questioned as she attempted to move, her voice scratchy and low, but, as soon as she tried to sit more upright, Oliver could see the pain hit her small frame, and she immediately collapsed back.

Lightly, he once more brushed strands of hair back, ones that had come forward to blanket her face when she had attempted to sit up, caressing her cheek as he did. “Don’t move right now,” he said as he placed his other free hand in hers, lightly squeezing to provide what reassurance he could. “You’re okay, but you were shot.”

Oliver continued to lightly stroke her cheek as he watched her attempt to speak again, her throat obviously dry as she licked her lips. “I... I... I think I could use some water.”

Oliver’s lips twitch upward as he reached over her lithe body to grab a water bottle. Carefully, he lifted her up slightly so she could take a few sips. “Slowly,” he requested. Well, more like commanded by the timbre of his voice, but he banked on the fact that Felicity was too tired and uncomfortable to argue with his tone.

“Thank you,” she whispered as he lowered her down, reaching for his pillow to place behind her so she could remain slightly propped up. Her gaze never wavered from his as she looked at him so intently, watching everything he did. They continued to stare at one another a few more moments before he opened his mouth to speak, but as he did he felt her hand squeeze his, her grip strong as she spoke first. “Don’t,” she said. “Please. I’m not ready yet for what you have to say.”

“Felicity...,” he replied, his thumb moving back and forth along her cheek. “I...” but before he could question her, confused by her statement, the pair heard a voice on the other side of the curtain.

“Ollie,” Thea softly spoke as the curtain moved to show her concerned face poking through. “I didn’t know if you wanted...” And then she saw Felicity was up.

But before she could rush to her friend’s side, Oliver held up his hand and reminded his sister that Felicity was hurt, pointing to the blonde’s shoulder. "Gunshot wound. Be careful."
Trying to look contrite but failing as Thea rolled her eyes at her brother, she quietly exclaimed, "I know. I'm not an idiot." But she did appear to listen as she slowly approached the bed and gave Felicity a careful, controlled hug. "I'm so glad you're okay," Thea said as she gave the blonde a soft kiss on the cheek before standing once more.

Felicity gave the younger woman a small smile as she looked up at her, taking one of her tiny hands within her own. "And I'm glad Oliver told you the truth."

Thea and Oliver shared a look before the teenager turned back to Felicity. “And I have you to thank for that.”

“No you don’t,” Felicity quickly argued. “It was Oliver’s decision to tell you everything.”

“I highly doubt he would have if you hadn’t made the suggestion,” Thea countered as she edged herself down carefully next to Felicity. “But I will,” she emphasized as she looked upon her brother, “be grateful that he was the one who told me and not someone else.”

Oliver gazed at his sister lovingly and carefully bent over Felicity to give his sister a kiss. “Thank you, Speedy.”

The patient looked between the two siblings as she picked at an invisible piece of lint on the blanket that covered her body and asked, “so, uh, how did your Mom take it when she found out that Thea now knows Malcolm Merlyn is her father?” The brother and sister once more shared a look, and Oliver knew before Felicity even spoke she would see the difference as compared to the one he and Thea just shared a moment ago. And, as if on cue, seconds later his thoughts were confirmed when Felicity asked, “what’s wrong,” as she looked between the two.

Oliver tightened his grip on the blonde’s hand before speaking. “Maybe this should wait until later.”

“No, Oliver,” she softly argued as she stared up at him. “Tell me. Please.” He hesitated as he peered down at Felicity, waiting, gathering his thoughts before speaking again. “Please, Oliver. I can see that something happened. Just tell me.”

And, as in most cases, Thea answered before Oliver could. “Our mother is dead.”

“Slade Wilson,” was all Oliver had to say and Felicity knew.

“I’m so sorry.”

Yet, before either Thea or Oliver could respond to Felicity’s voice of sympathy, a new voice entered the fray. “Thea, what’s going on? You’ve been down here for a while. I thought you were going to see if Oliver needed anything and then come back,” Roy quietly asked as he entered the space. That’s when he found out Felicity was now awake. “Barbie,” he smiled at the blonde. “So glad you’ve come back to us.”

Felicity smiled back at the younger man as she replied, “thank you Casanova. I’m sure you’ve been behaving since I’ve been gone.” Her smile grew wide as Roy winked back at her.

Oliver glared at his protege as the man bantered with Felicity. Roy, of course, took it in stride. “Calm down, boss,” Roy quipped before lightly grabbing Thea’s arm and getting his girlfriend to stand. “We’ll just leave the two of you to catch up.”

“But, Roy, I wanted to talk….”

“Not now, Thea. You’ll have time for that later. I think Oliver and Felicity need to rest.”

Oliver’s glare turned to gratitude as Roy gently ushered Thea towards the stairs. Thea quickly glanced over her shoulder towards Felicity before leaving. “We’ll talk later.”

The blonde nodded in response, giving the girl a small smile as she watched the pair leave. As soon as they were gone, Oliver slowly reached over, gently placing his thumb and forefinger on Felicity’s chin to guide her face towards his, his gaze intense as he looked into her eyes. “Now, what did you mean…?”

But, before he could finish, Diggle entered the space, and Felicity’s attention turned towards her friend. “Hey,” he said. “Roy and Thea told me you were up. How are you feeling?”
“I’m doing okay,” Felicity answered as she peeked a glance in Oliver’s direction. “Definitely sore, though.”

Oliver tried to hide his frustration, for he didn’t begrudge the team wanting to see Felicity, but he really wanted to get back to their conversation.

“That’s to be expected. It’s not everyday you get shot.” John joked.

Felicity smiled. “Oh, I wouldn’t say that. I think the two of you have it pretty down pat by now.”

The two men shared look, and, after a moment, Diggle must have sensed Oliver’s unrest, because the next thing he did was give Felicity a kiss on the cheek before turning to go. “I’ll leave you two to get some rest.”

Before he could go, though, Oliver asked, “you and Thea working on that project we talked about earlier?”

“Yes. We should have something concrete before we get moving again.”

“Thank you,” Oliver answered, his gratitude evident for more than one reason by the tone of his voice.

Digg nodded in acknowledgement reading Oliver’s body language without even trying. “Let me know if you need anything,” he replied before heading back up on deck to join Thea and Roy.

“What was that all about,” the blonde next to him inquired.

“It’s just something I was working on before everything happened,” Oliver answered as he gently placed his arm around Felicity’s shoulders and pulled her closer to his side before placing a soft kiss on her forehead.

She eyed him, the questions evident in her pale blue eyes as she studied him, but she must have decided not to inquire further, for she closed her eyes and sank into his embrace. Oliver lightly played with her hair as he, too, settled his body with hers. “Where exactly are we, Oliver?”
He once more moved his hand to tilt her face towards his. “I will answer you this one question, but, after that, you are going to explain to me what you meant earlier. Understood.”

“Oliver, I…, she started to reply as she turned her gaze away from his once more.

“No, Felicity,” he calmly interrupted, bringing her gaze once more upon his own. “We are going to talk about it. We are not going to hide from this any longer.”

“Okay,” she whispered but still attempted to move her eyes from his.

He wouldn’t allow it. “We’re on a ship off the coast of Lian Yu. Lyla was able to help us when we found out Slade had taken you. We haven’t left yet, because we wanted to make sure you were more stable before heading out towards Hong Kong and then home.”

“How did you find me so quickly?”

The corner of Oliver’s lips turned upward as he teasingly looked down at Felicity. “That’s more than one question.”

“But…”

His hand that had been holding hers reached up and cradled her cheek as he moved his thumb back and forth. “I promise in due time I’ll answer all your questions,” he whispered as he bent down and placed a soft, gentle kiss on her lips before pulling back and continuing, “now it’s time you answered mine.” He could see she was shocked by his actions and his insistence, but he made no move to justify his actions. He then watched as a lone tear escaped from the corner of her eye and fell onto his hand as he continued to stroke her cheek. “Tell me,” he quietly implored.

She wiped another tear away that had managed to escape before answering. “I’m afraid.”

“Of what?”
And then it all came rushing out. “That you’re going to pull away like you always do. That, because of what happened with Slade, you’re going to tell me that it’s too dangerous for us to be involved.” She motioned between the two of them. “Not that we’re involved, but I thought we might be heading there, and then this happened, and I’m not ready for you to walk away, and….”

