And I Thought I was so Smart

by badwolfchild

Summary

Barry takes a half step back. Then, without a word, looks Snart right in the eyes and removes his mask. “My name is Barry Allen, I am the fastest man alive, and I’m also your son.”

Notes

I've had this planned out in my head for almost a year and finally got the courage to write it out and post it. I do have a couple chapters written out in advance and an outline for the rest. The posting schedule I'm going to try and follow is a new chapter every Monday, Pacific time.

Title from Dear Theodosia in Hamilton

*Quick note before hand that you need to know, Henry knows about Barry's powers. It just made it a thousand times easier on me, so just assume that Barry told him right away in episode 1.
See the end of the work for more notes.
Barry's smile felt, and probably looked, forced if the concerned looks Iris and Felicity kept throwing him were anything to go by. He tried to enjoy himself at this trivia night with his friends but his mind kept replaying what happened earlier when he went to go visit his Dad at Iron Heights.

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While Felicity went back to her hotel room to get ready for trivia night, Barry decided to go give his Dad a visit at Iron Heights. Father and son sat down across from one another and simultaneously picked up the phones.

Barry grinned as his Dad greeted him the same way he always has for the past fifteen years. “Hey slugger.”

“Hey Dad.”

The two chatted for a while, Barry catching Henry up on the recent events for the past week. Barry had just finished telling Henry about the attempted diamond heist this morning when Henry’s eyebrows shot up. “Wait, did you say Leonard Snart? He’s the one that might have this cold gun that could,” He paused to look around that no one was paying attention to their conversation, and then lowered his voice to be safe. “Slow you down?”

Barry nodded. “Yeah, why? Do you know him?”

With his free hand Henry slowly wiped his face from eyes to mouth, suddenly looking ten years older in a matter of seconds. After a moment of being lost in thought he finally nodded. “Yeah,” his voice caught and he cleared his throat to start again. “Yeah, I know him.”

Barry’s eyes shifted back and forth as he waited for the older man to finish.

“I’ve known the kid since he was about sixteen. I’m assuming you read his file at the CCPD about his father.” Barry only nodded. “Well I would help him and his sister out at my clinic off the books.
When he was nineteen he brought in a week old baby boy. He explained that the child was his, and that the mother abandoned him on his doorstep. He was adamant that he wanted to keep the kid, but he needed help. He wanted to go straight to keep his son safe. I got him a job at the clinic, Nora would make home cooked meals for him, and we would watch his son from time to time whenever it was needed.”

Barry finally cut in. “What went wrong then? I knew everyone who worked at your clinic, and he’s obviously not doing any other legit work if I saw him trying to steal that diamond this morning.”

Henry shifted and sighed. “After about a year, things got real bad back at home with his younger sister. He thought with him out of the house that attention would shift away from his sister. His father had only ever hurt him and never touched her. That changed when he got drunk and threw a bottle at her. She was only eight years old and needed thirteen stitches. He knew he needed to get her out of that house, but he also didn’t want his father to find out about his son. Leonard then had to choose between his baby sister and his baby boy. He,” Henry stuttered for the first time in his story. “He knew that Nora and I had been trying, unsuccessfully, to have a baby for awhile and made the hardest decision in his young life. He knew, with the baby being so young, that he wouldn’t remember that first year of his life. Not in the long run.”

“Dad, wha- what are you saying?” Barry asked breathless.

“You, Barry, were the baby. Please know, every decision that was made, was made with your best interests at heart.” Barry felt like his heart just dropped out of his chest. He rubbed the nape of his neck, then crossed his arm in front of his chest the best he could with the phone still in his other hand. Henry patiently waits for Barry to process the news.

After a minute of Barry minutely shaking his head, he finally made eye contact with Henry. Barry chose his next words deliberately. “Why didn’t you ever tell me Snart was my biological father?”

“He didn’t want you to know and think that you were unloved. He loves you so much and it tore him apart having to let you go like he did.” Barry ducked his head down and away as he felt tears stinging in his eyes. On impulse, Henry went to hold Barry’s hand, only to mentally curse as his hand is stopped by the plexiglass between them. “Hey, look at me.” He waited until Barry raised his head, eyes red rimmed. “If there had been any other alternative where the two of you could have stayed together he would have taken it. He wanted to give you a better life than what he got.”

“Does Joe know? Does anyone else know?”

Henry shook his head. “No. The only people that knew were Nora and I, Leonard, and a close friend
of his, Mick I think his name was.” Barry nodded but stayed silent. He wiped his eyes and glanced at his watch.

“I, uh, better get going. Even with my speed, I still have a problem being on time. I’ll be back next week.” Barry gave a shaky smile and started to stand up.

“Hey, I love you son.”

Barry gave his first genuine smile. “I love you too Dad.”

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Barry shook himself out of the memory as Eddie got up after getting a call that Snart was spotted at the museum. With Felicity’s help, Barry was able to get to the scene as well.

Barry flashes in the moment he saw Snart, his real father, shoot a white beam at Joe. Without thinking, he pushes Joe out of the way then ducks behind a pillar for cover. He clutches at his side where he was shot. Barry vaguely hears Joe ask if he’s okay. He hisses as he manages to let out an affirmative. He hears the cold gun power up and he darts away to another place to hide.

“Time for a test run!” He hears Snart call out. Barry sneaks a glance from his hiding place and sees Snart aiming the gun at a civilian. Not wanting this to get dragged out, Barry acts on impulse. Before Snart can even squeeze the trigger, Barry grabs the man and races him to a forest outside of the city. While Snart is still disoriented from being moved, Barry snatches the cold gun out of his hands and tosses it a couple yards behind himself. With all that done, Barry steps back a couple feet, turns off the comms in his suit, and waits for Snart to get his balance.

After a couple seconds and the world stops spinning for Snart, he yanks the goggles off and tosses them to the ground. He takes a deep breath to swallow his panic at being alone and at the mercy of this unknown speedster, then smirks. “Well well well, not quite the hero everyone has been whispering about, are you Streak?" Snart raises his arms and gestures to the isolated forest that he was brought to. “Bringing little old me all the way out here, without one witness in sight for miles.”

He then drops his arms and his smirk, taking a step forward. He has the most serious look on his face that Barry has ever seen. This whole time Snart’s been acting like this is all just a game, but now things just got real for him. “Just answer me this before you kill me, how did it feel to kill Nora Allen? Did you wait until her son, only eleven at the time, was downstairs to see you end her life?
Huh! Did you get a kick out of that *Man in the Lightning* ?!

Barry takes a half step back. He feels the prickle of tears in the corner of his eye at the mention of his mother, feels all the pain that a reminder of losing his mother comes with. Then, without a word, looks Snart right in the eyes and removes his mask. “My name is Barry Allen, I am the fastest man alive, and I’m also your son.”

Chapter End Notes

The rest of the chapters will be longer, this is just a little preface/teaser. My tumblr is badwolfchild if you want to check it out.
Happy Monday everyone! Hope everyone likes this new chapter. Thank you so much for all the comments and kudos! They make my heart very happy.

This starts up right at the end of Going Rogue when Barry and Felicity are talking on the train.

“If you ever need anything, I’ll race over in a heartbeat.”

“Same. Well, as fast as I can run. Which might take me a while, but I will still come.” The two share a smile as Barry leans back in the train seat, Felicity mirroring him. “You could talk about it if you want. I could tell something was bothering you at the trivia thing, and it wasn’t just Iris being with Eddie.” Barry’s eyes dropped and he began to fidget with the hem of his shirt. Felicity gave him a sympathetic smile. “Does it have anything to do with that secret meeting you swept Snart off to?” She hazards a guess.

Barry’s head shoots up with wide eyes. “How did you-”

“Cisco mentioned that after you sped off with Snart that the comms cut out. He had me look at them thinking they malfunctioned. That, on top of this,” She then gestures to the tablet she was reading off of before Barry arrived. “Story about how the diamond appeared in the museum's curator’s hands in a gust of wind, have me suspicious.”

Barry wrings his hands. “You, uh, didn’t tell Cisco that I turned them off, did you?”

Felicity shakes her head, and Barry let out a breath he didn’t realize he was holding. “I figured you had your reasons.” Felicity chooses her next words carefully. “Reasons that I hope you could tell me.” She then shakes her head and corrects herself. “Not that you don’t need to if you don’t want to. For the first couple years that I covered for Oliver, he never told me the whole truth. Not that he didn’t want to! He had very good, valid reasons not to! It’s just that it would be nice to know this time. To help you as a friend who could listen! And I’m rambling again, aren’t I.”

Barry cracks a smile, then sobers up. “I found out that Leonard Snart is my biological dad.” Barry bites his lip as he waits for Felicity’s reaction. Time seems to slow down for him as he waits for his
friend to say something. After what felt like hours, the blond started to chuckle. Her laughter grows then instantly stops at the still serious look Barry was giving her.

“Oh my god, you’re being serious right now, aren’t you.” Barry gave her a tight lipped smile with a shrug.

“I guess they were right when they said you can’t pick your family.” Felicity smacks him on the leg. “Ow! What was that for?!”

Felicity smacks him again. “You’ve been sitting on this information all day and didn’t tell me?!” She then pouts and points at him. “Don’t you dare say you’re picking up Oliver’s bad habits of keeping secrets and brooding over them, mister!”

Barry raises his hands in mock surrender. “I promise I won’t keep any more secrets from you and brood about them.”

Felicity nods. “Good. Now, what happened when you went all radio silent with your new dad?” Barry levels a stare at her. “Too soon?”

“Yeah, I think a couple hours is too soon.”

“Sorry.”

Barry clears his throat and leans forward in his seat, getting down to business. “I, may have, took off my cowl and told him I was his son.”

Felicity’s eyes went wide and she hit him again for the third time. “What is wrong with you?! Isn’t the first rule of superheroing not telling your enemy who you are and what you look like?!”

“Ow! Would you stop hitting me?! I didn’t have a choice!” Barry’s hands start to flail as he tells her what happened at the theater. “He had the cold gun and was trying to kill me and innocent people around, including Joe! I panicked and figured, ‘Hey, if he knows I’m his son, he won’t try and kill me, and might listen to what I have to say!’”
“Well, considering you’re sitting in front of me right now, I’m assuming the not killing you part of the plan worked at least. But how do you know he won’t go off and try to kill someone else? Cisco said you didn’t come back with the cold gun. Did you let him keep it?”

Barry does something between a grown and a sigh. He gets up and starts to pace in the aisle. “You don’t get it, the whole reason he stole it in the first place was because of me!”

“Yeah!” Felicity agreed, then adds on. “Because you stopped his heist earlier!”

“No!” Barry stops pacing and runs a hand through his hair. “Not present me, eleven year old me! After we left the theater, he called me Man in the Lightning!”

Felicity finally understood and mutters. “He thought you were the one that killed your mom that night.”

Barry gave a sardonic smile. “Not exactly that many speedsters running around.” Barry finally collapses back down across from Felicity, emotionally exhausted.

“And I thought my life was insane. What else did you guys talk about? You must have said something to get him to just give you back the diamond.”

Barry crosses his arms. “He wants to get to know me. He said I could take the diamond back to the museum if I went out for coffee with him, and just talked.”

Felicity leans forward with wide eyes. “For real?” She crinkles her nose. “I can’t believe I’m going to say this, but that’s actually really sweet. You should text me afterwards and let me know how it was.”

Barry can’t help but giggle. “I will definitely text you after to tell you how coffee with my criminal father goes.” Barry’s smile drops. “But seriously, can you maybe not tell Ollie about, any of this? Joe doesn’t even know yet, nobody knows for that matter, and I really want some time to wrap my head around this before Oliver starts breathing down my neck and telling me what a horrible idea it is to get involved in any way with someone like Snart.”

Felicity reaches over and takes his hand into hers. “Of course, it will be our little secret.”
“Don’t get me wrong, I’ll tell him eventually,”

“Just not yet.” She finishes his thought. “I get it, I truly do Barry.” She squeezes his hand one last time, then pulls away.


Barry then speeds off in a gust of wind. “Bye Barry.” She whispers.

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A week later, Barry races to the address that Snart had texted him the night before. He glances at his phone one last time, then up at the sign above the coffee shop’s door. *The Cracked Mug* is a quaint, little mom ‘n pop style shop that’s stayed in business somehow despite the growing number of Starbucks’ on every block. It also has the added bonus of being on the other side of Central. After the fight he had with Iris in Jitters about her blog, he’ll take as much distance as he could take. He wishes he could just tell Iris the truth, that he was the speedster she’s been blogging about. He feels incredibly guilty saying all those things to her. The worst part was, was that she was right. If he wasn’t the speedster in question, then he would want to know every detail and he would be doing just as much, if not more, effort into finding out everything he could. He hates it when he gets into a fight with his best friend.

He stuffs his phone back in his pocket as he rushes inside, already five minutes late. Barry spots Snart in the back corner, two steaming mugs sitting in front of him. He takes one last deep breath to calm his nerves then shuffles over to the table. He raises his hand in greeting with a tight lipped smile. “Hi.”

Snart nods in greeting. “Hey.” Barry continues to stand there picking at the chair. “You know, that’s not just there for decoration. It also serves the purpose of letting people sit in them too.” He drawls.

Barry’s head shoots up and he rubs the back of his neck. “Right! Sorry.” He wrestles out of his jacket and drapes it on the back of the chair before flopping down. He wraps his hands around the mug, blowing on it before taking a sip. “So, um, what should I call you? Snart seems too formal, what about Leonard?”
Snart crinkles his nose. “Len’s good. Or you could call me Dad?” Snart, or rather Len, smirks.

Barry chuckles. “I think I’ll stick with Len for now.” Barry shifts in his seat as the lingering tension came back full force. “Why Bartholomew?” He blurts out. “I mean, it’s not a bad name! It’s just… different. I guess.” And there goes his foot-in-mouth syndrome again…

Len takes his turn to chuckle and waves for him to stop. “If you want to blame someone, blame my grandfather. He hated the name just as much, always went by the name Bart.” Len sits up a little straighter. “He used to look out for my sister and I before he passed away when I was fifteen.”

“I’m so sorry.”

Len waves him off. “It was a long time ago.” His smirk returns to his face. “Now, you can run up the sides of buildings?”

Barry throws his head back and groans. “You found her blog?”

Len’s eyes sparkle with amusement. “You know the author?”