He quickly silenced her with another kiss, this one longer and more urgent as he gently moved his lips over hers again and again. He never ceased the contact as he carefully shifted his body more towards hers and moved both hands to cradle her face. Felicity moaned into his mouth as the kiss continued, allowing his tongue to enter. Their tongues dueled together, each one taking and receiving. It wasn’t until Oliver felt Felicity wince that he realized he was getting out of control and remember that the woman had just been shot.

Reluctantly he pulled away and placed his forehead on hers – their eyes both closed, their breathing ragged as their air mingled together. “Felicity, open your eyes.” She slowly did as he asked, and Oliver, in turn, did the same. Blue on blue looked at each other as he spoke. “I love you. I… I’ve been holding onto that emotion for what seems like forever for you, and I needed you to know it’s how I feel.”

“No, shhh,” he said as he bent down and gently kissed her again. “I’m not running from this, from you. I….”

Now it was Felicity’s turn to interrupt him by kissing him, her lips softly moving over his again and again, and, as she pulled away and looked into his darkened blue eyes, she said, “I love you, too.”

As the words left her lips, their foreheads bent together, their gazes meeting the others, and Oliver whispered, “thank you.”

“For what,” Felicity whispered back, her eyes closing as he settled them down to recline on the bed.

“For believing in me. For loving me.”

“Always,” she replied as her exhausted body once more took over, and Felicity started to fall
“I love you, Felicity Meghan Smoak, and I’m never letting you go.”

Oliver watched as her lips turned upward as he spoke, and, as he, too, settled down to sleep, he heard a her soft voice next to him answer back, “I love you too.”

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The Team finally left the coast of Lian Yu a few hours later. Felicity and Oliver both awoke to the feel of the ship now moving. At that point, Felicity informed Oliver she really needed to use the restroom, and he retrieved Thea to help her. After that was done, she insisted on moving around above deck, refusing to get back into bed, stating she had been immobile long enough.

Oliver argued at first but then relented at her persistence, eventually assisting her up the ladder where they were joined by the rest of the team. Once there, he gently held onto her waist, for Felicity was still weak from blood loss and lack of food, as the two took a few laps around.

Diggle eventually approached the pair, asking Oliver if he could take a look at something before they made it back to Starling City. As Roy and Thea were right next to him, the pair assured Oliver they could watch over Felicity while he was gone… just a few feet away.

Felicity watched as Oliver walked over to where Digg was situated in what looked like a makeshift control station. She curiously surveyed the pair as the men began to intently talk, their faces only inches apart, while the two looked over something on a laptop the blonde assumed John had set up earlier. She couldn’t stop the overwhelming feeling of joy that hit her as she eyed Oliver. Sleeping next to him, kissing him, hearing him say he loved her all kept reverberating not only in her mind but throughout her body as well. Even though she was just shot and her shoulder throbbed like she had just gone a few rounds with Evander Holyfield, she couldn’t stop from feeling ‘good’ – so good, in fact, that she had a permanent smile plastered on her face that no matter how hard she tried to hide it, it wouldn’t go away, and, honestly, she really didn’t want it to.

“What’s making you so happy, Smoak? You look like the Cat that ate the Canary…. no pun intended, of course,” Thea teased.

“Yeah, Barbie, what’s got you so smiley,” Roy chimed in.
Felicity kept her response vague as she replied, moving her eyes from Oliver out towards the sea around them. “Can’t a girl just be thankful that she’s still alive after being taken captive by a superhuman madman and his bitchy sidekick... not to mention shot as well?”

“Yes,” Thea countered before Roy could. “But we,” the younger woman motioned between herself and her boyfriend, “know it’s more.”

“Let’s just say that Oliver and I have come to a crossroads that I think we both agree on... together,” Felicity replied to the pair while smiling to herself.

“Phew,” Thea sighed before she quickly squealed and hugged Felicity hard, mindful of her shoulder. “Thank god my brother didn’t’ screw something up.”

“Hey, I heard that,” the trio heard Oliver comment as they all turned towards him and Digg.

Felicity could only beam at the man as he drew his gaze upon her, and, in turn, he radiated his happiness back with a smile that lit up his entire face. His stubble had grown to a short haired beard, and there were dark circles under his eyes – like her, but he looked happy, and that was all Felicity needed to see.

Nodding at Digg, Oliver gave the man a squeeze on the arm, before he returned to where she was standing and gently, once more, placed his arm protectively around her, the heat from his skin enveloping her and making her feel warm all over. “You ready to go back down and rest now,” he whispered in her ear, the whiskers on his face tickling her neck as he lightly kissed her there.

“Not yet,” Felicity replied as she turned in his arms to face him, her good arm wrapping around his neck while her injured one grabbed onto his waist as she pulled her body flush with his, leaning her head on his chest, closing her eyes, sighing as she heard his strong heart beat against her cheek, and taking in the feel of him in her arms. “Honestly,” she whispered. “I wish we could stay like this forever.

He placed his finger under her chin, tilting her head upward as he bent down and placed a long, slow kiss against her lips. “Me too,” Oliver whispered back as he pulled away, keeping her body flush with his.
Felicity could feel the heat rise up into her cheeks as she heard Thea mock them, “get a room, you two. Oh, wait, you can’t. Well, then, go below already.”

The pair turned to face the rest of the team, Oliver smiling at the three, while Felicity bent her head down embarrassed, still not used to this affectionate Oliver... even though she had to admit she initiated it.

“It’s okay, Barbie. You’ll get used to us teasing you,” Roy added as he winked at her... which then turned Oliver’s smile into a scowl. “Plus,” the younger man came over and conspiratorially whispered in her ear as he covered his hand over his mouth. “I don’t think your boyfriend likes me winking at you.”

“You’re right about that, Casanova,” Oliver grunted as he led Felicity towards the stairs that would take them below deck.

And that’s where the pair stayed until they docked in Hong Kong before boarding the Queen Consolidated jet, taking them back to Starling City.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Felicity and Oliver are finally alone! Slightly adult content

Chapter Notes

Thanks again to everyone who is sticking with me. Just one more Chapter to go :) AND it will be posted before the season premiere next Wednesday. Can't wait for S3! As always thank you to my beta oyhumbug who knows I can’t do this without her!

~ Jules ~

Where to Go From Here

Chapter 15

Felicity slept most of the flight home from Hong Kong. She woke on occasion to the sound of Oliver’s voice next to her. He was so close and his voice so calm that the resonance of his speech calmed her in a way nothing else could. Just knowing he was next to her allowed her to relax, rest and breathe steadily. Felicity wasn’t sure with whom he was having a conversation, nor was she sure about what they were discussing, but it really didn't matter. They were all safe, and alive, and heading back to Starling City with plans to put the memory of Slade Wilson behind them.

Through it all, Felicity couldn’t remember a time when Oliver was not by her side. He stayed with her from the moment she woke up on the ship off Lian Yu to when the Team boarded the Queen Consolidated jet and began the last leg of their trek home. She didn’t want to admit to it, but she needed his presence with her – from the touch of his larger hand around her much smaller one, to the way his body was gently pressed against her own.

She needed it but still didn’t want to rely on it, for that scared her. Even though Oliver said he was never going to let her go, she still couldn’t stop that nagging feeling that it was all going to blow up one day. For now, though, she tried to put those thoughts away in the deep recesses of her mind and focus on relishing the fact that he was here with her, and that was what mattered in that moment.
When Felicity was awake, Oliver did as he promised and answered her previous question on how they were able to outsmart Slade and arrive earlier on the island than expected. He looked at her tenderly and, as he spoke, took her hand within his own, turning it over and pointing to her beautiful pink watch, explaining that John had installed a high tech tracking device inside the unit’s mechanisms to make sure she was never lost. As he continued to speak, he gently cradled her face between his hands and kissed her tenderly, whispering into her mouth that he never planned on losing her again.

She sighed softly as she melted into his kiss, enjoying this new, affectionate Oliver but still not quite believing it. In fact, at one point, she asked him to pinch her, placing her on the receiving end of a 'have you lost your mind' look. Felicity laughed and told him to do it... which he did, and it made her feel all the better.