“Yeah, we grew up across the hall from each other.” Barry then smiles. “She’s my best friend,” The smile drops from his face. “And we also just got in a big fight. That’s why I was late.” Barry begins to fiddle with the edge of his now empty mug. “She doesn’t know it’s me and her dad wants me to get her to stop blogging about it. He’s scared that someone will hurt her because of it. Just last night she was at the bombing sight, trying to get a glimpse of The Streak. What if she had gotten hurt? It would have been my fault.”

“Have you ever thought to tell her you’re the one behind the mask?” Len asks sagely.

Barry runs a hand threw his hair. “I want to so badly, you have no idea. But her dad-”

“Is what? Holding a gun to your head and telling you, you can’t say anything to her?”

“What? No, of course not! It’s just that after my dad went to prison, Joe took me in. He asked me not to tell her and I’m respecting his wishes.”
Len shakes his head in disbelief. “I get that, but if he really wants to keep his daughter safe, she should know the whole story. How is she suppose to defend herself if she doesn’t even know the bigger picture? And what about you?”

Barry crinkles his brow. “What about me?”

“What’s going to happen when you need your best friend to talk to? One of these days everything will get to be too much, and you’re going to be wishing you could talk to her.”

Before Barry could comment his phone starts to buzz in his pocket. He mutters an apology and pulls it out, sighing when he sees that it’s Cisco. “Yeah.” He answers, put out by the interruption.

“We’ve piggybacked onto General Eiling’s surveillance. According to what they’re saying, the lovely Ms. Sans Souci was just spotted in Anglewood.”

Caitlin’s voice then cut in. “The same neighborhood as Dr. Harold Hadley’s office, the military surgeon who performed several procedures on her. That’s why she was looking for the folder.”

Cisco’s voice came back. “You gotta get to her before Eiling does.”

Barry takes a deep breath. “Okay.” He hangs up the phone and winces. “Sorry, I gotta,”

“Go. Be a hero.” Barry stands and collects his coat. “Be careful, the military is nothing to mess around with. Also, think about what I said about your friend.” Barry nods then scrambles out the door, reaching the nearest alley he bursts to his full speed.

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Barry found the door to Joe’s house unlocked and walks right in. “If you came to do laundry, I already got a load in.” Iris’s voice rang out.

He closes the door and goes to the table where Iris is typing on her laptop. “Uh, no, I came to talk.”
Iris finally looks up in concern at the state of Barry’s voice and he clears his throat, memories of what Len had said coming to the forefront of his mind. In this moment he really wishes that he had been wrong about something overwhelming happening. He wants nothing more than to be able to lighten the load a bit and be able to tell her all about Bette’s death and how it just keeps playing over, and over, and over again in his head. “I…” He sighs and starts over, feeling horrible for the lie he’s about to tell. “I was working a case…” He looks down at his folded hands on the table. “Someone…” Barry couldn’t get the words out and groans. “I’m sorry!” He blurts out. “I’m sorry, but I can’t keep doing this!”

Iris reaches across the table and takes Barry’s hand. “Hey, look at me. Whatever it is, you’ll be okay. If you don’t want to tell me then it’s okay.”

“That’s the thing! I do want to tell you!” Barry took his hands back to gesture wildly. “For the past couple weeks all I’ve wanted to do was tell you! But your dad-” Barry covers his mouth in shock. Iris’s eyes become hard. “What about my dad?” She practically growls. Barry opens his mouth to speak but gets interrupted. “And don’t you dare lie to me, Barry Allen.”

Barry slumps his shoulders. “I… I saw someone die today. Someone I thought could be a friend. And I saw her die because I’m the Streak.” Barry just let the word vomit go, not able to stop now that he got started. “Please know Iris, I wanted to tell you so badly! But Joe was worried that you might be in danger if you knew, but then you started that blog so he wanted me to talk you out of it! Then you told me that you started the blog because of me and it’s just made me feel even worse and I-”

“Whoa Barr, slow down.” Iris put her hands on his shoulders to steady him. “Just slow down, take a deep breath, and start from the beginning.” Barry did as he was told and the two move to the couch. He starts from the moment that the lightning struck him in his lab that night, all the way until the events that just happened with Bette only a couple hours ago. Iris only jumps in every now and again to ask for clarification, but silently listens the rest of the time. The whole conversation took a little over an hour, and by the end Barry was resting his head on Iris’s shoulder with eyes red from crying.

The two sat in silence for a couple moments until Barry couldn’t take it anymore. “Do you hate me?” He kept his head on her shoulder, not wanting to see the look on her face.

She leans her head on top of his. “Oh Barry, I could never hate you, you’re my best friend.” They sat up and shuffle to sit across from each other on the couch.

“Iris, please don’t tell Joe that I told you. I just did the opposite of what he wanted me to do.” Barry
pleads.

“Fine, but on one condition.”

“Name it.”

“No more lies. I hate for there to be secrets between us.”

Barry nodded with a smile. “Deal.” He then freezes. “Then I should probably tell you,” Iris rolls her eyes with a smile but then nods for him to continue. “But you can’t tell anyone! Not even Joe.” Iris nods again. “Last week my dad told me that he’s not my biological father, Leonard Snart is.” Iris slaps him on the knee. “Ow! Why do people keep hitting me?”

“Don’t you dare change the subject! How could not tell me this!?” She sat up straight and squared her shoulders. “I want to meet him.” She declares.

“What? Iris, no! Len is a known criminal!”

“Len? Have you met up with him?” She challenges him.

Barry winces. “Well, yeah, but-”

“Then I want to meet him too! You owe me for not telling me about you being The Streak!”

“First of all, I’m really not digging that name. And second, I don’t think it works like that!”

Iris shrugs. “Fine. Then I’ll find him and meet him on my own!”

“Fine! You can meet him, but Joe is never to know about this.”

Iris beams and does a little clap. “Yay! And don’t worry, my lips are sealed.” She does a little motion
of zipping her lips closed and throwing away the key. Barry can’t help but laugh and shake his head at his friends actions. “So, how did you change your voice at Jitters?”

Barry grins and demonstrates. “I can vibrate my vocal chords so I end up sounding like this!”

The two laugh until they are sitting in a comfortable silence.

Iris leans fully against the back of the couch, arm propped up. “I can’t believe that my dad wanted you to keep this from me. First how he’s acting around Eddie, and now this? If I wasn’t giving him the silent treatment already…” Iris shakes her head.

Barry gives his signature puppy dog eyes. “Please don’t blame Joe. All he wants is for you to be safe. He might not be going about it the best way,” Barry mutters the last part, but then brings his voice up to normal volume. “But he’s not doing any of this with malice intent. He’s just doing what he thinks is best.”

Iris groans in defeat. “I could never last against your puppy eyes. Fine. I’ll take what you said under advisement.”

Barry nods with a smile. “That’s all I ask.” He then takes his turn to groan. “I think I’m gonna crash here tonight in my old room, and I still need to text Felicity, she’s bound to have a million questions about how the meet up with Len went. Then I’m going to have to call Len and warn him that the storm that is Iris West wants to meet him.” Iris pats him on the shoulder on her way back to the table in mock sympathy. “I miss when my life just consisted of work and netflix.” He watches as she starts to type again. “You’re not going to quit that blog, are you.” Barry didn’t form it as a question. He knew that his friend has her heels firmly planted in the ground on this issue.

“Why would I do that when now I have an inside source?” She gives him a look like he’s a two year old.

Barry just rolls his eyes and chuckles. He gets up and moves to the stairs. “Just make sure to call me if you get into any trouble.”

“So I can have The Streak save me?” She calls out teasingly.

“Still hate that name!” Barry calls from up the stairs.
From inside Eobard Thawne’s time vault, he began to pace back and forth in front of the monitor showing Joe West’s livingroom. He stops and crosses his arms. “Gideon, how did I not know of this development?”

The screen changed from the live video feed, to thousands of news articles and government documents pertaining to one Bartholomew Henry Allen and one Leonard Snart. “I’m sorry, but there is no record of Leonard Snart ever having a child, let alone that child being Barry Allen. It seems in the original timeline, neither person knew of the relation that they shared.”

Eobard growls as he wipes his hands down his face. “Is the timeline still intact?” He finally asks of the AI.

Gideon pulls up the news article from 2024. Flash Missing Vanishes in Crisis still reads as the main headline. Eobard sighs in relief. Gideon then highlights the first paragraph. “The only change I can detect is here, where it now reads, ‘The Flash, with the help from Starling City’s Green Arrow, The Atom, Captain Cold, and Hawkgirl…’ The rest remains unchanged. What would you like to do about Leonard Snart?”

“Let’s just keep an eye on him for now. Alert me if anymore alterations appear in the timeline.”

“Yes, Mr. Thawne.”

The image of the AI disappears and Eobard pulls up the video of Barry talking on the phone. “What to do with a problem like a Snart…” He mutters as he continues to watch Barry roll his eyes with a grin, no doubt saying something sarcastic to the person on the other line. He turns up the volume to hear the end of Barry’s phone call.

“Look, I’ll talk to you later Len. Some of us have a legal, law abiding job to get to in the morning, night.” He listens to the reply on the other end then hangs up the phone, plugs it in to charge, then goes through his nightly ritual before going to bed.

Chapter End Notes

I totally had Private Eyes playing in my head as I wrote creeper EoWells at the end
there.

(In my notes for that scene I wrote "Private eyes, watching you, watching your every move" in the margins)
The Flash and Captain Cold are Born

Chapter Notes

Happy Monday all! Hope everyone had a great Easter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Barry’s vision keeps blurring as he runs on autopilot. Everything hurts and all he knows is that he has to get somewhere that’s safe and away from that insane guy of steel. Joe is still at the scene and his Dad is out of the question. Iris is with a friend from work tonight, and Cisco and Caitlin don’t know that he was out tonight… Len. Len will know what to do. He changes direction and goes to the address that Len gave him incase there was ever an emergency. He flashes in and relaxes when he sees Len is here. He pulls off his cowl that is sticky from blood. “I think this qualifies as an emergency.” He manages to get out before his legs give out and his vision fades out. The last thing he feels are arms holding him up and hears the vague sound of someone calling out his name…

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Len was just turning off the tv to go to bed when a gust of wind enters his apartment. He snatches his cold gun and has it pointed at the intruder. He throws the gun back down on the coffee table when he recognizes the red suit. Barry is teetering on his feet, and before he could ask what was going on, Barry rips off his bloody cowl, and speaks up first. “I think this qualifies as an emergency.” Then Barry’s eyes roll back and he’s falling to the floor.

He catches the young man and holds him up, his head rolling onto his shoulder. “Barry? Barry! Can you hear me? I need you to stay awake, can you do that for me, Kid?” He curses as Barry appears to be out cold. “Okay, can’t take you to a normal hospital.” Len mutters, and then remembers Barry talking about his friend Caitlin at S.T.A.R. Labs that also doubles as his doctor. “Guess I’m gonna be meeting your friends a little sooner than you would have liked.”

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He carries Barry into an area that looks like the one that Barry had described to him once, the cortex he thinks it was called. He begins to panic when he realizes that no one is here. A moment later he hears voices growing louder.

“What exactly are we debating?” A male voice, Dr. Wells. He recognizes that voice from the tv.
“The average number of bugs Barry swallows in a day of running.” That male voice sounds younger and he doesn’t recognize it. Barry had mentioned working with a Cisco Ramon. He’s also the one that created the cold gun if he’s remembering correctly.

There was a pauses then Dr. Wells replies dryly. “I look forward to seeing you accept your Nobel.”

Barry starts to shift in his arms and his attention focuses solely on his son. “Barry?!" He hears Cisco call out. “What the hell did you do to him?!”

He ignores him and turns to the young woman who must be Dr. Snow. She has a terrified look on her face and hasn’t moved from the corner of the room. “Please, you need to help him.” Her eyes shifted to the bleeding out Barry in his arms and her eyes soften.

“Cisco, get the gurney.” She starts giving out orders like a natural leader and he places Barry down when Cisco arrives with the gurney. He can feel Dr. Wells’ eyes burning a hole through him the whole time, but he focuses on watching Dr. Snow work on Barry.

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Len had been leaning against the wall with his arms crossed and watching like a hawk for over an hour now. Cisco, having run out of jobs to do for Dr. Snow, came over and leans against the wall next to him. “So what happened exactly? You don’t have the cold gun, and Barry doesn’t have any frostbite on him, so something tells me you didn’t do this.”

Len just shrugs, eyes never leaving Barry. “He just showed up and then collapsed. Thought it wouldn’t be smart to take him to a hospital, so I brought him here.”

Cisco pushes off the wall. “That’s another thing, why did Barry go to you? No offence, wait scratch that, full offence, but you’re a thief and a criminal. Why would he trust you to help him? And how did you know to bring him here?”

Len’s eyes finally shift away from Barry and to Cisco, giving him his full attention. “Not my place to tell.”
Barry groans and both their eyes shoot up to him. They dart over to the gurney and stand on the opposite side from where Dr. Snow is working.

“Dude, what happened to you? You look like you took on a train, and the train won.”

“Feels like it too.” Barry looks over to give Cisco a look when he sees Len standing next to him. “Len, what are you doing here?”

Dr. Wells rolls forward. “That seems to be the question of the hour, Mr. Allen. He claims that you showed up at his apartment out of the blue. Care to explain why you thought Mr. Snart here would be a safe place to escape to?”

“And what’s with calling him Len?” Cisco pitches in. Caitlin stays quiet as she works on Barry’s hand, but still glances up to give Barry a quizzical look.

Barry looks to Len, and he shrugs, giving Barry permission to say however much he wants. “Well, he doesn’t like to be called Leonard, and I’m not really comfortable calling him Dad.”

Cisco crinkles his nose. “Eww dude. You could just say dating, I don’t need to hear what you two call each other in the bedroom.”

Barry and Len share an equally disgusted look. “What, no! I mean that Len is my biological father! I went to him because I panicked. I was in a lot of pain and I didn’t know where you guys were, Iris was with a friend, and Joe was at the scene I just ran away from in the first place.”

“What were you running from to begin with?” Len spoke up.

Dr. Wells creates a steeple with his hands. “Yes, at the moment, I believe that is the most pressing question.”

Dr. Snow speaks up. “It must have been something pretty bad. You have thirteen fractures in your hand alone, that’s a new record. You also have a concussion, three cracked ribs, and a bruised spleen. Even with your powers, this will all take a couple more hours to heal.”
Barry groans as he lays his head back, closing his eyes for a moment to gather his thoughts. “A man. A big, bad man. His skin changed when I hit him. Like it turned to metal.”

Dr. Wells leans back and crosses his arms. “Interesting. A man of steel.”

“My question is,” Len drawls. “Why were you out there alone?” He glares down at Barry.

“Yeah dude, why didn’t you call us?” Cisco adds on.

“I didn’t think I needed backup on this. The police scanners just said it was someone that stole a hummer and took off with some ATMs. I thought it was going to be a simple flash in, detain him, and then flash out.”

“Well, you’re just lucky he didn’t knock any teeth out. Those puppies don’t grow back.” Cisco cautions Barry.

Barry grunts as he starts to sit up, but is stopped by a hand on his shoulder. “Stay.” Len growls.

Barry rolls his eyes but does as he’s told. “The strange thing is,” Barry starts.

“Besides the guy with the metal skin?” Len cuts in.

Barry ignores him. “I feel like I knew him.”

“What do you mean?” Dr. Snow asks.

“He said something that was familiar.” Barry shakes his head and raises his voice back up to its normal level. “But he’s going to hurt someone if I don’t stop him. So how do I fight a guy that’s made of steel?”

Dr. Wells starts typing away at his computer. “We will find a way.” He then turns his body and points to Barry. “Tonight, you heal. And you Mr. Snart, you may stay with young Mr. Allen here if you so wish.”
Len grabs the nearest chair and pulls it up next to Barry’s makeshift bed, then puts his feet up on the bed. “Don’t mind if I do.”

Barry knocks his feet against the invading ones on his bed and gives a mock glare. Len just knocks his foot back and gives him a twin glare. Barry looks his father up and down for the first time this evening. “Since when have you been wearing a S.T.A.R. Labs t-shirt?”

“Since someone bled all over my sweater.”

Barry began to yawn over exaggeratedly. “Oh man, I’m beat. I’m just gonna get some rest and let my body heal like Dr. Wells said.”

Len smirks. “Brat.”

Barry smiles while keeping his eyes closed. “Old man.”

Cisco walks up to the foot of Barry’s bed. “Don’t think I haven’t forgotten ‘bout all this,” He gestures his hands at the two of them. “’Cause I’m gonna be wantin’ the whole story when we’re all done taking down this tin man.”

Len gave an innocent look. “Well it all started when I was nineteen and met this girl I really liked,”

Barry snorts and Cisco covers his ears. “Eww! No! I don’t need to hear you talking about doin’ the nasty!”

Dr. Wells finally cuts in with a smile, having been listening to the whole thing. “Alright, that’s enough. Let’s let Mr. Allen get some rest.”

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Barry and Len are walking out of S.T.A.R. Labs together the next morning. “So, are you going to stick around and help us take this guy down?”
Len raises his eyebrows at Barry. “I’m not exactly the hero type, Barry.” He sighs at Barry’s puppy eyes. “But if you’re in another situation like last night, call me. No more of this lone ranger shit that you pulled. Deal?”


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“...Now that we’ve established that we’re all uber-nerds, what are we gonna do about Tony?” Barry asks from his perch against the wall.

“I’d like to know that as well.” Len appears in the doorway to the lab.

Cisco glares at him. “Dude, how do you keep getting in here? We have a security system.”

Len smirks. “Security system? That’s cute.” He then turns to Barry. “So your metal man’s name is Tony?”

“Tony Woodward.” Barry smirks. “What happened to you not wanting to help out?”

Len avoids eye contact. “I’m not. I just came to get my sweater. I forgot it last night in all the chaos. Since I was here, I thought I’d come check up on the uber-nerds .”

Cisco scoffs. “Sure Jan.” He then leads the group to the other room. “We’re gonna train you man, *Karate Kid* style.”

The group follows as Cisco goes to push a glass board out of the way. “What, are you gonna have the kid wax the metal guy?” Barry and Caitlin give him a weird look. “Like wax on, wax off?” He clarifies.

Cisco stops pushing the board to point at Len with a grin. “Finally! Someone who watches movies
around here!” He then finishes moving the board. “Behold!” He shows off his makeshift metal robot. Barry shares a look with Caitlin and Len. “I call him Girder.” Cisco finishes proudly.

“For the record, not my idea.” Caitlin defends herself at Barry’s look.

“Fighting is physics. It’s not about strength, it’s not about size, it’s about energy and power. Channel your speed the right way, and you could totally take this bad boy down.”

Len crosses his arms and tilts his head. “I can’t believe I’m about to say this, but I agree with Cisco here. The only problem I see is that Barry’s Girder moves.”

“See, I thought about that too!” Cisco picks up a controller. “So…” He then demonstrates by having the robot move forward and back, side to side.

Barry turns to Caitlin, the only one in the room still worried as well. “I have ice and bandages standing by.” She reassures him.

“Well, looks like you all have this handled. Good luck, Kid.” He ruffles Barry’s hair as he walks by and has his hand batted away.

“Don’t forget your sweater! Or leave it so you keep having an excuse to wander back here!” Barry calls to him. Len just waves, never turning around.

After the thief is gone Cisco turns to Barry. “Dude, your new dad is kinda cool.” Barry just levels a glare at the inventor.

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Eobard is humoring the detective by going out to have drinks with him. He’s not an idiot, he knows the detective wants more than to just share a drink with him. All this interrogation is missing is the two-way glass. He plays along though, curious to find out how much Detective West has put together about the murder of Nora Allen. He starts to get a little worried though when he keeps bringing up the Particle Accelerator, and then even more so when he starts to dig into his past, or well Harrison Wells’ past. Time to send Joe West here on a little misdirect, shift the attention away from him.
“You know, have you looked into Leonard Snart by any chance?”

“What would he have to gain by killing Nora? He’s a high end thief, and the Allen’s didn’t own anything worth enough for him to kill someone over.”

Eobard began to fiddle with his glass. “Well, I’m no detective, but I just thought that, with him being Barry’s father and all-”

Joe cut him off, already showing signs of anger like he thought he would. “What the hell are you talking about?! Henry Allen is Barry’s father.”

Eobard faked ignorance. “Oh well, I just assumed that the young Mr. Allen had told you already. Last night, Mr. Snart, or Len as Barry had called him, was the one to bring in the bleeding Barry. Barry had said that when he was hurt, he ran to the person he felt safe with, his father.”

Joe stands abruptly and slaps down some cash on the table. “Sorry to cut this short, but I have somewhere to be.”

Eobard nods with a smile. “Of course, Detective. Good luck with Mr. Allen.” When Joe is gone, Eobard smirks and finishes off his drink, his mission accomplished.

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Barry is sparring with Eddie in his lab when an officer runs in. He tells them that Iris is missing and the two share a look of concern and dread. “Go, alright! I’ll call Joe!” Eddie runs out of his lab with a nod. He finishes on the phone with his friends at S.T.A.R. Labs, then thumbs through to another contact. It rings twice before a deep voice answers.

“Done with your metal man already?”

“It’s Iris Len, he took her.”
When Barry finds out where Tony is keeping Iris, he calls Len back on his way out of the precinct.

“They’re at Carmichael Elementary.”

Barry hears the sound of a motorcycle in the background. “I’m only a few blocks from there. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

Tony is holding Iris by the arm. “... I’m looking for a fight.”

Barry flashes in, beating Len to the school. “Good, because you just found one.”

Tony pulls Iris with him as he walks toward him. “You just won’t stay dead. What, come to save your little fangirl?”

“This is just between us. Let her go.”

Tony drops Iris down and stalks toward Barry. As the two continue to talk, Iris feels someone tap her on the shoulder from behind. She spins around with a gasp, and finds a man in a parka and goggles on shushing her. He is hunched down to her level and whispers to her. “You must be the Miss Iris West that Barry is always talking about.”

“Len?” Iris hazards a guess as to his identity.

“The one and only.” Barry and Tony begin fighting so Len pulls Iris behind him, and keeps his cold gun trained on Tony. When Barry starts losing the upper hand and is on the ground, he shoots a beam of ice at Tony, freezing him from the ankles down. “How about you just chill out for a bit?”

“You got him busy for a minute?” Barry calls out from behind the mask.
“Go do your thing, Kid.” Barry nods and flashes out of the building.

Tony stops chipping away at the ice keeping him in place and scoffs. “Some hero he is. As soon as I get free, I’m coming for you next Frosty.”

Len just smirks. “I’d like to see you try.” He drawls.

Just then, everyone looks up at the sound of a sonic boom. Tony shifts back to his metal skin just as Barry bursts through the doors. Next thing Len knows, there’s another sonic blast as Barry punches Tony and he pulls Iris out of the way. The force of the punch freeing Tony from his icy prison.

Barry and Tony both are fidgeting on the floor from pain. Tony recovers first and starts to get up. Before Len could lift his cold gun, Iris pushes past him and punches Tony straight in the jaw, knocking him out for good. Barry leans back against the lockers, cradling his hand. “Nice cross.”

Iris cradles her hand as well. “Thanks, I think I broke my hand.”

“Me too.” Barry looks at Len. “What are you wearing?”

Len puts his gun back in the holster on his right thigh. “Says the guy in skin tight red leather. You get a costume, so why can’t I?”

“He’s got a point, Barr.” Iris chimes in.

Barry leans his head back on the lockers. “This is why I didn’t want you two to meet, you guys are gonna be insufferable.”

“Just wait until I start telling her embarrassing stories about you as a baby.”

Iris perks up. “Ooo, yes please! And in return I’ll tell you embarrassing things Barry did in high school.”
Len smirks, pulling the goggles down around his neck. “You got yourself a deal.” Barry just rolls his eyes from his place on the floor.

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An hour later found Len and Iris alone in the cortex chatting. They both look up as Barry, Cisco, and Caitlin enter. Barry is pulling off the gloves to his suit and tosses them down by the computers, his hood already down. “How’s your wrist?”

Iris holds up her right wrist that’s wrapped in an ace bandage. “Not broken. And yours?”

Barry twists his wrist around. “Completely healed.” Iris just sticks her tongue out in response. “So what are you doing here? Shouldn’t you be at the station?”

“I already gave my statement so my dad let me head home. I thought I’d stop by and see how everyone was doing. Did you get Tony locked up okay?”

“He did. Girder’s safe and sound down in the pipeline.” Cisco says as he munches on a red vine. “Which reminds me, you still don’t have a name.” Cisco points his candy at Len.

Len has had his head propped up on the arm of the chair the whole time. He just raises his eyebrows at Cisco, still not saying a word.

“How about…” Cisco’s eyes light up and he grins. “Captain Cold.”

Len sits up with a grin. “I like it.”

“Well, since we’re doing names, instead of The Streak, I was thinking of going by The Flash.”

Iris smiles. “The Flash and Captain Cold, you two make quite the pair.”

“You sure do.” A voice calls from the entryway. Everyone turns to see Joe walking in with his arms crossed.
Len tenses up and the color drains from Barry’s face. “Joe, I can explain—”

Joe raises his hand up to silence Barry. “Honestly, I don’t want to hear anything you have to say right now. All you’re going to do right now is listen to me.” Joe says with controlled rage. He then points at Barry. “You deliberately disobeyed me. I had one rule, one rule, and that was to not get her involved in any of this. And now look what happened, that psycho downstairs kidnapped her and she got hurt!”

“And I saved her! Len and I both saved her!” Barry yells back.

Joe turns to the wide-eyed Caitlin and Cisco. “Would you two please take Iris and give us the room?” He asks in a lower voice.

“Dad, no! I’m staying!” Iris protests.

“No, you’re not!” Joe snaps.

Caitlin goes to Iris and grabs her hand. “Come on, we should go.” Iris starts to put up a fight, but stops when she sees Barry shake his head at her and motions for her to go.

“Fine.”

After the three are left alone Barry is the first to speak, his voice level. “Who told you?”

“Certainly not you, since I seem to be the last one to find out. How long were you planning on keeping this a secret? Do you even realize how bad it could be if anyone back at the station found out you’re related to Leonard Snart?!”

Snart, not Len, Barry thinks, gets up from his seat and strides over to Joe. “Ever think the reason he didn’t tell you is ‘cause he’s scared of how you’d react? That you would start yelling at him over something like who he’s related to, which he has no control over?”
“Hey, this has nothing to concern with you! I’m speaking with my son right now!” Joe snaps.

“Well he’s my son too!” Snart snarks back. “And I did a lot more than just raise him! Even with the job Henry gave me, we didn’t have much money! And on top of that, I also had to deal with Central City’s finest constantly hounding me about my father, said father pushing me to find out why I went straight, and my father abusing my sister back at home! All at nineteen, I might add! The only way to keep Barry out of that mess was to let, him, go!” Snart pauses to catch his breath, then starts again calmer. “The only two good things in my life were my son and my baby sister, and if I wanted my son to have the best life possible I knew I had to give him up.” At that Len stalks out of the room, the other two left speechless.

Chapter End Notes

As always, my tumblr is badwolfchild if you want to check it out. (If anyone knows how to put links in this thing, could you help me out?)
Happy Monday!

So I completely slipped the black out episode, and just had them talk about it in passing. It's one of my least favorite episodes, nothing big happens, it was obviously a filler before the xover, and there was really no way to fit in Len anywhere. So for the sake of saving time and energy, just assume everything that happens in that episode, happened.

Other than that, have fun reading this and please make sure to read the note at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Around ten thirty am, Len heard a knock at the door. With Lisa out of town, and him and Mick still not on speaking terms, the only other person who knew this address was Barry. He hasn’t spoken to Barry since he stormed out of S.T.A.R. Labs around a week ago, and isn’t sure how to face him after his emotional outburst. He opens the door, expecting his son, and is instead face to face with Joe West. He rolls his eyes and goes to close the door, but West stops the door with his foot.

“I’m not here to start a fight, Snart. I just wanna to talk.” West says.

Len leaves the door open without a word and nods for West to enter. Len leans against the kitchen island and crosses his arms.

“Barry tell you about this place?”

“No, he wouldn’t tell me anything. Both him and Iris have teamed up and gone radio silent on me. I got Cisco to check the GPS on Barry’s suit to show where he went after the first time he fought Woodward.” West removes his gun and badge, and places them on the counter. “Listen, I’m not here as a cop, no one will know about this place. I’m just worried about Barry.” West then shifts from foot to foot. “I’m also here to apologize.”