She had asked what had happened to Isabel and Slade and quietly listened as Oliver told her about their call to A.R.G.U.S. to collect Mr. Wilson from Lian Yu, but Isabel was a different story. He had to admit he had no idea where the vindictive brunette had gone. Sara had said she had taken care of her, and that was the last he knew of her whereabouts. The two both speculated that possibly Sara and Nyssa had taken her back with them to Nanda Parbat to have Nyssa’s father Ra’s Al Ghul deal with her as he saw fit, which would make for an interesting combination. For now, though, the pair was grateful that she was gone and Oliver, once again, had control over Queen Consolidated. The pair continued to talk, sharing with each other what had happened during their time apart while Felicity was able to remain awake, but, soon, within Oliver’s warm, comforting embrace, Felicity’s eyes grew heavy, and eventually the blonde fell back asleep with Oliver’s strong, muscular arms safely wrapped around her.

When they finally landed in Starling City, much to Felicity’s surprise, the team headed in different directions. Without a lot of fuss, which was surprising within itself, they said their goodbyes. Felicity hugged Diggle tight as the blonde thanked him for everything he had done... as she assumed Oliver had by the look the pair shared before he headed off to rendezvous with Lyla. It seemed, according to Digg, the two had something important to discuss. Roy and Thea headed back to Roy’s place, Thea making Felicity promise they would see each other the next day and have some 'girl time...' which of course she did after Oliver made Thea promise it wouldn't be too early. In fact, he suggested they all meet at Verdant the following afternoon to regroup to which the team, minus Diggle, agreed, but Oliver planned to text him later with the details.

After that was settled, Oliver gave his sister a fierce but gentle hug as he kissed her head and wished her good night, subtly reminding her not to call. Thea, in response, affectionately slapped him on the arm, wiggling her eyebrows and whispering to her brother not to do anything she wouldn’t do before waving him off and reaching for Roy's hand. Roy softly kissed Felicity's cheek and told her that he was glad she was back before the pair walked off to Thea's car that had been left at the airport hanger when the team had headed to Lian Yu.

Finally, Felicity and Oliver were alone. Before Felicity knew what was happening, Oliver took her within his arms and wrapped them tight around her as if sealing her in a warm, safe cocoon.
She felt him kiss her temple as he tenderly smoothed her hair down her back, her ponytail long gone. They stayed like that for how long Felicity didn't know, but, within moments of being pulled into Oliver's embrace, she had moved her arms around his waist, matching the intensity of his hold. As they stood there, Felicity whispered in Oliver's ear, "I'm okay. I promise I'm okay." She then kissed the place on his chest where his heart lay as well as, unconsciously, rubbing her hand up and down his back, providing comfort to him as he was doing with her.

He finally eased his hold but kept his arms around her as it allowed Felicity to look up into his bright blue eyes that were now laced with water on the edges of his eyelashes, so close to falling but refusing to do so. He moved one hand around from her hair to cradle her cheek and slowly, reverently caressed her soft skin with the tender yet callous pad of his thumb. "For once, I agree with Roy," Oliver responded... which earned a smile out of Felicity. "I'm glad you're back." To emphasize what he was feeling and expressing, Oliver bent down and kissed her softly, slowly moving his lips over hers with an intensity that brought tears to Felicity's eyes.

A boldness Felicity wasn't sure where it came from had her eventually pulling back, bringing Oliver's forehead down to hers, their breathing slightly ragged, their eyes closed as she asked, "say it." And she knew he knew what she wanted.

She felt Oliver's lips move to the column of her neck, placing long, gradual kisses along the length of it, as she, without thought, tilted her head to the side to allow him greater access as he ascended upward to the shell of her ear. "I love you, Felicity Megan Smoak," he whispered before he urgently brought her lips back to his and kissed her with an intensity that left them both breathless and had him once more bringing his hand around her body and pulling it flush with his own so that she didn't know where one of them started and the other stopped.

Finally, they pulled apart, and Felicity gazed into Oliver's now dilated pupils, their breathing heavy as the love he felt for her was there for anyone to see, and a happiness she didn't know existed came over her. Her lips quirked upward as she raised her uninjured arm and placed her hand along his stubble covered jaw, "I love you, too, Oliver Jonas Queen." And, that time, it was Felicity who pulled Oliver's mouth to hers, kissing him with a passion she knew would always belong to Oliver.

Eventually the pair came up for air – their foreheads once more touching, their eyes closed, and their breathing ragged as it had been only moments prior. "We need to go, or our first time is going to be against the side of that plane hanger, and that's definitely not where I want that to be... or where I imagined it to be."

Felicity smiled up at him as she teasingly asked, "you've imagined a first time with me?"

Oliver lightly pecked her on the lips with his mouth before he grabbed her hand and led her to a
waiting car. "Don't mess with me, Felicity. I'm hanging by a thread right now."

She stopped him by squeezing his hand and stilling her feet. As Oliver turned to face her, she shyly smiled before telling him her thoughts, her cheeks turning a faint color of pink as she spoke. "Oliver, I don't care where our first time is as long as it's with you."

She watched his gaze soften as his voice turned low and gruff. "Come on," he said as he once more led her to a waiting car, "before I change my mind."

As Digg had left to meet Lyla, Oliver drove the pair to a building Felicity was unfamiliar with in downtown Starling. It was a high rise in between where Queen Consolidated and the Foundry were located. Oliver held her hand the entire car ride, his thumb going back and forth over her knuckles, making Felicity's insides turn to mush and an ache form between her legs. After he parked the car in the building’s underground garage, Oliver came around to assist Felicity out of the car and led them to an elevator that took them up to an elegantly constructed lobby with a travertine tiled floor that had small diamond inlays throughout the space.

As they exited the elevator, Oliver leaned down and whispered in Felicity's ear, "I'll get our bags later."

"Bags?"

He smiled at her confused response. "I had Thea pack a few things for you until we can get your things that Sara didn't destroy."

She could hear the self-loathing in his voice as he spoke. “Stop it. That is not your fault.”

"How can you say that? I brought her into our lives, onto the team. I got involved with her knowing, but unable to admit how I felt about you. This was definitely my fault."

Felicity placed her good hand on Oliver's chest, stopping his movements. She knew he could have kept going, but he didn't. She took that hand and moved it from his chest to his face, gently guiding his eyes to meet her own. She stared for a moment, studying him – the guilt he always carried in the forefront of his gaze. "They were just things, Oliver. Were they things I loved? Yes. But nothing is that important... well, maybe my computers and tablet, but you're my boss, and you would be expected.... Oh my god! You're my boss. What a cliche I am: the secretary falling for her boss."
Before Felicity could go any farther with her ramble, Oliver pulled her to him and kissed her soundly. All Felicity could think was how much nicer this way was than the way he used to cut off her rambles. As they pulled apart, Oliver lightly brushed her hair from her face, placing it behind her ear as he moved his touch downward along her neck. “First of all, you are not my secretary, and, second, no one could ever call you a cliche. Now, come on.”

He gently grabbed her hand and led her over to a round, circular desk that was located off to the left of the lobby. As they headed that way, Felicity’s eyes were drawn upward to several crystal chandeliers that hung from a two story high ceiling with windows surrounding the entire space. In the center of the room, there was a large fountain, its sound of water lapping into the large round pool and producing a calm and serene ambiance... like you were walking into a high end spa. Once they reached the workspace, Felicity noticed several monitors that kept watch on all the different areas of the building. Oliver spoke with a large but friendly man whose name, from the ID badge he wore, was George. George worked security for the building. He was quite pleasant with an engaging, warm smile which he focused on Felicity as he looked at the two of them.

After Oliver told him who he was, the man retrieved an envelope from behind the desk and handed it to him. Inside was a key that Oliver placed in his hand as he led Felicity over to the elevators. They were situated behind the lovely fountain and could be seen directly from the main entrance of the building. There, he used said key to summon one of three elevators. Once inside, Felicity turned to ask Oliver a question, but he only squeezed her hand and whispered, “soon,” letting her know that he would explain everything, just not yet.

They headed to the top floor where, once there, the doors opened to a beautifully furnished penthouse apartment. It was huge with floor to ceiling windows covering the entire space which overlooked all of Starling City. As they entered the foyer, Felicity released Oliver’s hand and moved slowly through the space, making sure to notice every detail. The apartment was built with modern finishes but was furnished not in a sterile, contemporary style but in a more cozy, homey feel – something Felicity was accustomed to in her own place.