Len squints at him. “Really?” He drawls out the question.

“I may have slightly overreacted.”
“Just slightly?” Len smirks.

West glares. “Don’t push it.” He warns. “I went and talked to Henry a couple days ago. He backed up everything you said. He also seemed to speak very highly of you, surprisingly.”

“Having a hard time separating the hardened criminal CCPD sees me as, verses the scared teen parent that Henry saw me as?”

West nods. “If you want to know the truth, yeah. I do have a hard time separatin’ the two. But before Iris stopped talkin’ to me she told me how you saved her.” West almost has tears in his eyes. “Thank you for saving my baby girl.” West holds out his hand and Len shakes it. “Barry explained why he told her about his identity, and as hard as it is to say, you were right. Woodward would have taken her whether she knew about Barry being The Flash or not, and at least this way she knew to do something to give Barry a heads up like setting off the fire alarm at their old school.”

Just as quickly, Len snatches his hand back and crosses his arms again. “Thank you, that’s big of you to say. She okay from yesterday? I saw on the news this morning that you guys were hostages during that blackout last night.”

West wipes his hand down his face. “Yeah, managed to get my partner’s hidden piece and disable the sonuvabitch. It’s actually Barry that I’m worried about.”

Len drops his arms and pushes off the island. “Why, was he there too? I didn’t see his name listed.”

“No, but he was off fighting a meta at S.T.A.R. Labs without his powers.”

Len’s heart drops. “Is he okay? Why didn’t he call me?”

West puts his hands up to calm him down. “He’s fine, his powers are back now and everyone is safe. Except Woodward, and that’s what I’m worried about. How much do you know about Harrison Wells?”

Len chooses his next words carefully. “I know that everytime I’m in the same room as the man my instincts scream that there’s something off about him. I also don’t like how much trust Barry puts in the man after what his machine did to him and this city.”
Joe crosses his arms. “This may be one of the few things that we agree on. I’ve been getting the same vibes from the guy. Another thing is the timing that he told me about you and Barry.”

Len goes to into the kitchen and pours a cup of coffee. He gestures if West wants one and he shakes his head.

“The whole time, he was helping me investigate Nora’s murder. Then, when I start to dig into his past, that’s when he slips in that Barry’s been seeing you.”

Len puts his coffee down with his eyes wide. “He baited you. The second you started to get close, that’s when he redirected your attention to me.”

West points. “Exactly. He knew that I would let my emotions get the better of me when it concerns Barry and used that.”

“Smart and manipulative.”

West nods. “Which is why we can’t let him know that we’re on to him. We just have to play along, and as much as it pains me to say it, we can’t let Barry know yet.”

Len nods. “The kid idolizes him, plus he can’t tell a lie to save his life.”

West gives him the first genuine smile he’s seen and snorts. “You picked up on that already? He once told the Captain that he was late because of car trouble.”

Len furrows his brow. “I thought he didn’t have a license?”

West’s phone starts to ring and he shakes his head before he answers. “He doesn’t.” He whispers then speaks into the phone. “Detective West.” A pause as he listens to the other end. “Yeah, I’ll be right there, sir.” He hangs up and puts his gun and badge back on. “Bank heist at Cunningham and Sampere. We’ll have to continue this conversation another time.”
Len leans his forearms on the counter and wraps his hands around his mug. “I’ll ask around Central’s underground, see if I can dig up some dirt on Dr. Wells that he would rather keep hidden.” Len then smirks. “And I better not get questioned about that robbery, I was here talking to you the whole time.”

West rolls his eyes as he goes to the door. “Smartass.” He then stops and really looks at Len. “I’m really starting to see the resemblance. Barry gets the same playful look on his face.” Len ducks his head and finds his mug a lot more interesting. “Same embarrassed look too.” West mutters on his way out the door. Len looks back up when he hears the door click shut. He continues to stare ahead where West was standing, a thoughtful look on his face.

A couple hours later, Len is interrupted by Barry flashing in. He tugs off the hood of his suit and goes straight to the kitchen. “So Joe said that you two are playing nice now.”

Len gets up from the couch where he was cleaning his cold gun and sits in the chair at the island bar. “No, please, come right in and dig through my kitchen.”

Barry uses his speed to make a sandwich. He starts to eat it at normal speed across from him. “Don’t mind if I do.” Barry says with a mouthful.

“Do I really need to tell you to chew and swallow before you speak?”

Barry overexaggerates as he swallows his next bite. “You and Joe are really okay with one another?” Barry deflects.

Len steals a bite of Barry’s sandwich and swallows before speaking, unlike other uncivilized company. “We won’t be making any friendship bracelets anytime soon, but we do agree that you’re our number one priority. He also thanked me for helping save his daughter, and to top it off, he admitted that I was right that she should know about your powers.”

Barry finishes off the sandwich and grabs a bag of chips. “For real? Wow.”

Len goes to snatch the chips away, but Barry pulls away before he could grab them. “Now that we’re all caught up, is there any reason you’re here eating all my food?”
“Oh!” Barry grins. “I’m in a race! I gave Ol- I mean the Arrow a thirty minute head start, but I’m still so going to beat him. He’s going to help me out with this meta that makes people Hulk out.”

“No.”

Barry’s grin drops. “What’d you mean no?”

“I don’t want you working with that psycho. He’s killed people, Kid. That’s not someone you should be hanging out with.”

Barry rolls his eyes. “You know, you sound just like Joe. Why don’t you guys understand that he’s changed? Plus you’re one to talk, I’ve read your CCPD file and you’re suspected in at least six murders.”

“When West and I are in agreement on something, you should listen. And if you paid attention, those murders were in self defence and spread across twenty years. This Hood has killed at least twelve people in only the last three years. He actively goes out looking for fights.”

Barry puts his hands up and shakes his head. “You know what, I don’t want to start a fight with you right now.” He then puts up his hood up. “I get that you don’t trust him, but I do. I’m an adult and can make my own decisions. I’m gonna go see him whether you like it or not.”

Barry can see Len start to close off. “Fine. Do whatever you want.” He brushes Barry off.

“Fine.” Barry flashes out of there before he says something that he’ll regret.

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For the next couple days, Len respects his son’s wishes and let’s him go out and play superhero with the Starling City archer. After all the times that Barry got hurt and didn’t tell him, he got Dr. Snow, or Caitlin as she asked to be called, to text him updates if Barry ever gets hurt. The first text about The Arrow ‘training’ him by shooting arrows into Barry’s back gets ignored. He warned the kid that the guy is crazy, and as much as it pains him to admit it, he made a good point about Barry scoping out the scene before running in head first. The second text had him worried though. Barry had run
right in without any backup, *again*, and had gotten ‘whammied’, her wording not his. She said there was nothing to worry about though because it looks like whatever the meta does, doesn’t seem to affect Barry. Despite what she said, he’s still spent the last half hour debating whether or not to head down to S.T.A.R. Labs. With a muttered ‘what the hell.’ He snatches up his keys, cold gun, and parka.

When he arrives to the cortex, he finds chaos and two people that he doesn’t recognize. One is an African American man, former military judging by his stance, by Cisco. The other is a blonde woman with her hair in a ponytail typing away at another computer across the room. On the screen shows surveillance video of Barry in his Flash suit throwing Detective Thawne around a street and Iris yelling in the background for him to stop.

“Please!” Iris’s desperate voice came through the speakers. “I know this isn’t you, it’s that meta. You need to fight it Flash!”

Len has heard enough and lets himself be known to the room. “What the hell is going on? I thought he wasn’t affected by Bivolo’s powers?”

The military man spins around first and points a gun at him. “Who the hell are you?” He demands. Cisco, being the closest, jumps up between the two.

“Whoa, Dig! He’s cool, you can put the gun away!” Dig, as his name seems to be, reluctantly holsters his gun. He still watches him intently though, so Len ignores him and turns to Caitlin.

“So the reason that we didn’t seem to think that Barry was affected was because his powers had been fighting off Bivolo’s powers, causing his rage to slowly be building up throughout the day.” She explains quickly, then goes back to working on her computer.

“If his temper is anything like mine, that is not something we want to see added with superspeed.” Len cautions them.

Dig points at Len and looks between Caitlin and Cisco. “He knows Barry’s The Flash? And why would Barry’s temper be like his?”

Len just glares at the man. “Kids tend to inherit both the good *and* bad qualities of their parents.”
The blonde spun around. “That must make you Leonard Snart! Duh, the gun totally gives you away! Anyway, back to the matter at hand, Ol- The Arrow just left to try and calm Barry down. If you leave now, you should be able to catch up.”

Before he could leave, Cisco hands him a comm. “This might come in handy.” Len puts the comm in, pulls his hood up, and runs back out of the room as fast as he could.

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Over the comm link, Cisco gave Len directions and he shows up mid-fight between Barry and The Arrow, and Barry seems to be winning. The Arrow is trapped in a vortex of fire created by Barry. He shoots a beam of ice at the ground, causing Barry to trip and the fire to go out.

“I think it’s time you cool down, Kid.” Len keeps his gun up at Barry as he walks into the alley.

Barry’s eyes flash as red as his suit for a moment as he glares. The Arrow has recovered by now and has one of his arrow’s notched and ready to fire at Barry. Barry slowly starts stalking toward him. “What’re you gonna to do Len? Think you could put me in a time out? Well you can’t!” Barry stops and holds his arms out. “Maybe if you hadn’t abandoned me, you could! If you had stuck around, maybe I would be calling you Dad instead! But you didn’t, you chose your sister over me.” Barry growls and starts pacing. Cisco tells the two to keep Barry distracted just a little longer. Len has to give this Arrow some credit, he hasn’t so much as blinked at anything Barry has said so far. “God, I want to hate you so much! You’re a hypocrite, and a criminal! You’ve hurt and killed people before!”

Len shrugs. “So has he.”

The Arrow glares at him. “Don’t further antagonize the angry speedster.” He growls with a voice modulator masking his voice.

“And that’s just it! You both are constantly bossing me around and telling me what to do! ‘Don’t associate with The Arrow, he’s a psychopath!’ and ‘Scope a room before you enter, you have the time!’ Well guess what, I’m done taking orders!” Barry starts to charge at Len, but stops to catch the arrow shot at him. “Did you really think this could stop me?!” Barry throws the arrow back at Green at full speed, and he has to duck and roll to get out of the way in time.

Len uses this distraction to his advantage. He drops his gun to the ground, he had an uneasy feeling
in his stomach having it pointed at his son the whole time, and grabs Barry from behind. Barry struggles to get free from the almost bear hug, and tries to free his arms that are pinned at his sides.

Green’s recovered again and is checking the eta of West and Dr. Wells over his own comm.

Barry grips at Len’s forearms, but Len has both his hands locked tight on his wrists, keeping Barry in place. “Let, me, GO!” Barry grunts.

“No way Kiddo, this is for your own good.” Len hears the screeching of tires in the distance and knows the cavalry is only a couple seconds away. “Gah! I hate you! I hate both of you!” Barry screeches as he continues to claw at Len’s arm.

Len sees the S.T.A.R. Labs van turn into the alley that the three are in. “You’re okay kid, I got you. You’ll be back to normal in no time.” West turns the van sideways and the side doors flip open on their own. Lights start to flash in different colors, and Len starts to feel Barry go lax in his arms. In the corner of his eye, he sees the archer let the tension go from his shoulders and put away his weapon, Barry no longer any threat.

The speedster drops to the ground and Len goes down with him, his arms still around him - just not as tight as before - and both are breathing heavy. Barry leans back and lays his head on his shoulder with his eyes closed from exhaustion. The Green Archer kneels down in front of Barry. “How are you feeling?” He asks in a kind voice, the modulator off.

“Like I’m going to have the worst hangover in my life.” Barry replies with his eyes still closed, but a small smile on his face.

Len shakes his head with a grin. “Well it can’t be that bad, you only drank for four years.”

West came running over. “Barr, you all right?”

Barry nods and opens his eyes. “Yeah, I will be.” He begins to fiddle with the cuff of Len’s parka. “Look, Joe, about what I said, I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean any of it.”

“Hey, I get it. None of that was you, it was that rage thing from that meta.”
Barry finally looks up and glances around the whole group. “Still, I’m sorry to all of you. I said some nasty things.” Barry turned to Len. “And especially to you. What I said was completely uncalled for.”

Len shrugs the best he could with Barry still in his arms. “Don’t mention it. Lisa and I have said a lot worse things to each other.”

“By the way Barry, when were you going to explain this to me?” The archer gestures between Barry and Len.

“Uhh,” Barry stalls as he tries to think up an excuse. “Look Ollie, I was totally going to tell you eventually, the right time just never came up.”

Len smirks. So the archer’s name is Ollie, although it’s most likely a nickname. “Yeah Ollie, he was going to tell you eventually.”

He hears West chuckle and Ollie glares at him. “If you must, it’s Oliver.”

“Alright then Oliver you can give me the third degree in the van on the way back to S.T.A.R. Labs because this one,” Len scoops Barry up bridal style. “Needs to get his leg fixed up.”

Barry grabs the labels of his jacket in shock of suddenly being lifted. “Hey, no! I can walk just fine, I don’t need to be carried like a little kid.”

“Funny you bring that up, because I clearly remember last week telling you something that could have prevented this whole mess from happening in the first place.” Barry groans as he remembers. “Ah, so you do remember. And it was…”

Barry rolls his eyes. “No more lone ranger shit.” He recites in a monotone voice.

“And what did you do?”

Barry sighs. “Lone ranger shit.”
Oliver opens the van door on the driver’s side and Len sets Barry down in a seat. “Good kid.” Len pats him on the shoulder then turns to go get his cold gun that he left in the alley.

“Never mind, I do hate you!” Barry calls out.

Len returns, his cold gun now holstered, and his hood down and goggles around his neck. Barry had taken off his cowl too. He hops into the van and drops down next to Barry while closing the door. “Aw, love you too Kiddo.” He knocks his shoulder into Barry and Barry elbows him back.

“Jerk.”

“Nerd.”

Oliver, who was crouching down in the front right behind West and Dr Wells, watches the duo in the back interact, then turns to the two in the front. “Are they always like this?”

“Yes.” The two say simultaneously.

“You know,” Len’s voice carries from the back. “If you want to play twenty questions, all you had to do was ask, Mr. Queen.”

Oliver spins around. “How- Barry, why did you tell him?”

Barry grins, kinda proud of Len. “I didn’t.” He shakes his head. “He figured it out on his own.”

“What, like it’s hard?”

Just then Len hears Cisco in his ear from the comm he forgot about. “Dude, did you just quote Legally Blonde! We are so having a movie night!”

Len starts ticking things off on his fingers, completely ignoring the voice in his ear. “Your name is
Oliver, you came back from that island at the same time The Hood appears in Starling, and I’m very good at remembering voices and yours was on the news a lot.”

Queen sighs as he takes off his hood and mask. “I think we all have a lot to catch up on.”

The whole van ride was spent with Len recapping to Queen the last month, and Barry nodding off on his shoulder. Even West had some parts filled in that he missed. Len noticed, but didn’t comment, that Dr. Wells had been watching him from the rearview mirror the entire time, not once looking away. When they arrived at S.T.A.R. Labs, Queen goes to shower, while Len carries a sleeping Barry up to see Caitlin with West. Dr. Wells had gone off to some other part of the building, leaving the two alone with a sleeping Barry.

“He is completely dead to the world, isn’t he.” West comments, breaking the silence first.

“You could set off a bomb next to him, and he would sleep through it at this point.”

“He’s always been a heavy sleeper. You would not believe how often he had detention in high school solely from being tardy to his first class.”

The two chuckle as they enter the cortex. The blonde spots them first and she shoots up. “Oh my god! Is Barry okay? I thought the lights helped him!”

West fields the questions as Len takes Barry off to the makeshift medical area that Caitlin set up a couple weeks back. Caitlin gives him a small smile as he sets his son down on the bed, and she closes a curtain around the bed to give Barry some privacy as she changes him and patches up his leg. Len goes back out into the main room and makes a beeline to Cisco.

“Here’s the comm back.”

Cisco waves him off. “Dude, keep it. You’re already part of Team Flash, that baby just makes it official.”
“Peachy.” Len stuffs it in his pocket anyway. “Still not a hero though.” He adds on.

Cisco takes the lollipop out of his mouth and points with it. “Anti-hero? Maybe a Han Solo type?”

Len thinks it over. “I was always more a Princess Leia fan myself, but in this analogy I’ll settle for Solo.”

Cisco grins and holds his hand up for a high five. “Yeah, up top!”

“No.” He then turns to the other three in the room and walks over to them.

“Next time, man!”

He ignores Cisco and turns to the two strangers. “So, now that we don’t have a rogue speedster on our hands, who are you two?”

The blonde sticks out her hand with a blinding smile. “Felicity Smoak. I work computers for the Arrow, who as you know is Oliver Queen, but I guess you already know that too.”

Len shakes her hand and chuckles. “Call me Len. Barry’s mentioned you before. You know, if you’re ever interested in switching careers, a lot of money is guarded by computers nowadays.”

Felicity shakes her head. “Been there, done that. Not really interested in going back for the t-shirt.”

Len shrugs. “Worth a try.” He then turns to Dig. “The only name I got about you is Dig.”

He holds out a hand to shake. “John Diggle. So you’re Barry’s father? I thought he was in prison for murder?”

“The name’s Leonard Snart. I’m Barry’s bio dad, had him at nineteen. Turns out, I dropped out of high school before they could give me the whole safe sex talk. My home life wasn’t what some would deem as a child safe environment, so Henry took him in about a year after he was born. Enter West here, and now the kid has three dads.”
“And now I also get three sets of lectures too.” Barry came into the room in sweats and a S.T.A.R. Labs t-shirt. He was limping and favoring his left leg.

“Barr, should you be walking?” West takes a step forward.

“Have a nice rest Sleeping Beauty?” Len pivots around and smirks.

Barry waves West off. “I’m fine, I’ll be fully healed in less than an hour.” Then he glares at Len. “If you must know, I’m really hungry. You wouldn’t happen to have any food on you, would you?” He asks, expecting Len to give a negative answer.

“Actually…” Len pulls out a couple power bars from his parka and tosses them to Barry.

Barry fumbles to catch them. Oliver comes in freshly showered and still in his suit. “Better eat that fast, we still need to catch your meta.” He turns to Len. “You going to join us?”

Len wrinkles his nose with his hands in the parka’s pockets. “Nah, not really my scene. I can trust you to watch my son’s back?” Len sticks out his hand as an olive branch.

Oliver nods and shakes his hand. “With my life.”

Barry finishes eating and flashes into his spare suit. “If you two old men are done, I’m ready to go.”

Len gestures to the exit. “Get outta here, brat.” Barry sticks his tongue out and flashes himself and Oliver out.

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Later that night, Len finds himself in a rundown motel in Keystone waiting on someone. He’s leaning against the wall and watching out the window. He had changed out of his parka and back into his leather jacket. Now that Iris writes about Captain Cold he can’t ever go out in it for fear of being recognized. His phone chimes with a text from Barry.
He shakes his head with a grin. He knows the kid is just crashing at his place to raid his kitchen some more. Just then the door opens, and he flips the phone shut and drops his grin. “Listen, I know we’ve had our differences, and that the last time you worked with me things didn’t turn out so well for you.” The mystery man sits at the small table in the room and strikes a match. “This time things are different. It’s not me you’re gonna be helping, it’s my son.” The man looks up sharply at Len for the first time.

“You’ve talked to the cub? How old is he now, twenty?”

“Twenty-five.” Len says coolly. “We just got back in touch recently. The problem is, me and another person that cares for him don’t really care for the company he’s keeping right now. That’s where you come in, I need you to do some digging into Harrison Wells. I’d do it myself, but I can’t let it come back to me, or Barry might get hurt in the crossfire.” Len hefts the metal case he’s been keeping on the windowsill over to the table and sets it in front of the man. “I’m assuming you still like playing with fire?” He opens the box to show a gun similar to his, but with a red fuel tank. “You help us out, you get this new toy. You in, Mick?”

Mick lifts out the gun and weighs it in his hand. He then grins. “Yeah buddy, I’m in.”

Chapter End Notes

PLEASE READ! So on Thursday, I'm going to be leaving on a family vacation for the next three weeks. I won't have any access to internet so that means I won't be able to update until May 22. I will write a one-shot for a Thanksgiving part that takes place after this chapter, but before the next chapter! I'll make this story a part of a series and post it in its own story. I'll post that one as soon as I get home (or the morning after, I'll be getting home late after an eight hour flight) which is May 19th or the 20th.

I feel so bad so I'll give you a little tease for the next chapter (The Man in the Yellow Suit)

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Just then Barry burst in, still in the same clothes as this morning and bleeding all over the place.

Mick heard the commotion on his end. “What was that, Boss? You alright?”

“Yeah Mick, I'm fine. Listen, I gotta go, I'll talk to you later.” He flips the phone shut without listening to the reply and rushes over to his son. “Barry?! Are you alright, what happened?”
Barry’s breathing heavy and bleeding from the top of his left eye, and his lip is split open on the right side. He grabs Len’s forearms like a lifeline. “It was him Len, I saw him. The Man in Yellow. And he’s fast. So much faster than me.” Barry falls to his knees and Len goes down with him. “I tried to fight him,” Barry’s voice cracks. “I chased after him to a stadium, but every punch I threw, he dodged like it was nothing.”

Len runs a hand through Barry’s hair. “Hey, shh. It’s alright, you’re safe now, I got you, you’re safe.”

Barry collapses forward in tears and buries his face in the crook of Len’s neck and shoulder. He reaches up and clings to the top of Len’s sweater. Len cups the back of his son’s head and just holds him, muttering that he was safe over and over into the top of his head. After a couple moments Barry begins to calm down some, though he still continues to lay his head on Len’s shoulder. “He said that it was my destiny to lose to him, just like it was my mother’s destiny to die that night.”

“Screw destiny. I promise, he is never going to hurt you again, not on my life.”

Barry tightens his grip. “No… This monster already took my Mom and Dad from me. I can’t lose my other dad, not when I’m just starting to get to know you.”

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And that’s all I’ll show. As always, my tumblr is badwolfchild, and I’ll be back on May 22! Bye, bye!
The next couple weeks seem to fly by. Thanksgiving came and went, and Len has slowly gotten used to being around people that he doesn’t need to keep his defences up 24/7. West, who eventually asked to be called Joe, even invited him to Thanksgiving dinner at the West household. He was going to decline, but Joe insisted that Detective Eddie Thawne wasn’t going to be there, due to him stuck working the holiday shift. It was slightly awkward at first, him being the only one there that was a little bit of an outsider, but the evening got easier after the arrival of Cisco and Caitlin.

Barry has been staying over at his place on and off enough times now that the spare room is now being referred to as Barry’s room. More and more of his stuff has also found its way into what used to be his spotless apartment. Barry’s sneakers by the door, the power bars that Cisco made have their own drawer in the kitchen, Barry’s keys and lanyard for work strewn across the coffee table, the list goes on.

Barry is currently buzzing around the apartment at superhuman speeds looking for something. Len just sits with his coffee on the kitchen counter, the only safe place from Barry, and watches his son zip around. He finally decides to put Barry out of his misery and pulls a black, velvet box out of his pocket.

“Looking for this?” He drawls as he sets it on the counter next to where he’s sitting.

Barry comes to a dead stop with windswept hair. “Seriously? You’ve been watching me tear apart this place for the past ten minutes and you had it the whole time? Why didn’t you say anything?”
Len puts down his coffee and begins to fiddle with the box on the counter. “First off, you will put everything back in its place that you disturbed. I’m your father, not your maid. Second,” He flicks the box open and shifts his eyes up with a smirk. “Who’s the lucky girl? Or guy,” He tacks on with a shrug. “I don’t judge.”

Barry’s face turns bright red and he flashes to grab the box. “It’s for a girl, and it’s not like that! We’re just friends.”

Len raises a brow skeptically. “Friends don’t get friends wedding bands, Barry. Unless they are special friends.”

“It’s not just any wedding band, it’s a replica of her mother’s wedding band. She lost it when we were kids and cried for like, two weeks afterwards.”

Len gives a look of understanding. “Ah, this is about Iris and your little crush on her. Isn’t she dating that Detective Thawne?”

Barry wrapped the box at superspeed during Len’s little speech. He finishes and stuffs the box in his jacket pocket. “Wha- I don’t- You have it all wrong, I don’t have a crush on Iris. She’s my best friend. And yes, she is dating Eddie and they are very happy together.”

Len hops off the counter and sighs as he takes his mug to the sink. “How long?”

“What?”

Len turns around and leans against the sink. “How long have you been in love with her?”

Barry looks like he’s about to protest, then sighs in defeat and shrugs, making an ‘I don’t know’ noise. “Since we were kids, I guess. I was just scared that if I told her how I feel and she didn’t feel the same way, I’d lose her as a friend.”

“I wish I knew what to say that would make everything better, Kid, but I don’t. I just know that if she’s happy with Thawne, then you should be happy for her too, as her best friend.”
Barry nods. “I am happy for her. Eddie really is a nice guy, kinda like a human golden retriever, and if he makes her happy, then I’m rooting for them.” Barry starts with a forced smile that shifts into a genuine one. “Anyway, Joe was wondering if you wanted to come help decorate the tree at his place? Iris is going to be making Grandma Esther’s eggnog - with lots of bourbon - and we’re gonna have Christmas movies playing, it’s gonna be lots of fun.”

Len smiles with a shake of his head. “As fun as that all sounds, I’m a little too Jewish for the Christmas festivities.”

“Oh! I didn’t know that, Happy Hanukkah then. We could get a menorah too.”

“I’m good, go. It’s Joe’s turn to watch you anyway.”

Barry mock scoffs as he slips his shoes on. “You make me sound like some unhouse trained puppy.” He grumbles.

Len crosses his arms. “I think you’ll get over it. Now get going or you’re going to be late, again.”

Barry looks at his watch. “Shoot! You’re right.” He fumbles to unlock the door. He then gestures to the apartment as a whole. “I swear I’ll clean all this up later! See ya, Len!” He leaves in a gust of wind.

Len shakes his head and begins to pick up. “He’s never gonna clean this up.”

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The next morning Len gets a text from Joe to get down to S.T.A.R. Labs ASAP. He forgoes the goggles and parka for his leather jacket, but still takes his cold gun (no matter what Cisco says, it’s definitely his now). The whole gang is gathered in the cortex by the time he arrives. Caitlin and Dr. Wells are sitting behind the control panel, which Cisco is leaning against, and Barry is sitting in an office chair next to Joe who’s leading the discussion. Len makes a beeline for a somber looking Barry. He puts a comforting hand on Barry’s shoulder and turns to Joe.

“What happened?” He demands.
“As I was explaining, Barry and I were at a crime scene this morning at Mercury Labs. The witness at the scene described seeing a yellow blur.”


Cisco speaks up next. “Then we need to get cracking and stop this speed psycho.” He glances embarrassed at Len and Barry, and put a candy cane in his mouth. “That, I wasn’t trying to give him a name.” He stutters.

“The crime scene at Mercury Labs was on a floor with highly secured vaults and the witness says he was looking for something.” Barry summarizes.

Wells leans forward. “Whatever he wanted, he wanted it badly enough to kill for it.”

Joe asks Wells what he knows about Mercury Labs and Len checks out of the conversation in favor of checking on Barry. He rubs his thumb back and forth on his shoulder, where his hand’s been resting since he got here.

“You alright, Kid?” He whispers.

Barry startles and looks up. “Yeah, I uh, I’m fine.”

Len can spot the lie a mile away, but decides to let it pass for now. Barry obviously doesn’t want to talk about it, and definitely not in front of an audience too. He pats him on the shoulder and crosses his arms. “If you say so.”

Len stays silent as he listens to Wells explain tachyon particles, for once just as lost as Joe. Barry proposes to set a trap with this tachyon prototype and everyone agrees to it. Wells gives Cisco and Caitlin their jobs and the three of them head down to the lower levels of the lab.

Barry gets up too. “I better get back to the station, I have a report for Singh due in an hour.” With that he speeds out, leaving Joe and Len alone.
“Walk out with me?” Joe asks and Len nods, wanting to talk with Joe too, just away from S.T.A.R. Labs.

The two walk out of the building in silence, but Len speaks the second they’re out the doors. “I don’t like this. Wells was the first one to bring up tachyons, and now we’re setting up this whole trap around them.”