The foyer was spacious with a semi-circular design that had a table against the wall to your left on which Oliver dumped the key he’d been holding into a bowl sitting on top. To the right was a door that was most likely a coat closet with an antique umbrella stand tucked in the corner right beside it. The floor was a dark maple with wide planks that flowed throughout the entire space. It was a completely open concept with a generously sized living room as you entered from the foyer with a stacked stone oversized fireplace as the main feature of the room. It had a large, caramel colored sectional that took up a decent portion of the room. There was a dark cranberry chenille blanket draped over the back and large, colorful pillows arranged in each corner.

From there, the space moved to the right into an informal dining room which was furnished with a large farmhouse table and mismatched chairs. The chandelier above was wrought iron with mason jars as fixtures. It was a quirky fixture in such a modern setting, but Felicity loved it. She reached
up to touch the unique piece and smiled back at Oliver as she did. From there, the apartment
opened up to a chef quality kitchen. All the appliances were stainless steel with a double wall
oven, oversized refrigerator/freezer, eight burner gas range, and a high end dishwasher. The
cabinets, though, were not what Felicity would have expected. They were antique white with a
black quartz countertop and a beautiful farmhouse sink. There was an island situated in the center
with a butcher block counter and a place for bar stools. The lights above were similar to the
chandelier in the dining area.

Once they headed back into the living room, Felicity saw a door to the left that opened into what
looked like a small office with the same floor to ceiling windows. From there, there was a wide
hallway that led, she assumed, to the bedrooms and bathrooms. By counting four closed doors
Felicity assumed there were two bedrooms, a guest bath and a linen closet down that way.

Felicity finally turned to Oliver and asked, “uh, Oliver? Whose place is this?”

Oliver rubbed the back of his neck as he looked down at the floor before returning his eyes back
to Felicity's. "It's yours," he told her.

Felicity just stood there in stunned silence. She watched as Oliver nervously remained where he
was waiting for a response – any response from her. Finally finding her voice, the blonde licked
her lips and weakly replied, “tha… that’s impossible. Oliver, I... I know you pay me a good
salary, but it's not this good.” She waved her hand around the penthouse in emphasis. “Plus, I
already have a place.”

She watched as he headed over to where she stood and gently took her elbow within his palm in
order to lead her over to the leather sectional couch. Placing his hands lightly on her shoulders, he
softly directed her to sit down. As she did, he kneeled in front of her so they were eye to eye,
taking her hand within his own and rubbing his thumb back and forth across her knuckles. “You
were taken the day after my Mo... my Mom’s campaign party. Your place is still a mess, and I did
not want you to have to go back there.” He took a deep breath before continuing. “The project
Diggle and I were working on was to find a place for you to stay. I couldn’t take you to the
mansion, because neither Thea nor I ever want to go back there again, and Diggle was going to be
with Lyla, so that left it up to us to find you someplace to stay. It’s been leased for a month with
an option to buy. The furniture was picked out from photos I sent a decorator. They’re all rented
right now so everything can be returned if needed. At the end of the month I’ll make sure your
place is fixed back to normal, and, if you decide that’s where you want to be, then you can go
back. But if you think this is someplace you might want to live...? Well, then it’s yours.”

Felicity opened her mouth to speak, but Oliver quickly put a squash on that as he raised his index
finger and covered her lips. “None of this has to do with us,” he said with conviction as he
gestured between the two of them. “It has to do with the fact that, whether you agree with me or
not, Sara destroying your home was my fault, and I’m doing this because of that.”
He then stood up and began pacing in front of her. “The place is secure. Diggle and I made sure of that. The windows are one sided, so we can see out, but no one can see in. Also, they’re bullet proof. The security is top notch, and we still plan to make some very minor upgrades. The penthouse was the best choice, because this is the only unit on this floor with the private elevator we just came up in that can only be accessed by you or that key. But, if this isn’t what you want or somewhere you’d feel comfortable living, just stay the night, and we can look for somewhere else tomorrow. The only thing I will not compromise on is the safety of the place you choose.”

Felicity motioned for Oliver to sit next to her... which he readily complied with. As they turned to face each other, their knees touched and the blonde’s body shivered in response. She didn’t think she’d ever tire of Oliver’s touch. She took his hand within the two of hers and leaned forward to lightly kiss his lips before pulling back. “It’s perfect. I don’t know how I’ll feel after a month, but, for now, I agree to stay here until that time comes.”

Oliver released a relieved breath before he kissed her softly and whispered, “thank you.”

It was as he pulled back that Felicity finally realized everything he had said. “Wait a minute, Oliver. If you and Thea aren’t going back to the mansion, and Thea’s at Roy’s, and Diggle’s with Lyla, where are you planning to go?”

It was probably one of the few times she’d ever seen Oliver Queen nervous. “Uh,... well....

Then it dawned on her, and the blonde turned a deep shade of pink, thinking about what this meant. “You... you thought you might stay here... with me?”

“Only... only if you don’t mind. There’s more than one bedroom, and we don’t have to sleep together. But I thought maybe you wouldn’t mind the company, and….”

Felicity kissed him hard, cutting off his ramble as a smile formed on her plush, makeup free lips. She couldn’t believe Oliver Queen was rambling, and it was all because of her. Shyly, as they pulled apart, unable to meet his gaze, she quietly answered his question – so quiet, in fact, that Oliver had to lean in to hear it. “I’d... I’d like you to stay with... with me.”

He took his finger under her chin and gently turned her head so her big blue eyes now faced his own. “I’m glad,” he replied as he leaned down and kissed her once more.
When they pulled apart this time, Felicity noticed her reflection in the windows and automatically groaned at her appearance. Taking her one good hand, she smoothed out the locks of her hair. Standing, she turned to look down at the man before her. “I think I’m going to go take a shower and try and wash off everything from the past two days.”

Oliver nodded as he reached up to squeeze her hand before releasing it, watching her as she headed down the hallway. “Last door on the right.”

Felicity waved in response, feeling Oliver’s gaze with every step she took.

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Oliver leaned his elbows on his knees as he placed his head within his hands and breathed a sigh of relief as Felicity entered the master bedroom. He still wasn’t sure this was the right thing or the fair thing to do to her, but he was doing it anyway. He knew he was so much better with her, but he wasn’t so sure she was better with him. God, he really hoped he was wrong, because there was nothing in this world that he wanted more but for he and Felicity to make it work.

He was so deep in thought he hadn’t heard her approach until her voice called out to him, “Oliver?”

He raised his eyes to meet hers and what he saw took his breath away. There she stood – a lilac towel wrapped around her slight body, her one good hand holding in place and looking more vulnerable and beautiful than he thought possible. Not knowing what was wrong, Oliver immediately rose and went to her. “What’s wrong,” he asked, his concern evident in the tone of his voice.

She shrugged her uninjured shoulder before she tilted her head towards the other. “I can’t... I can’t lift both arms to wash my hair. Would you... would you mind helping me?” Her face was bright red by the time she finished, and Oliver couldn’t stop the twitch of his lips as he looked at her. She was so damn beautiful.

Without words, he gently took her elbow in his palm and steered her back to the bedroom and immediately led her into the master bath. Her dirty clothes were haphazardly thrown on the floor, so the first thing he did was place them in a hamper located inside a fairly large linen closet in the bathroom. He then reached into the large shower and turned on the water, testing the temperature as he did.
“What... what are you doing,” he heard Felicity ask.

Oliver turned questioningly towards the blonde before responding. “What do you mean what am I doing? I’m going to help you wash your hair.”

“I thought... I thought you would just do it in the sink,” she pointed as she spoke, her shaky voice betraying her nervousness. “I... I didn’t think you were going to get in the shower with me.”

It was as she spoke that Oliver noticed the anxiety in her eyes. “Hey,” he softly said as he reached up and caressed her cheek with the back of his hand. “What’s wrong?” She licked her lips as she focused on a point just above Oliver’s shoulder. “Felicity, look at me.”

He didn’t think she would at first, but then he watched as she moved her gaze to his own. “It’s just,” she started as she took a deep breath while picking at invisible threads on her towel. “I’m... I’m not built like most of the woman you’ve dated, and....”

Before she even could completely finish her thought, Oliver pulled her into his arms, wrapping them tightly around her. “I don’t ever want to hear you talk like that. When I look at you, I see someone so beautiful inside and out that I feel like the luckiest guy alive. I can’t wait to look at you, to kiss you all over, and then, when I’m done, do it all over again. If you only knew how much I dreamed of this moment....”