“You noticed that too?” The two stop in front of Joe’s car and the man sighs. “Look, I’m gettin’ a real bad feelin’ about this too, but until we have the full picture, we should just play nice with Wells for the time being.”

“Fine.” Len drawls. “But I don’t want Barry anywhere near this trap.”

Joe opens his door and leans rests his arm against it and the roof to his car. “I was already planning on him being as far as possible from it. Any luck finding any dirt on Wells?”

“My contact has a lead, a former employee of S.T.A.R. Labs that got fired shortly before the accelerator got turned on. We’re still working on his exact whereabouts, but we should have a location in a week or so.”

Joe nods. “Good. I need to get back to the station to see if I could get a warrant for the,” Joe waves his hand in the air. “Whatever it was called.”

Len smirks. “The tachyon prototype?”

“Yeah, that thing.” Joe shakes his head. “Man, I did not sign up for all this science technobabble.”

Len scoffs. “You’re talking to the guy that dropped out of high school here. All this sci-fi shit goes way over my head. Math, blueprints, mechanics, all that I get like this,” Len snaps his fingers. “This level of science on the other hand, should stay in the movies where it belongs.”

“Amen to that.” Joe slides into his car and rolls down the window. “Good luck, and please stay out of trouble.”
Len salutes with two fingers. “Yes, sir.” Joe shakes his head and rolls up the window.

Later that night, Len is on the phone with Mick at his apartment. “What’d you find out so far?”

“Got a name, Hartley Rathaway. Parents disowned ‘im ‘bout two years ago after he came out, homophobic pricks. Since then he was hired as Harrison Wells’ right hand man ‘til ‘bout a week before they turned that machine on. He was fired, the official reason was ‘cause he was ‘trying to sell trade secrets’.”

Len scoffs. “That’s a load of bull. Why would someone with everything to lose and nothing to gain betray his idol like that. No, he learned something he shouldn’t have, and got discredited because of it. Good job, Mick.” Just then Barry burst in, still in the same clothes as this morning and bleeding all over the place.

Mick heard the commotion on his end. “What was that, Boss? You alright?”

“Yeah Mick, I’m fine. Listen, I gotta go, I’ll talk to you later.” He flips the phone shut without listening to the reply and rushes over to his son. “Barry?! Are you alright, what happened?”

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“Screw destiny. I promise, he is never going to hurt you again, not on my life.”

Barry tightens his grip. “No… This monster already took my Mom and Dad from me. I can’t lose my other Dad, not when I’m just starting to get to know you.”

Len hesitates for a moment at being called Dad, but shakes himself out of it quickly and buries his face in Barry’s hair. “Okay. I promise he is never going to get to any of us. Not you, me, Joe, Iris; he’s not going to hurt anyone ever again.”

“Promise?”

“I promise.” Len vows. He gives his son one last gentle squeeze, cautious of Barry’s injuries. He leans back and gets a better look at Barry’s face. Barry sniffs and wipes the tears from his eyes. “We should get you to Caitlin, have her check out these injuries and make sure there’s nothing too serious.” Len takes Barry’s chin to angle his face to get a better look at the cut above his eye. He makes a mental note that it seems to be the one that’s bleeding the worse and hopes that’s just because it’s a head wound.

“No!” Barry shoots out. “I mean- I don’t- I just-” Barry starts working himself up again.

Len rubs his hands up and down Barry’s arms. “Alright, it’s fine.” He calmly says, reminding him of when he would calm Lisa down when she had nightmares as a child. “Let’s just get you cleaned up and get some food in you, get you a change of clothes, then we’ll call Joe and meet him at S.T.A.R. Labs. That sound good to you?”

“Yeah.” Barry croaks.

“Okay. Can you stand or do you need help to the kitchen?”

Barry gets up on his own, Len hovering in case he falls. “I’m good.” Len leads him to the kitchen and pats on the island.

“Sit up here and I’ll get a warm washcloth to clean these cuts.” Barry nods, not trusting himself to speak, and does as he’s told slowly. By the time he gets settled on the counter Len has returned with a washcloth. He starts at the cut above the eye and dabs away. Barry winces and he pulls back. “Sorry.” He goes back to work, more gently this time.
“It’s fine.” Barry pauses. “You know, my mom used to do this for me all the time. That’s why Dad always calls me Slugger.”

“Oh yeah? Then that’s something else we have in common.” Len finishes with the cut above his eye.

“You were bullied?” Barry asks disbelievingly.

Len starts working on the split lip. “Yup. I was a scrappy, little punk whose old man was in prison for being a crooked cop. Parents would talk, kids would overhear, and I’m guessing I don’t need to tell you how cruel kids could be.” Len finishes with a wistful smile. “Those five years he was in prison, and it was just my mom and I were still the best. It was the only time I remember where there was no alcohol in the house. It was also the only time I remember her smiling.” Len gets lost in a memory. He shakes himself out of it. “Anyway, you should go get changed. I’ll whip something up real quick.”

Barry nods and slips down, wincing while he holds his side. “You’re still gonna have Caitlin check you out when we get there.” Barry waves back that he heard as he limps to his room, favoring his left leg. Barry takes his time as he changes and the food is ready by the time he finishes. He changed to some grey sweats, a S.T.A.R. Labs t-shirt, and a black hoodie with the Central City’s hockey team’s logo on it that Len is almost positive used to be his and has since found its way into Barry’s mess of a room. His limp has lessened already, but he still gingerly sits at the bar on the island.

“Mac ‘n cheese?” He asks with a slight smile.

Len scoops out a small bowl for himself from the pot between them. “Don’t get too excited, it’s just Easy Mac.” He then goes to the fridge and pulls out a bottle of ketchup.

“Really? And you call me a kid?”

Len pours a healthy helping on and sets the bottle in front of Barry. “My mom and I didn’t have much money, and whatever extra we had went to dear old dad’s commissary.” He starts mixing it in. “I used to steal pocket fulls of the packets during school lunch and at Big Belly Burgers to take home, and I would put it on almost everything.” Still standing, he leans the arm not holding the fork against the counter top and takes a bite. He winks. “Don’t knock it ‘til you try it, Kid.”

Barry squirts a little bit in his bowl and takes a tiny bite, face still skeptical. After a moment of
consideration, Barry reaches for the bottle again and dumps more on his man ‘n cheese. Len’s smirk widens. “Shut up.” Barry says with a mouthful.

“I didn’t say anything.” Len grins and Barry matches it.

Barry called Joe on the way to S.T.A.R. Labs. While waiting for Joe to get there, Caitlin did a quick check over Barry. She didn’t see any permanent damage, just some bruising that has already gone down quite a bit. Dr. Wells replaced Caitlin in the cortex and Joe showed up about ten minutes later. Len stayed by Barry’s side the entire time as his son retold the events to Joe and Wells. Len can sense that Barry is starting to panic again as his speech gets faster so he puts a calming hand on the back of Barry’s neck. He feels the tension ease in Barry’s shoulders and the kid closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, starting over. “So how do we catch this guy that even I can’t keep up with?”

Joe sends him a grateful smile for calming Barry down, while Wells didn’t even seem to notice Barry’s emotional state, too busy cleaning his glasses on his shirt. “The beautiful thing about force fields, Mr. Allen, is that they’re impervious to speed. Now, we’re almost finished fabricating the trap. All that remains,” At this he turns to Joe. “Is for Detective West to procure the bait.”

Joe and Len share a look. “I’m on it.” He turns to do that now and Barry follows. “Barry, why don’t you stay here.”

“No, Joe, today is not the day to tell me to stay behind.” Joe stops as Barry continues ahead. He looks back at Len - Wells having already rolled off to a computer - and shrugs. Len shrugs back with a small smile and a ‘what can you do?’ look.

Len came back to S.T.A.R. Labs later, fully decked out as Captain Cold. Joe and Dr. Wells are talking, and Joe breaks away the second he sees him. “You might wanna keep that whole getup on.”

He squints behind the goggles. “Why?”

“Eddie got a task force to be a part of this trap. I tried to talk him out of it, but he threaten to go to Singh.”
Len sighs. “Fine. At least thanks to Iris Captain Cold is seen on the side of the angels.”

Joe scoffs. “What is with you and Barry referring to yourselves in the third person?”

Len shrugs with a smirk. “It’s a gift.” He drops his smirk as he gets serious. “And speaking of the kid, I still don’t think he should be apart of this.”

Dr. Wells adjusts his glasses. “I believe that this is one of those rare instances that all three of us seem to be in agreement over the young Mr. Allen. Before you arrived, the Detective and I were just saying the same thing.”

Before Joe or Len could reply Barry arrives along with Cisco. As Cisco pulls up video feed of the trap with the tachyon prototype sitting as bait, Barry stands next to Len. “Dad.” He greets him.

Pride wells in Len’s chest and a smile tugs on the corner of his mouth. “Hey, Kiddo.” He pats him on the shoulder.

“The tachyon prototype is all ready to go Dr. Wells,” Cisco says.

Barry crosses his arms. “You think it’ll work?”

Cisco continues to study the screen. “It’ll work.” He confirms. He then turns and leaves the room to go check on something.

Barry leans forward on the back of a chair. “So how do we advertise to him that the prototype is here?” He asks, looking to Wells. Len and Joe turn to the scientist, wondering the same thing.

He leans back and crosses his arms. “We’ll take care of that.”

Barry looks between the three of them and after too long a silence starts to get suspicious. “What’s the problem?”
Wells pointedly looks at Len and Joe, expecting them to break the news to him. Joe sighs. “Look, Barry…”

Joe trails off and Len rolls his eyes - luckily no one sees the action behind the goggles. “The three of us don’t want you anywhere near this trap when we spring it.” Len puts it bluntly.

It hurts Len to see Barry give him a betrayed look. “What are you talking about?”

Joe steps in. “Barr, you’re too close to this.”

Barry turns the look on him. “Well, maybe you’re not close enough! If you hadn’t been too scared and warned me that he was here weeks ago, I could have been prepared for this!”

“That’s enough!” Len raises his voice. “Joe did his best given the circumstances. This monster had threatened Iris. If our roles were reversed I would have made the same call he did.”

Barry sends him an icy glare. “But he stabbed my mother through the heart and sent my father to prison for it. This is my fight.”

Joe shook his head. “Not today, son.”

Len goes to put a reassuring hand on his son’s shoulder. “Kiddo, I’m sor.” Barry smacks his hand away before it could connect.

Barry huffs and shakes his head, giving up. He snatches his coat up from a chair and marches past Len, bumping him on the way. “Thanks for nothing, Len.” He mutters under his breath.

After Barry is gone Len visibly closes in on himself. The hand that got smacked away was left poised in the air for a moment, then snatched back to himself.

Joe looks at him in sympathy. “Len, you alright son?”

Len takes a deep breath with his eyes closed. When he opens his eyes all emotion has left his face.
“I’m fine.” He snarls. “Let’s just get this damn thing done with.”

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Len goes off to a corner of the cortex to get out of the way of the geek squad as they finish the last minute adjustments for the trap. The last conversion he had with Barry just keeps replaying in his head. He vaguely notices that Thawne enters the lab wearing a bulletproof vest with a group of other officers. Pretty boy starts pointing in his direction and yelling, but Joe blocks Thawne from going near him and starts talking in hushed voices. Finally Thawne seems to have given up and settles for just glaring at him. He just glares back until Joe walks up to him and blocks his view.

Joe crosses his arms. “You done?”

Len mirrors him. “He started it.”

“And I’m endin’ this.” He then lowers his voice. “Look, I know you’re upset about your fight with Barry, but I need to know if your head is in this. If it’s not, that’s fine. You’ve been lookin’ into this just as long as Barry, you were close with Nora and Henry before; if you’re too close to this as well—”

“I said I’m fine!” Len snaps. Thawne looks up sharply at them, hand on his gun, and Joe waves him off. “I’m sorry.” Len lowers his voice. “Just- please, I need to do this.”

Joe thinks about it then nods. He points at Len. “Do not make me regret this.”

Len nods and the two join everyone else at the control panel, surrounding Dr. Wells and Cisco. Len and Thawne completely ignore each other, standing on opposite sides of Joe.

“Sending out a pulse in three, two, one.” Cisco says as he clacks away at the computer. They all watch the monitor intently, waiting for The Man in Yellow to appear. Len has a tight grip on his holstered cold gun. Nothing happens. “Sending out another pulse.” Cisco tries again. They watch the monitor and nothing happens again.

Thawne gets impatient. “Are you certain this trap will work?”
“I’ve sent out at least three charges. If anyone is looking for tachyonic particles, they’ll know we have them.” Cisco explains.

They wait a couple more seconds, then it happens. The Man in Yellow flashes on the screen in red lightning just like how Barry described it. The speedster is trapped, zipping around the fish bowl like area. Thawne and his group rush ahead, Caitlin and Cisco hanging back in the cortex to monitor things from there.

“You okay?” Joe mummers to Len as they all make their way down to the lower lab.

“Peachy. Probably just jumpy.” He mummers back. Joe nods, accepting the excuse. They make the rest of the way in silence.

The whole group, including Dr. Wells, empties out of the freight elevator, all guns drawn on the yellow figure in the trap. It’s dark in the room with flashing lights periodically. Everyone spreads out and Wells rolls forward.

“Cisco, lights!” Wells calls out.

Cisco’s voice comes on overhead. “Right away, Dr. Wells.”

The lights come on and Len sees the monster that killed Nora fourteen years ago. He wears a suit like Barry’s only it’s yellow, and he’s vibrating his face so no one can get too well a look. His eyes glow a menacing red color. Len tightens his grip on his gun.

“Detective Thawne?” Wells asks, eyes never leaving the speedster. “Would you like to read him his rights?”

Joe lowers his gun and steps forward. Thawne glances between Joe and the figure. “Joe, what are you doing?!”

Len steps forward too, although he keeps his gun raised. Joe mutters a response to Thawne, but he doesn’t listen, blood pounding in his ears. “Nora Allen! Do you remember that name?! Fourteen years ago, you stabbed her through the heart and got her husband sent to prison for it! They were both good people, and even better parents! I only have one question, why?!’’ Len demands.
The figure ignores Len and takes a step forward, looking right at Wells. “Dr. Wells, we meet at last.” The figure says in a distorted voice, similar to what Barry does with his vocal cords.