He then kissed her soft and slow, putting all his feelings into that one kiss.

Felicity melted into his arms, tears pooling on the edges of her eyes. “Thank you,” she whispered as they pulled apart.

“Now, let’s get you clean.”

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Felicity smiled up at Oliver as she watched him check the temperature of the shower, steam starting to fill the room. Then she gulped as she watched him start to undress and wasn’t sure if the steam was coming off of her or from the shower. She tried to keep her lustful thoughts in check as he pulled his light grey t-shirt over his head – her eyes never leaving his, but she was having a
hard time focusing when he stood there half naked, his eight pack on full display in front of her. God, he was magnificent.

His eyes never left hers as he leaned down and tenderly kissed the bandage that now covered her bullet wound before he moved his hand over the dressing to remove it. Her whole body tingled as the pads of his fingertips skimmed over her body, and she reflexively shivered in response. “Cold,” she heard him ask.

She sucked in a breath as his fingers continued to caress the area where she was shot. “No.” Her voice was low and raspy as she spoke.

He then reached around her, his breath light and alluring as it brushed over the wound when he leaned forward. Their eyes still locked, Oliver reached into a drawer without looking and pulled out a waterproof dressing to place over the area. Her body shivered once more in response to his touch. He then led her over to the shower and moved behind her as he whispered into her ear, “let’s get you warm.” And, before she could protest, he gently tugged at her towel, and the two watched together as it dropped to the floor. He gently guided her to the shower opening. “Get in,” he gestured. “I’ll be right behind you.”

Felicity stepped into the warm if not slightly hot spray, letting the water wash over her as she raised her one good hand to wet her hair. She could hear Oliver as he finished getting undressed. She tilted her head back, her eyes closed as she soon heard him enter, his hands immediately landing on her waist and pulling her close to him. She opened her eyes then and tilted her head back to look directly into his eyes. His gaze took her breath away. She could feel his body’s reaction against her belly, but the look that he was giving her said more than that. They stood there for a while – neither moving, their eyes never turning away, the water continuing to flow over their bodies.

Eventually, Oliver’s hands moved to her temples as he slowly ran his touch down her hair, wetting the strands as Felicity had done so only moments ago. The blonde tipped her head back into the water, her eyes closing and a moan escaping her lips in reaction to his touch. She felt his hands leave her body, but Felicity continued to keep her eyes closed. She heard him open a shampoo bottle, and then once more his hands were on her, his fingers kneading her scalp, a foamy lather forming in her hair. His touch was so gentle, so tantalizing, that she couldn’t stop another moan from escaping her lips.

“This feels so good,” she rasped out. “You must have done this before.” And then she immediately tensed at the realization of what she had just said. She felt Oliver tense as well, and she wanted to kick herself for her foot in mouth syndrome. “I didn’t mean that to come out as accusatory as it sounded... or even like I was fishing for how often you’ve done this before, because it’s really none of my business. I myself have never done it – not that you needed to know that. I’ve always been a little shy about men seeing my body, and...
“Felicity.” She stopped at the sound of his voice, but refused to look at him. She felt as he drew his hands downward to her face, and gently forced her eyes to open and look upon his own. He kept the water from hitting her eyes, though, as it, instead, splayed down her back. “I have never washed anyone’s hair before, and I promise you, if I have my way, your hair is the last I ever will.” He then he leaned downward and kissed her… only, that time, it wasn’t a slow and soft kiss. Rather, it was hard and urgent, and Felicity couldn’t stop her one good arm from snaking around his neck, her fingers digging into his short trimmed hair, scraping along his scalp as she moved her body flush with his.

Oliver moved his arms to wrap tightly around her waist and stepped forward so they were both under the spray of water. They kept kissing, his hands moving up and down her back, up into her hair, as he continued that same path over and over again. Felicity rubbed her body up and down against his, the water making it slick as their skin rubbed against each others. Her whole body was on fire as the area between her legs started to ache.

“Felicity,” she heard Oliver say into her mouth. “We need to stop. I don’t want our first time to be in a shower.”

She pulled back slightly, her eyes getting pelted with water as Oliver brushed her hair out of her face. “I don’t care where our first time is. I just want to be with you. Now.”

And that’s when he pulled her even closer to him as he kissed her with an urgency that hadn’t been there before. He picked her up by the waist and rotated their position so he was now under the spray and moved her back up against the shower wall. He brought his arms upward to cover her back to provide what little comfort he could against the hard tile, her legs immediately wrapping around his waist as he lifted her high, her center now at the tip of member.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, do it now,” she encouraged as her hands moved to his shoulders as he prepared to push into her oh-so-willing body.

“Hold on tight,” he rasped out.

“I always do,” she said before she screamed out his name as he entered her, the feeling of him filling her as good as she imagined. Felicity saw the twitch of his lips as he did so and knew he was remembering, like her, the last time he had said those words to her. Quickly though, that smirk changed to lust as he started to move within her. She couldn't stop the deep, guttural moans that escaped her lips each time he slid up and down. “God, Oliver, you feel so good…”
Before she could say another word, he captured her lips within his own and kissed her hard, his tongue moving into her mouth and exploring every inch of its recesses as his teeth scraped against hers. They couldn't get enough. The kiss became more and more urgent as he continued to piston in and out of her. Felicity could feel the intensity building in her body as she matched him stroke for stroke, pushing against him just as hard as he was with her, until she felt her whole body explode with one of the most intense orgasms she’d ever felt. She screamed his name at her release. Moments later, he followed, screaming her name when his own release came.

They stayed like that – her legs wrapped around him, his manhood still hard inside her as their ragged breathing finally slowed down. Eventually, he eased out, letting her body slide down his, his arms moving to once more wrap around her waist. Even though Felicity was well satiated and her legs felt like rubber, the feel of his wet skin against her own sparked her body once more, and she couldn’t stop herself from lifting onto her tiptoes and planting another intense, soul searching kiss upon his mouth.

Oliver moved one hand to her cheek, once more brushing her hair from her face as he continued to kiss her back. Soon, though, he leaned back and whispered into her mouth, “we are never going to get out of this shower.”

“I don’t care,” Felicity answered back as she continued to kiss him fervently.

“You will when the water turns cold.”

She pulled away from his mouth and smiled up at him, a teasing spark in her eyes. “You’ll keep me warm.”

Oliver leaned in and kissed her again before he replied, “that I will.” But, even as he said it, he pulled away and moved her once more under the shower’s spray.

They quickly soaped each other’s bodies, removing the grime from the last two days, and, although they both wanted to linger and explore, especially Felicity as she was now able to touch Oliver without excuses (or to fix an injury), they didn’t, for the water was starting to turn cold. Admittedly though, Felicity did get Oliver to promise they would be taking another shower together soon... and maybe even a bath in the two person whirlpool tub that was also there.

After they were done getting clean, Oliver took Felicity’s towel and tenderly dried every inch of her body, taking his time to kiss certain areas as he went along. In the essence of fair play, Felicity did the same with Oliver, and soon the pair made it to the bed in order to continue their
exploration of each other well into the wee hours of the morning. When they both finally fell into an exhausted sleep, their bodies entangled with the other, there was a content smile upon both their lips.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

We've finally reached the end to this story. I hope you all have enjoyed my first Olicity fanfic. I'm curious to know what you all thought so if you have a chance let me know! Thanks to everyone who have stayed with me, even with the long interruptions of updates. I appreciate all the kudos and comments. And thank you to my beta oyhumbug (Charlynn) who knows I could never do this without her.

~ Jules ~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Where to Go From Here

As Oliver waited for the elevator to transport him to his and Felicity’s home, he couldn’t keep the perpetual grin off his face, and he didn’t want to. It had been a few months since he and Felicity had moved in together – into the penthouse apartment at Starling Shines, and he couldn’t be happier.

When the agreed upon original month was almost up, he recalled how Felicity approached him about their living arrangement. She had been so tentative that day. He had just gotten back from a run, his whole body covered in sweat when she exited the kitchen wearing only a thin short robe, one that he quickly noticed was still damp from an obviously recent shower and was showing off every last one of her luscious curves. She was carrying her Robin Hood coffee mug in hand and a small squeak escaped her lips as she suddenly saw him standing there, apparently not expecting him to be back yet. He grinned at her as she barely managed to keep from dropping her beverage, but his smile quickly turned to concern when she didn't smile back.

She was nervous, he could tell by the way she shifted her feet and restlessly moved her drink between her shaking hands. This, in turn, immediately put him on alert as things Arrow related had been quiet, and, as far as he knew, they were doing well – really well, in fact, especially when he recalled the night before.

With that thought in mind, he had quickly moved to her, gently taking the mug from her still jittery digits and led her back into the kitchen, having her sit on one of the leather bar stools they had purchased – one of the first things the they had bought as a couple. He’d moved his hands up to her slim shoulders and then back down to her hands, repeating the process several times before asking what was wrong. At first, she shrugged it off, saying nothing, but he raised his eyebrow in response, challenging her on the lie she was telling.
Finally, after a few minutes of a mutual stare down, Felicity disclosed what was on her mind. Before she actually confessed, though, she began to nervously lick her plush, lipstick-free lips, which immediately made Oliver reflexively want to kiss her, but he astutely refrained, because he knew something was wrong, especially when she didn’t react to his intense gaze and avoided his eyes altogether. After a few heart stopping moments, she finally told him, quietly whispering that she didn’t want to move back to her apartment but wanted to stay there with him... if he still wanted that.

Oliver had released the deep breath he had been holding and then swiftly pulled her into his arms, crushing her slim body against his own. She squealed in surprise and promptly chastised him for getting her all dirty, like him, after she had just taken a shower. But there was no heat in her words, and Oliver knew she wasn’t really mad. Plus, as he remembered it, her squeal quickly turned into a moan as he had whispered in her ear, his body feeling her's tremble as he nipped her earlobe and lustfully told her that he was sorry and he would fix her dirty self immediately, kissing her soundly as he lifted her off the stool, her legs instinctively wrapping around him as her center hit right where he wanted it to. Oliver had then, without argument from Felicity, proceeded to assist her with yet another shower, only this one...? This one was not alone, and she was definitely thoroughly scrubbed down when it was finished. Not only was she squeaky clean, but she smelled just how Oliver liked her to: like him.

They had still yet to figure out a way to take a shower without the water turning cold, but the journey to try and find a solution was well worth it.

Yet, surprisingly, that was not the pair’s favorite place to be together.

The day after their first night together, Oliver gave Felicity a full tour of her new home. He soon discovered that his Executive Assistant had assumed one of the doors in the hallway had been a linen closet. So it him gave immense joy when he proved her, for once, actually wrong and surprised her with stairs that lead to a hidden Oasis on the rooftop. Felicity had laughed when she first saw the set up and eyed him suspiciously with her keen, knowledgeable blue eyes, for she knew Oliver had picked this place mostly for the security features but possibly more so for the space before her as she knew how much he loved rooftops. Either way, it hadn’t mattered to Felicity, for she loved it, too.

It was a beautiful set up with a garden path that lead to a semi-covered patio that had two rattan couches with big, fluffy pillows, perfect for lounging. They were positioned in an ‘L’ shape, and, in front of the couches, there was another stacked stone fireplace as the focal point to the arrangement. It also, as Oliver put it, had an outdoor TV for him, so he could keep up with the news and any crime activity in the city, but, for as much as he talked about monitoring the goings-on in Starling City, most of their time was spent relaxing without noise or electronics. Oliver had told her, because she spent so much time in the basement at The Foundry for him, he’d wanted her to have a special place all her own outside to enjoy herself, one that he had hoped she would share with him.

The two spent all their free time out there, together. Even if it rained, the area was covered, and Oliver had set up propane heaters when the weather would eventually turn cold. There was something for Oliver about spending time outdoors in a safe environment with the woman he
loved that he couldn’t describe in words, but he made a point of showing Felicity every time he had the opportunity, and, because of those opportunities, Oliver put a coded security lock on the door, so only he and Felicity had access to the space. As it had happened, Thea and Roy had moved in for a short time, and there had been one close call. That one had prompted Oliver to take certain measures to assure their privacy.

His sister and her boyfriend had decided to make an upgrade to Verdant by adding a loft apartment above the nightclub, which they were now enjoying. The two figured, since they were there pretty much all the time, it gave them more time to spend together rather than traveling back and forth to Roy’s place. Plus, it allowed Thea to live within the means she was accustomed to and make the place hers and Roy’s together. So, while the place was under construction, the two had moved in with Felicity and Oliver. Besides that one almost mishap, the four had gotten along really well, but he would be remiss if he didn’t admit he was glad when they finally moved out.

Today, though, was one of those rare days when the whole team had off, and he had asked Felicity out on a real date. They’d been on a few, but, because of their circumstances and time, outings as a couple were few and far between. Sometimes, Oliver felt guilty that they didn’t have a real courtship, but Felicity always assured him she wouldn’t have it any other way. Today, though, he requested they do something as a real couple. It was October 24th, the day they first met when Oliver entered Felicity’s office at Queen Consolidated, and it was a day he insisted on celebrating.

The weather had graciously been unseasonably warm for Northern California in the Fall, and Oliver decided to seize the opportunity and take Felicity out on a picnic... a very special one, at that.

He had been out making the final preparations for their day, and, now, that it was completed, he had returned home to collect his date.

As he rode the elevator up, Oliver envisioned how Felicity would look. He knew immediately her hair would be down and she would not be wearing her glasses. He didn’t know why she insisted on those two things, but she told him he saw her enough in a ponytail and glasses that, when they went out, she wanted him to know how much she appreciated the effort he made and wanted to put in a little more effort on her appearance to make it just that much more special. He loved her for that. But, at the same time, it didn’t matter either, because he loved her with her ponytail and glasses, and he told her that every chance he got. But she insisted.

As the elevator dinged to announce his arrival, nothing prepared him for the vision he saw. She was standing by the windows, the late morning sun shining in, making her form appear more heavenly than it already was. She hadn’t turned yet even though he knew she was aware of his arrival, so he took advantage for just a moment and observed her frame, and what he saw took his breath away.

Her hair was down, swept to the side with a fancy clip to keep her luscious locks in place just like he had pictured, and, even though her head was turned, he knew she did not have her glasses on. She was wearing a pale pink sundress – one that almost appeared white in color, making her look like the angel she was. Only Oliver knew the dress wasn’t white, because, according to Thea, you never wore white after Labor Day. It was highlighted with a bright fuchsia skinny belt that accentuated her tiny waist and strappy high heels that matched the color of the belt.
He could see it was halter style as Felicity's neck was exposed due to her hairstyle. Her back was bare just below her shoulder blades, giving him an appreciative view of her slim shoulders and arms as it beckoned his hands to slide and caress over her soft, silky skin. The pretty bow holding the ensemble in place teased his fingers to release it, so Oliver could expose more of her ethereal body.

Only there would be time for that later. Right now, he needed to stay focused and make sure Felicity didn't distract him from his carefully laid plans. At least not yet.

The skirt of her outfit was long and flowy which would serve well for what he had in store.

Oliver approached her slowly, his steps carefully measured as he advanced towards her. His rubber soled boots made little noise on the hardwood floors yet enough so that she knew he was drawing near, but, still, she did not move. Once there, Oliver proceeded to do what his mind had already conjured up and raised his left index finger and, with a featherlight touch, slowly followed the path of her dress along her flesh, kissing the edge of her shoulder as he did.

He whispered in her ear and felt the goosebumps rise on her flesh as he spoke. "You look beautiful."

A ghost of a smile appeared at the corner of her lips as she continued to gaze out the window before answering. "And you're late."

With that, Oliver lightly grabbed her waist with both hands and turned Felicity towards him as his lips descended upon hers. The kiss started off slow, their mouths moving at a leisurely pace, but, soon, his partner’s eagerness showed through as Felicity snaked her hands up his chest, wrapping her fingers around his neck and pulling her body flush with his while deepening the kiss as her tongue moved inside of his mouth. Oliver, not wanting to be outdone or to relinquish control, tightened one hand on her waist and traveled the other up her back, teasing her exposed skin before gently wrapping it around her slender neck and tilting her head upward so he would have better access to explore her mouth. Their tongues dueled as Oliver's hand on her waist ascended up her ribcage where his thumb teasingly moved back and forth, stroking the underside of her breast. He heard Felicity moan into his mouth as he continued his ministrations, and his movements became bolder. Then Oliver felt one of her hands rise upward to run through his short cropped hair, scraping his scalp in rhythm with his own movements. Realizing this was exactly what he had hoped to avoid, Oliver took what little self controlled he still possessed and lightly pushed Felicity from his embrace.