Wells rolls forward. “What do you want with the tachyonic particles?”

The two continue to talk back and forth, completely ignoring everyone else in the room.

“...Some would say I’m the reverse.” The figure finishes, when Caitlin’s voice comes on overhead.

“Dr. Wells, evacuate! Get out of there now! Dr. Wells!” Just then the figure speeds through the barrier and grabs Dr. Wells, taking him inside the containment area. He starts beating up Wells, all of them watching on helplessly.

“Cisco!” Joe calls out. “Turn off the barrier!”

“If I turn it off, that thing’s gonna get out.”

“Cisco, he’s gonna kill Wells!”

Len has enough of this. He holsters his gun, grabs the largest wrench on the tool chest, and starts to smash the machine powering the barrier. As the barrier shuts down, the speedster’s attention goes away from Wells and to the tachyon prototype. In the blink of an eye it’s gone and Wells is left on the ground bleeding.

“Where’d he go?!” Thawne yells, looking all around. He hears a noise and everyone turns their guns to the figure standing in front of the closed elevator doors. “Don’t move, or we will shoot!”

In no time at all, all the officers are on the ground dead, and the figure stops in front of Thawne, knocking his gun to the ground. Len takes his chance and shoots a beam of ice. He speeds out of the way before the shot can connect, pushing Thawne to the ground, and goes to Len, now knocking his gun down and ripping off his hood and goggles. He holds him up by his neck. “It’s not nice to play with toys that aren’t yours, Leonard Snart.” He then raises his hand and starts to vibrate it. “I thinks it’s time you had a time out.”
Barry’s going over old case files in his lab when he gets a text. He checks it and panics when he sees it’s from Caitlin sending him an SOS. He gets into his spare suit he keeps in his locker and races to S.T.A.R. Labs. When he gets there, he finds a group of officers dead on the floor, Eddie on the ground, but conscious and breathing, and Len being held up by his neck. The Man in Yellow’s other hand is vibrating that it looks fast even from Barry’s perspective. It starts moving towards his dad’s chest and Barry screams. He moves as fast as he can, and grabs The Man in Yellow, taking him as far from his dad as possible.

The two speedsters are propelled into the air, breaking through a skylight, and end up outside the lab, fighting the whole time in the air. They land and from the corner of his eye he sees Cisco and Caitlin run outside. Barry is pushed into the hood of a car and he screams from the pain. The evil speedster goes for his friends so he gets up and stops him from reaching them. He’s thrown to the ground and he flashes in front of him before he even gets the chance to get up. He’s punched in the gut and thrown to the ground again. He gets up on one knee and throws a punch, only to have his hand grabbed mid swing and have it snapped back. He gets an uppercut to the face and then his cowl is ripped off.

Barry faintly hears Caitlin calling out his name when he feels a burst of heat and then suddenly The Man in Yellow is gone. He looks back and sees a man with raggy, dirty hair literally on fire.

Barry lays on the ground defenseless, watching The Man in Yellow climb to his feet. “Our race is not yet done. See you soon, Flash.” The Man in Yellow speeds off in a flash of red, and Barry can finally breath. Everything next happens in a blur, Cisco runs up to him while Caitlin goes to the burning man. He thinks he hears Caitlin call him Ronnie, but all he can focus on is his dad, Joe, and Eddie. He asks Cisco about them.

“They’re fine, dude. The question is, are you? You just had your ass handed to you by tall, dark, and freaky back there.”

Barry waves off Cisco’s help as he climbs to his feet. “I’m fine, I just need to see that my dad and Joe are okay.”

At that, the doors to S.T.A.R. Labs burst open, and an out of breath Len appears.

“Dad!” In a burst of speed, Barry tackles his dad - luckily the two stay standing - and Len drops his
cold gun to the ground to wrap his arms around his son.

“Come on, man! Stop throwing that to the ground!” Cisco yells half heartedly in the background.

One hand grips the back of Barry’s head as he holds him close and he uses the other to flip Cisco off. “Oh, kiddo.” He pulls back and frames his hands around Barry’s face, studying every inch of him. “Don’t ever scare me like that again.”

Barry leans into the touch and holds onto Len’s wrists. “I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have stormed out like that, I know you and Joe were just doing what you guys thought was right.”

Len shakes his head. “No, I’m sorry. You were right, you shoulda been there. If you hadn’t shown up when you did…” Len trails off when it hits him how close he really was to dying tonight. Barry pulls him back into a hug and grips the back of his parka.

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The next morning Len is woken at dawn by the sun in his face and a stiff back. He sits up on the unfamiliar couch and stretches, his back popping into place. His eyes are stinging and he realizes that he forgot to take his contacts out before falling asleep. He pulls out a white case from his pocket to put his contacts in and replaces them with his glasses from his other pocket. They have thick, black frames and Barry has named them his ‘nerd glasses’. He looks at his watch and sees it’s only six-thirty in the morning. Around two last night Barry urged him to stay at Joe’s, wanting both him and Joe under the same roof as him for the night incase The Man in Yellow came back. He groans softly as he gets up and folds the blanket he had been using, then drapes it over the back of the couch. Still remembering his way around from Thanksgiving, he heads to the kitchen and gets a pot of coffee started.

About an hour later both Barry and Joe make their way down the stairs, showered and fully dressed for work. Barry leaves Joe’s side and glues himself to Len’s, whose leaning against the counter reading the paper.

Joe pours two cups of coffee and hands one to Barry. He spots the glasses right away and snorts. “Nice specks there.”

Len folds the paper, setting on the counter behind him, and adjusts the frames. “Fell asleep with my contacts in last night. It was either wear them, or be endlessly be squinting at things all day. On a
different note, should a speedster really be drinking that much caffeine?” Len teases. Barry gives him the stink eye.

He chuckles as the doorbell rings and Joe goes to get it, while Len starts talking quietly with Barry. Joe comes into the kitchen with Thawne on his heel.

Barry chokes on his coffee. “Eddie! What uh, what are you doing here?”

Thawne has a stern look as he glares at Len. He crosses his arms. “I think the better question is, what is he doing here?”

Len tenses and returns Thawne’s glare. Joe plays referee between the two again. “Alright, this is gonna be a long discussion, so why don’t we get comfortable during it.” He ushers everyone out to the dining room table. Barry and Len sit on the far side of the table, Thawne opposite of them, and Joe sits at the head of the table.

Barry bites his lower lip as he glances back and forth between to two stone-faced men.

Thawne asks the first question. “Why were you at S.T.A.R. Labs as Captain Cold last night?”

“To help capture that speedster in yellow. Cold beats speed.” Len shoots back.

“But why does Leonard Snart, international thief, care about capturing this guy, and why were you asking all those questions about Barry’s parents?”

“Well, aren’t you just a curious bee.” Len deflects.

Joe sighs. “Len, quit playing games. We’ve all been up most of the night and it’s too damn early for this.”

“Fine. Barry here is my son. That straight enough for you?”

Thawne is making a great impression of a fish and seems to be at a loss for words. “Wha- Since
Len and Barry spoke at the same time. They share a grin and Joe rolls his eyes. “Oh hell no. I need more coffee if you two are gonna be like this.” Joe leaves for the kitchen as Len explains in detail why Nora and Henry Allen had Barry in the first place. Joe returns mid story with two mugs and sets one right in front of Thawne. “I think you two broke him.” Joe whispers to Barry.

Barry stifles a laugh in his coffee mug. “Not my fault my life is turning into a soap opera.”

Len finishes off the story. The three sit silently and wait to see what Thawne’s reaction is going to be.

“So you three,” Thawne gestures to them with a wave of a hand. “Have been keeping this a secret for months.” He summarizes. He turns to Joe. “After all the crap you put me through for dating Iris, you just decide to be all chummy with this criminal?”

Barry’s head shoots up at that. “Hey, he’s not just some criminal, he’s my dad too! And you’re one to talk, you kept the fact you were dating Iris from Joe for almost a year.”

Everyone stares in shock at Barry’s outburst, Thawne especially as he’s never faced Barry’s wrath first-hand.

Joe shakes off the shock first. “Barr’s got a point, I guess you could call us even then. And for the record, we’re not chummy in the least bit.”

“Call it, we tolerate each other for the sake of Barry. We got shared custody of the kid here, so we remain civil for him.” Len adds. Barry rolls his eyes at the wording, but doesn’t comment.

“Are you going to tell Captain Singh about this?” Barry finally asks the main question.
Thawne sighs. “Wow, uh, this is a lot to take in. Not just you two, but those superpowered people out there like The Flash. What did you call them again?”

“Metahumans.” Joe answers. “And there are a lot more of them out there, we’re just lucky that The Flash is on our side. He’s a hero.”

Barry ducks his head and hides his grin from Thawne, him still being in the dark about that part of Barry. “The same could be said for Captain Cold too.” Barry teases and Len groans.

“Anti-hero .” Len corrects. “But this conversion is derailing. So what’s your answer, Thawne? You in?”

Thawne shifts in his seat and studies his mug. “I don’t know. I have to sleep on this. What I can tell you all for certain is that whatever I choose, I’ll make sure to warn you first.” Thawne promises.

Joe nods. “That’s all we ask for.”

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The last couple days had been tense for Barry. Eddie still hasn’t made a decision yet and he was giving no indication which way he was leaning toward. Tonight was the night of a little holiday get together that Joe has had planned at his place for the past week now. Barry was at Len’s trying to convince him to come.

“Come on, please? Joe said you were invited now that Eddie is in the know about you, and it would mean a lot to me if you came.” Barry had been following Len around the apartment since he got off work, and is currently begging in the laundry room at the end of the hall.

Len sighs as he lifts the basket of clean clothes and carries it to his room next to the laundry room. Barry, his little shadow of the day, follows him into the room as expected. “If you’re gonna be following me, make yourself useful and put away the clothes after I fold them.” He says as he dumps the basket out on his bed. “Has Thawne given you an answer on whether he’s going to tell your boss?” Len asks as he hands Barry a folded shirt.

Barry takes his turn to sigh. “No, not yet.” He puts the shirt in the dresser.
“Then don’t you think me showing my face might make him lean away from the desired option?” Len raises an eyebrow.

“Or, he would get to know you and realize that your not that bad a guy?”

Len snorts and sets down a pair of pants. “Ever the optimist, aren’t you.” He takes a deep breath. “You really want me to go that bad?”

“Yes! I really do. If it helps, Iris will be on your side. Maybe not mine, but yours for sure.” Barry mutters the last part as he flops on the bed, laundry forgotten.

Len finishes putting away the last of the laundry himself. “Why?” He asks suspiciously. “What did you do?”

“I, may have, told her I loved her.”

Len sighs. “Oh, kiddo.” He sits down against the headboard next to Barry. “What did she say?”

“That’s just it, she, uh, didn’t say anything. You see, she’s moving in with Eddie now, and I get that I’m too late, I just don’t know where we stand now.”

“Does she know that you get that you’re too late? She might expect that you want her to break up with Thawne.”

“I don’t know. I don’t know how to tell her that without it getting weird, or weirder than it already is.”

“Just tell her that you’re happy for her that she’s moving in with her boyfriend.” Len groans. “I know I’m gonna regret this, but fine. I’ll go to this thing at Joe’s if it’ll make you happy.”

Barry brightens up. “Really?! Awesome! I’ll go text Joe to let him know.” Barry runs to the bedroom door, at normal speed - Len has forbidden him from using his speed in the apartment unless it was an
emergency - but stops to turn around in the doorway with a grin. “Thanks Dad. This really does mean a lot to me.”

Barry leaves and Len leans his head back with his eyes closed, already feeling a headache coming on.

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Barry and Len walk right into Joe’s house. Cisco and Caitlin are sitting on the couch. Caitlin turned around while Cisco just leans up and looks upside down at them. Joe is setting a bowl of eggnog on the dining table, must be the famous Grandma Esther’s eggnog, and Iris is in Thawne’s lap in an armchair that’s in the corner of the room. Everyone smiles in greeting, Thawne’s being the most forced when he spots Len behind Barry.

Barry looks around. “Where’s Dr. Wells?”

Caitlin stands up. “He wasn’t really feeling up to celebrating, but he sends his regards.”

Barry nods in understanding. After that Caitlin and Cisco head off to the dining room table where food is laid out in a buffet style, sensing the tension in the room between Thawne and Len. Len goes right to the couch and sits down in front of Thawne and Iris. Barry follows and sits on the arm of the couch. Joe comes into the living room with his arms crossed. Iris gives Len a small smile in greeting, but doesn’t meet Barry’s eyes.

“Well? Have you come to a decision, Thawne?”

Thawne glances around the room at everyone, finishing off with Iris. She gestures with her head at Len and Thawne sighs. “After thinking it over, and talking with Iris, I’ve decided that I won’t say anything to Captain Singh, about you and Barry, or about you being Captain Cold.” Barry and Joe visibly relax. “Just so you know, I’m not doing this for you. I’m doing it for Barry. Iris told me how much he cares about you, and it wouldn’t be fair for him to get in trouble, and possibly lose his job, just because he’s related to you.”

Len nods. “Thank you. I didn’t expect anything more.” Len pats Barry on the knee as he gets up. “I’m gonna go check out this eggnog I’ve been hearing so much about.” Joe follows him to the dining room, being able to tell that Barry needed a moment alone with the couple.
He takes a sip of the eggnog and almost chokes. “Wow, Barry wasn’t kidding about the bourbon.”

Joe holds up his cup in honor of Grandma Esther. “Grandma Esther never joked about her eggnog.”

Cisco, who was standing nearby, laughs then drops it. “Hey, Joe, Len?” Joe hums that he was listening and Len nods for him to go on. “I saw something weird the other night.”

“I hate to break it to you, but we all saw something weird the other night.” Len drawls, already feeling the eggnog affect him.

Cisco frowns. “No, I mean, when The Flash and The Man in Yellow were going full on bumper cars on each other I was watching the electricity coming off of them. Yellow and red electricity.”

Joe still looks confused, but Len was catching on. “Barry had said when he was a kid, he saw yellow and red electricity the night Nora was killed.”

Joe finally caught on. “There were two of them.”

Cisco points at them. “Exactly. The Man in Yellow may have killed Barry’s mother, but he wasn’t the only speedster there that night.”

Iris calls in from the other room. “Dad, it’s time!”

Joe sets down his cup. Len looks down right confused. “Time?”