Their forehead touched as their eyes remained closed, and they both tried to catch their breath. “We need to stop,” he whispered.

“But I don’t want to stop,” she countered.

Oliver gently took hold of her upper arms, pushing her a few inches away so their bodies were no longer touching. “We need to go, or all my carefully laid plans will go to waste.”
That put a smile on the blonde’s lips. “Plans,” she repeated as she wiped her lipstick that now stained Oliver’s mouth.

“Yes, plans,” he said as a smile also formed on his lips as he grabbed her hand and led her towards the elevator.

“Okay, but, first, I need to freshen up my lipstick.”

“No, you don’t.” Oliver replied as they moved passed the leather sectional, and Felicity bent down to gather her clutch. Oliver immediately took the bag from her grasp and tossed it right back to where it had previously laid.

“Hey,” she protested.

Continuing to pull her towards the exit, Oliver responded, “you won’t be needing that.”

“Alright, but there will be payback for this.”

Oliver's smile grew wider at her response, and, moments later, they were on the elevator heading towards their destination.

*****

Felicity had no idea where they were headed, only that Oliver had mentioned they would be doing something outdoors in order to take advantage of the warm weather. As they continued to hold hands and make their way towards Oliver’s car, her movements slowed as she took notice of what was parked there until she finally stopped completely, her legs not willing themselves any further. In turn, Oliver stopped as well.

“Oliver, what’s that,” she asked as she pointed to the space where his car was suppose to be parked.

“A motorcycle.”

“I know it’s a motorcycle, but whose motorcycle is it,” Felicity asked as she noticed it was not the usual one he used on his nightly outings.

Oliver tugged on her hand, forcing Felicity to turn her attention towards him. He raised one hand
and placed it gently on her cheek as he guided her eyes to focus clearly on his own. “It’s mine,” he responded as his thumb grazed her skin, his lips hitching upward into an endearing, teasing grin. “Did you think Oliver Queen would have only one motorcycle?”

“No, but....”

“Felicity, do you trust me,” Oliver asked, cutting off whatever she was going to say.

Felicity gazed into his dark blue eyes and, without hesitation – her voice soft as she spoke, replied, “yes.”

“So, trust me now.”

She knew her fears were unfounded, because, if there was anyone who would keep her safe on one of those danger traps, it was Oliver Queen, so she used the only argument she had left. “But my hair! You know how I feel about helmet head, and I worked really hard....”

As she spoke, Oliver abruptly cut off her ramble as he carefully removed the fancy clip from her hair, causing her blonde locks to fall into waves over her shoulders. He promptly took both hands and smoothed out the silky locks before Felicity could say anymore on the matter. He gave her a quick kiss before leading her over to where the motorcycle was parked. “This is a Harley Davidson CVO Street Glide. It’s heavy, and, even though it can go fast, it has nothing on the Ducati.” Oliver then removed a helmet and leather jacket from the rear saddle bag. “Here,” he said as he tenderly helped Felicity put her arms through the sleeves.

She was shaking as he did it, but she managed to get the coat over her frame, and, as it engulfed her tiny form, she smelled Oliver’s scent wrap around her which helped to put her more at ease. She watched as he moved to place the helmet over her head. “You know, Sara once asked me why you had never ridden with me on my motorcycle.”

“What did you tell her?”

“I lied and told her because it wasn’t necessary. Deep down I knew she didn’t believe me, because she knew the reason as well as I did.”

Licking her now very dry lips, Felicity looked up, taking in Oliver’s features before asking, “and what was that?”

“She knew,” he stated as he leaned towards her, Felicity assuming to help assist her with the helmet, but he surprised her by kissing her before continuing to explain, “that, the minute you wrapped your body around mine, there was no way I would be able to deny how I felt about you.”
“Oh.”

With that, Oliver positioned the helmet over her head and assisted her up onto the motorcycle.

Felicity was thankful she had picked a dress that was long and loose, for, if she hadn’t, there was no way she’d be able to gracefully sit on this bike. As Oliver took his place in front of her, Felicity slid forward so her front was snug up against his back, her legs were pressed to his thighs, and her arms were tightly wrapped around his waist.

Oliver turned before he started the engine and raised the lip to her helmet. “She was right.”

Before Felicity could respond, Oliver started the engine and they were off.

At first, Felicity kept her eyes closed, too scared to look at her surroundings, and her hands instinctively tightened on Oliver’s waist as they continued to move through the city. Soon, though, she realized they were out of the city, for the start and stop of the bike had stopped, and she felt a steady glide of the machine beneath her as they headed north towards the mountains that overlooked the bay. As she became more comfortable on the motorcycle, Felicity started to enjoy the ride, and it was then when she decided it was time to give Oliver payback for not finishing what they’d started at the penthouse.

So, as Oliver continued to take them farther away from Starling, Felicity moved her body even closer to his, her center rubbing up against his bottom. She then moved her hands beneath his sweatshirt and began to lightly caress his abdominals, his body hot even with the wind beating over them as the motorcycle continued to move north. She felt his muscles twitch in response to her touch, and it gave her immense satisfaction as she felt him falter as she continued to explore his body. She knew she was walking a thin line, but, once she stared, she couldn’t seem to stop.

Felicity soon felt Oliver slow the bike and move them to the side of the road.

Once stopped, he flipped the lid of her helmet once more. As he gritted his teeth, he growled, “are you trying to kill us?”

The blond could only bat her eyelashes and innocently reply, “who me?”

“Felicity,” his tone invited no argument. “We’re almost there. Can you behave for a few more minutes, so I can at least get us both there safely?” She could only nod as a mischievous grin transformed her face. “Felicity.”

“I promise.”

With that, Oliver started the engine, and, once more, they were on their way. After only a few minutes, they left the road and headed down a small dirt path which lead to a huge clearing of land set on a cliffside outside of Starling City. Once there, Oliver stopped and proceeded to remove the helmet from Felicity’s head.
Immediately, as she could now see more clearly, Felicity took in her surroundings and eventually turned to Oliver and asked, “what is this place?”

Oliver didn’t answer right away but dismounted from the bike and then placed both hands on Felicity’s waist and lifted her off before gently placing her on the ground. He then wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her soundly before replying. “When I first got back to Starling City, I would sneak out and just go nowhere to clear my head.”

“Yes, I remember John telling me how it drove him crazy when you would manage to disappear on him. I just always thought it was for your vigilante business.”

Oliver smiled, and she knew he was thinking about all the times he had been able to dodge Diggle. “Most of the time, it was, but there were times when I just needed to get away. It was one of those times when I found this place.”

He removed the jacket she wore, placing it back in the saddlebag before taking Felicity’s hand and leading her to the edge of the cliff. It was then that the blonde could really take in the beauty of the place, for the location was magnificent. From their vantage point, she could see Starling City clearly, and, if she looked hard enough, she managed to find the outline of The Foundry and their penthouse home. But it wasn’t just the city views that took her breath away, because not only could she see the skyline but the beautiful harbor as well.

“Oliver, it’s magnificent,” she said as she continued to take in the vista before her.

“I’m glad you like it, because I own it.”

“What,” her surprised tone echoed throughout their surroundings as she turned to face him.

“When I found this place, something drew me to it. So, I researched the property and found the owner and offered him a price he couldn’t refuse.”

“Well, you definitely have good taste.”

“Yes, I do,” he softly responded, and Felicity blushed as she realized his was looking at her and not the property they stood upon.

Oliver then led her over to another clearing where he had set up a blanket and a beautifully catered picnic for them to enjoy. Felicity gasped in surprise, her heart swelling at all the trouble Oliver must have gone through to set this up. “When did you do this?”

“I told you I had some things to take care of this morning. This just happened to be one of them.”
Felicity pulled him towards her and kissed him as she said, “I love you.”

“I love you, too. Now, let’s eat. I’m starving.”

She just laughed in response. “Of course you are.”

The pair enjoyed a long, leisurely lunch with wine and prepared food from their favorite restaurant, savoring the quiet time away from their normally busy lives. Way too soon, however, the sun started to lower, and the air began to turn cold.

“I guess we should start to head out,” Felicity said.

Oliver agreed as he began to clean up the leftovers. “I’ll come back for this stuff with my car later.”

Felicity nodded in response as the pair made their way back to Oliver’s motorcycle, his arm now wrapped around her shoulder, keeping her close to his body to keep her warm. As he helped her back onto the bike and she got herself comfortable, Felicity reached up and wrapped her hand around Oliver’s neck, gently pulling him towards her and said, “thank you for bringing me here.”

Then she kissed him again, and, as she did, Oliver moved to straddle the bike facing her. While they continued to kiss, he wrapped his arms around her waist and brought her body closer to his. At the same time, he reached around her and pulled something out of the saddlebag.

Felicity had assumed it was the jacket she wore earlier, but, when they broke apart, she saw Oliver holding a small black jewelry box. “Oliver?”

He licked his lips as he looked at her, his gaze intense as he took a deep breath. “Felicity, I never thought I would one day be able to share my life with anyone because of what I... what we do, but as always you have proven me wrong, for, as I look upon you, I know there's only one person I want to share my life with, and that’s you. You’re already my partner in so many ways, but now I’m asking you to be my partner in life. For forever. So, Felicity Meghan Smoak, would you do me the honor of marrying me?”

As he finished, Oliver opened the box he held, displaying a beautiful two carat, oval cut, emerald stone set in a platinum halo setting with tiny diamonds surrounding the magnificent gem. He removed it from the box and carefully placed it on Felicity’s ring finger. “It was my great grandmother’s. One of my other errands this morning was to visit the Queen vault and retrieve this ring.”

Felicity gazed at the ring in awe as she turned to focus her eyes on the man before her. “What about Thea? She may want this one day.”

“I already asked her, and she was quite excited to let you have it.”
“Thea knows about us getting engaged?”

Oliver smiled in response. “Well, you haven’t said yes yet.”

Felicity sheepishly smiled back, her eyes glazed over with unshed tears before she shouted, “yes,” as she pulled him into another scorching kiss.

When they separated, Oliver framed her face with his hands before asking, “I’d like to build our family home here... if you agree.”

“Really?” He could only nod in response, a shimmer of water on the edges of his own eyelids. “What about the penthouse?”

“Oh, we’ll always have the penthouse. I bought that place the minute you agreed to stay with me.”

“Then yes,” she replied. “I’d love to build our home here.”

With that, Oliver pulled Felicity to him once more, only this time their kiss started slow. His lips moved over hers again and again, tasting every corner, every inch, before moving his tongue to the edges, seeking entrance into her mouth. Felicity readily complied, and soon the kiss turned hungry, and the blonde, without conscious thought, moved herself onto Oliver’s lap, her legs snaking around his waist as her skirt fell to expose a generous amount of thigh. Oliver took quick advantage of uncovered flesh and slid his left hand upward, starting at her knee and making his way along her thigh as his other hand moved to that perfectly formed bow that had teased him all day, gently tugging on the ends so that it easily came undone.

As the top released, the man was exposed to two beautiful breasts whose nipples immediately responded to the cold afternoon air. Oliver moved his mouth to one, and, as his tongue and mouth teased the plush, round mound, his right hand moved to the other, giving it the same attention with his deft fingers as the other was receiving from his mouth. Felicity arched her back, pushing herself even more into his touch as he continued to ravish her body. She was quickly losing control, and the heat and moisture building at her core was rapidly taking over. Before that happened, she wanted to give him the same attention he was awarding her, so, with a resolute determination, Felicity moved her hands to the edges of Oliver’s sweatshirt and the t-shirt underneath, skillfully lifting them over his head. As she did, she forced his hand to relinquish its hold on her breast, and Felicity took full advantage of that fact as she began to give Oliver’s body the same attention he had granted her.

Her mouth immediately started on the several scars that covered his chest, beginning with the bullet wound his mother had given him, the same one which brought them together. As she continued her exploration with her mouth – sucking and kissing, her hands moved to his abdominals and explored every last inch as she had wanted to while they were on his motorcycle.

As Felicity continued her luxurious assault on his body, his head tilted back giving her access as
she zealously planted kisses up his throat, to his earlobe, and finally landing on his lips once more in another sizzling kiss.

He joined in with as much fervor as her, and, as they continued to lustfully attack each other’s mouths, Felicity felt both of Oliver’s hands moved to her legs and continued their earlier ascent upward to where she wanted to feel him the most. When he finally reached his destination, his hands stopped as her breath caught, and he broke their kiss, surprise evident in his voice as he spoke. “Are you not wearing any undergarments?”

A shy grin appeared on Felicity’s face as she shrugged. “I thought it would make things so much easier.”

Oliver started to caress her folds as a moan escaped Felicity’s lips. “Well, it’s a good thing I didn’t know this earlier, or I definitely would have crashed the bike.” And, with that, the man once more brought his lips down upon hers, the kiss turning more and more urgent as both their hands started to move over each other’s bodies. Oliver lifted her skirt higher as his fingers stroked her center. “God, you are so wet.”

“Only for you,” she responded as her hands moved underneath his jeans to stroke him up and down over his underwear. “I guess you didn’t have the same idea as me.”

“I’ll remember that for next time,” Oliver countered as his lips moved to her neck, making his way downward back to her breasts and bringing his attention back to where it was earlier. His fingers continued to slide up and down her folds, her body arching into his touch, attempting to guide him to where she wanted him the most, but he refused to give in to her demands. She could feel his grin against her neck as he continued to kiss and suck there.

“You’re not playing fair, Queen.”

“Patience, Miss Smoak.”

Felicity brought her hands to his face, directing it upwards to meet her lips again. “I have none when it comes to you.” And she kissed him hard, her tongue moving to the deepest recesses of his throat, her teeth grinding against his, her desire for this man about to explode. She moved her center to his and suggestively rubbed herself up and down his body – her core hitting his, his erection growing even bigger as she moved up and down over his jeans, her naked breasts rubbing against his bare chest. Oliver growled in response as he hiked her skirt higher and moved his hands to unfasten his jeans. Felicity helped them down his hips, but, due to him straddling his motorcycle, they wouldn’t go down any further. Felicity didn’t care, and neither did Oliver.

The blonde placed her hands on his shoulders and continued to rub up and down his body, only this time her naked, wet center was rubbing over his very exposed, very hard erection.

She teased him mercilessly before Oliver finally had enough and grabbed her waist, leading her to the place they both wanted most. As he hit her core, Felicity lowered herself slowly inch by inch, enjoying every delicious moment of the descent, her body taking him within her own. Once he was as deep as he could go, Felicity screamed out in pleasure as Oliver grunted his own. Then she
took her hands from his shoulders and snaked them up into his hair, her elbows now resting where her hands once were and giving her the leverage to move up and down. As she did, she kissed him once more with a mindless abandon, and Oliver matched her stroke for stroke.

Due to his position, Felicity had control, and she loved every minute of it, taking them both to the brink before backing off. She wanted this to last, but, finally, Oliver met his breaking point and kept her still while he ravaged her body with his mouth and hands. Immediately, Felicity felt the burning of her release building, and, within a matter of minutes, Oliver took her over the edge. Her body pulsed around him, and he, too, lost control, following closely after her. He pulsed inside her for a long time, her orgasm hanging on with his, and, once it was over, Felicity collapsed against him, her body sagging into his. She could feel Oliver gently stroking her back as they both came down from their release.

“Now, that was a motorcycle ride,” she whispered when she had finally caught her breath.

“Trust me, the next one is going to be even better than that,” Oliver boasted.

“Promise me?”

“Oh, I’ll do better than that; I think I’ll just show you.”

And Oliver did just that.

The pair ended up staying on their newfound homeland until late in the evening, neither feeling the cold air as the temperature continued to drop. Eventually, they made their way back to Starling City with Oliver promising next time they’d bring a tent and sleeping bags, so they could see the sunrise on their land. When they finally made it back to the penthouse, Felicity’s fears of motorcycles was long gone.

~ The End ~

Chapter End Notes

So I just had to comment that the scene on the motorcycle has been in my head since the Chapter where Sara and Felicity talked about it at The Foundry. Of course there’s been several different scenarios that ran through my head, but this is the one that managed to make down in writing, and for those who know me, know I have a thing about motorcycles! Thanks again for all the support, and hopefully you'll stay with me when I write my next story!

~ Jules ~
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!