Barry remembers something and yells for Joe to wait a minute. He runs upstairs, at normal speed again, and comes back down with something hidden behind his back. “Alright Joe, we can start.” Joe puts a christmas star up on the tree and Cisco pumps his hands in the air. Barry edges around the room to Joe, making sure Len can’t see what’s hidden. “And, like I promised, I got you this since you don’t celebrate Christmas.” Barry pulls a menorah out from behind his back. “Happy Hanukkah, Dad!”

Len feels himself smile genuinely. He ducks his head down and blames the slight blush on face from the eggnog. “Thanks, Kid. This means a lot.”
Barry displays the menorah up on the mantle and goes to his dad’s side. “I’m glad you came.” Barry says quietly so they’re not overheard.

Len slings an arm around Barry’s shoulders, not usually one to initiate contact, but now on the little bit than more tipsy side of the scale. “You know, I am too.”

Chapter End Notes

This was one of the best times I ever had writing this chapter, and the next one is even better. Mick enters in the next chapter. (for realsy now, like meeting Barry and everything)

As always, my tumblr is badwoldchild. I post arrowverse mostly (coldatom, coldflash, really anything Len related) with a mix of other tv shows I watch.
**Enter Hailstorm (Revenge of the Rogues)**

Chapter Notes

So super long chapter. Mick is super fun to write.

Next weeks chapter will still be posted on Monday no matter what, it just might be a little later in the day than normal. I'm doing coldatom week and it's taking a ton of my time up. (shameless self promo)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“So, you might not want to go out as Captain Cold for a while.” Barry walks into Len’s apartment one evening. He toes his shoes off at the door, drops his keys and lanyard off on the coffee table, and tosses his messenger bag and coat down next to the couch where he collapses and puts his feet up on the coffee table.

Len strolls out of the kitchen, wiping his hands on a dish rag. “Well, hello to you to. Care to elaborate on why that is?”

Barry puts his hands behind his head. “The CCPD have Captain Cold as an official person of interest in an attempted grand larceny last night at around ten pm.”

“Considering Cisco had us do that ridiculous movie night last night at S.T.A.R. Labs until around one in the morning, it couldn’t have been me. Even I can’t be in two places at once.”

Barry leans forward and rests his arms on his knees. “I know that, and Joe knows that, but we can’t really say why we know that.”

Len shifts. “Why does CCPD think I’m a part of this anyway? I thought Cold was chill with them.”

Barry chooses not to comment on the obvious cold pun. “Whoever broke in used something to freeze the steel door cold enough that it would shatter like glass when rammed into with enough force, most likely a car. The only thing the detectives think of when they hear that.”

“Is my cold gun.” Len finishes Barry’s sentence. “Was anything taken? You said it was an attempt.”
Barry shakes his and leans back again. “Nope. We think it was someone trying to call me out, The Flash that is.”

“And what are you going to do when they try again?”

Barry shrugs. “Nothing. My presence will just escalate things. If I don’t do anything and let them get bored, they’ll just quit. Plus, I need to focus on getting faster right now. It’s just a matter of priorities.”

Len tilts his head in confusion at Barry’s out of character behavior. “And if they don’t just quit? What if this person escalates things even further because you won’t pay any attention to them?”

Barry throws his head back and sighs. “There’s nothing to worry about. Cisco is going to be helping out CCPD and hook them up with some gear that can hold up against even the cold gun. Everything will be fine.” Barry gets up and pulls his coat back on. “I’m just gonna go for a run for a couple hours. Don’t wait up.”

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After Barry left, Len called Joe and asked if he would come to his place to talk. Fifteen minutes later, Len is letting the other man in and leading him to the kitchen.

“Did Barr tell you about the scene we were called to last night?”

Len leans against the counter and crosses his arms. “That someone is running around and giving my alter ego a bad name? Yeah, but I’m not too worried about that. What has me concerned is how nonchalant the kid was about the whole thing.”

Joe’s head shoots up. “He give you that speil about priorities too?”

Len simply nods. “Didn’t sound like him. Sounded a whole lot more like something Wells would say though.”

Joe leans his hip against the counter and nods. “I agree with that. You still think he's up to
"Yes… but the question is what? As much as it pains me to say it, he can't be the Man in Yellow. He was with us the whole time we had him trapped, even got beat up during the escape, so what is Harrison Wells hiding?"

“That buddy of yours find out any more about that former employee?”

“We got a name, but that’s about it. Hartley Rathaway. He’s good at hiding though, every time we think we know where he is, he vanishes. We’ll nail him down eventually, it’s only a matter of time.”

Joe nods and raps his knuckle on the counter. “Good, I’ll do a search of his name at work tomorrow too. Also, I think Cisco wants to meet you at S.T.A.R. Labs, something about testing new shields against a weapon like the cold gun.” Joe starts heading to the door. “I gotta get goin’ now, talk to ya later?”

Len nods and hears the door click shut. He sighs and starts to put away the food, having lost his appetite. He might as well head to S.T.A.R. now. He leaves the leftovers in the fridge, knowing Barry will be hungry after his run, and heads out to the labs with his cold gun.

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Len creeps into his apartment much later that night. He stumbles on Barry’s tennis shoes that were discarded at the entrance and swears under his breath. After he closes and locks the door, he feels the hairs on the back of his neck stand on end. He pulls out his cold gun, turns on the light, and spins around, cold gun buzzing as it comes to life. His shoulders drop when he just finds Mick lounging on his couch with a beer.

“Shit, I almost shot you, you know that?” He whispers harshly as he sets his gun down on the counter.

Mick shrugs and takes a swig of the beer. “Not the first time, prolly not the last, either.” He whispers back.

Len rolls his eyes. “What the hell are you doing here?”
“Needed a place to crash. Your couch was closest, so I thought I’d stop in, check ta see how you an’ the Cub were doin’.”

Len glances at his watch. “At two-thirty in the morning?”

Mick shrugs again. “You were up. Where were ya anyway? Not like you to stay out late.”

“I don’t see how that’s any of your business.” Len crosses his arms.

Mick rolls his eyes and sighs as he gets up. “Fine, be that way, you stubborn ass.” He goes to the kitchen to throw out his beer bottle. Len follows and sits at the island. “Here’s a question ya need ta answer, when was the last time you ate?” Len opens his mouth to answer, but Mick cuts him off. “And the crap you get in the frozen aisle don’t count.” Len closes his mouth and just glares. “That’s what I thought. And when was the last time ya ate somethin’ that’s green naturally.”

“Christmas dinner.” Len mutters.

“That was three weeks ago, dumbass!” Mick raises his voice above a whisper.

Len shushes him. “Barry’s sleeping, dumbass.”

“Well Barry’s awake now, so you might as well tell him why you’re arguing with a random guy at two-thirty in the kitchen.” A sleepy voice says from the hallway. Barry himself walks in, scrubbing at the back of his head and making his bedhead worse. He plops down in the seat at the bar next to his father.

“Really? A whispered conversation wakes you up, but the first five alarms you set in the morning don’t?”

Barry ignores him and looks the stranger in the kitchen up and down, taking in the burn scars on both arms. “How’d you get those scars?”
Len slaps Barry in the back of the head. “Barry, the man you are being rude to is my friend Mick Rory. Mick, the brat lacking in all brain-to-mouth filter in my son, Barry.”

Mick smirks. “Damn Cub, ya grew up. And the scars are from not listenin’ when I was told not to play with fire.”

Barry looks at Len and mouths the word Cub questioningly. “It’s a nickname he called you when you were a baby. At first it was Barr Cub, then he just shortened it to Cub.” Len elaborated.

“It’s also cause you were obsessed with that cartoon where the bear tries to steal picnic baskets.” Mick chimes in as he digs through the fridge.

“Yogi Bear. The irony was not lost on anyone.” Len fills in. “And obsessed is putting it mildly. If anyone so much as went near the tv when that was on, you would throw the mother of all tantrums.”

Barry snorts and pillows his head in his arms, falling asleep to the two men talking over him.

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Barry woke the next morning in his bed and a pounding on his door. “Come on, Kid! Gotta get up or you’ll be late.” Barry groans and speeds through getting dressed for the day. He stumbles out his door to come face to face with Len. He glares at Barry, knowing he broke the no superspeed rule, but couldn’t call him out on it due to Mick being in the other room and within hearing distance.

Barry walks through the living room to get to the kitchen and finds Mick laying across the couch with a beer. He eyes the beer. “So you preach about eating fresh vegetables, but drink a beer at eight in the morning? Isn’t that a little hypocritical?”

Mick looks away from, ironically, a cooking show, and to Barry. He just shrugs. “Least I eat my veggies. More than you an’ your old man.”

“Just give up, Kid.” Len appears behind Barry. “This is a battle I’ve been fighting - and losing - for the past thirty years.” Barry holds up his hands in surrender and continues on to the kitchen. Len turns to Mick - whose attention is back on the show - and walks in front of the tv with his arms crossed. “How long you planning on sticking around?”
Mick sits up and clicks the tv off, knowing he’s not going to be able to finish anytime soon. “Don’t know,” He shrugs. “When do you plan on dyin’ of scurvy?”

Barry sips on his coffee from the kitchen and watches the two. “I feel like this is something that’s been going on for a while now…”

“It is!” The two answer as they glare at each other.

“Alright then,” Barry grabs a power bar from his drawer. “I’m just going to eat this on my way to work, and let you two finish whatever this is.” He snatches his work stuff up that’s scattered throughout the apartment. “Bye Dad, nice meeting you Mick.” Barry waves on his way out.

“Bye, Kid.”

“See ya ’round, Cub.”

After Barry left Mick cracks a smile. “He’s a badge?”

Len sighs as he plops down next to Mick. “Yup. A CSI, probably the best in the city.”

“Not surprised, ‘specially if he got that brain of yours. He already has no filter like a certain punk I knew back in juvie.”

Len steals Mick’s beer. “Shut up.” Len gives a fond smile. “And he is so much smarter than me. Went to school and got a college degree.”

Mick gives a sardonic smile. “Aw, look who’s gettin’ all soft. When was the last time you stole somethin’ again?”

Len glares. “Your beer, two minutes ago.” He holds up the beer in question. Mick just raises his eyebrows at Len. “Fine, so I’ve been a little preoccupied for the past couple months.”
“You mean playin’ house with your long lost kid?”

“I mean that The Man in the Lightning is back.”

“Seriously? The one that killed Nora and got Doc Allen framed for it?”

“The very same. Tried to get me too.” Len brushes his neck at the memory.

“That why you been runnin’ ‘round playin’ hero as Captain Cold?”

Len’s head whips around. “How did you-” He shakes his head. “Of course you figured it out, you got a problem with it?”

Mick steals back his beer. “Naw. Someone’s gotta watch your kid’s back out there, might as well be you.”

“Barry’s not out there, he just processes the scenes later.” Len lies smoothly. Mick rolls his head to the side to give Len a look that he wasn’t buying it. “Fine, he’s The Flash. But how the hell did you figure that one out?”

“No one related ta you could get up an’ dressed that fast.”

Len curses. “Told that brat not to use his speed here.” He grumbles.

Mick barks a laugh. He pats Len’s shoulder as he gets up. “Breakin’ rules already, he must be your kid.”

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That night, the CCPD gets a nine-one-one call that someone with a cold gun is attacking Mr. and Mrs. Rathaway as they were departing their private jet with a multi million dollar painting. Joe, along with a dozen other officers, get to the scene in a couple minutes with the new shields that Cisco had designed with Len’s help at S.T.A.R. Labs the night before.
“Freeze!” Joe yells from behind the shield. Joe notices that the cold gun this guy has is much different from Len’s. Where Len’s is sleek and modern, this one is purple and looks like something from Tomorrowland at Disneyland. His brown hair is buzzed short on the right side and shoulder length everywhere else. He’s about Barry’s age and wearing a long trench coat and black jeans.

The Rathaways are ushered behind the police line, but this stranger doesn’t seem to care. “That should be my line!” A male voice calls out as he starts to fire at the officers. The shields held up and the man frowns. “Well this isn’t any fun, where’s The Flash? He sounds a lot more fun!” He fires again to no avail.

“Who the hell are you?! Cause you ain’t Captain Cold!” Joe yells between being shot at.

“Hmm.” He cocks his head as he thinks. “How about, Hailstorm! And you know what’s worse than a storm?! A forest fire!” As the officers close in with their shields up, Hailstorm pulls a yellow gun that’s slightly bulkier than his cold gun out from his trench coat and fires with his left hand. Flames erupt from the yellow gun.

“Fall back!” Joe orders. Some officers start screaming as the shields were only built to withstand the cold.

Hailstorm smirks. “It’s been fun fellas, but I need to get going. Places to be, people to rob, you know how it goes!” He fires the heat gun once more for cover, then makes a dash with the painting in the confusion.

~~~~~~

Len paces as he waits for Barry to get home. “Would ya sit down before ya wear a hole in the floor?” Mick complains from the kitchen.

Len stops pacing but continues to stand in the living room with his arms crossed. He glares at Mick’s back. “You saw that news report too. Barry could have stopped this Hailstorm if he hadn’t listened to Wells. Joe and Thawne were there, they could have been killed.”

Mick turns around and raises an eyebrow. “Since when have ya cared what happens to a badge?”
“Since they are important people in my son’s life. If they had gotten hurt, he would never forgive himself.”

Before Mick could reply, the door clicks open. Barry slinks in with his eyes cast downwards as he slowly removes his shoes. He looks up as he feels two sets of eyes watching him. “What?” He asks, put out.

“You know what, you should have been there tonight.” Len accuses Barry. Barry glances over at Mick. “He knows. Maybe if you used your speed to help Joe, instead of to get ready in the morning, he wouldn’t.” Len growls. “What the hell were you thinking?!” He finally explodes, waving his arms around. “I thought you wanted to use these powers to help people!”

“I do!” Barry yells back. “And you’re right! Is that what you want to hear?! I’m an idiot-”

“Yes, you are!” Len shoots back.

“Enough!” Mick yells over the other two. They go silent as they turn to Mick, who looks pissed. “You’re both idiots! Now sit!” He points at the two chairs at the island. “And listen!” They both glare as they do as they’re told and cross their arms. Mick lowers his voice back down to a normal level. “Leonard, quit bein’ an overbearin’ ass. He already knows he fucked up, so stop rubbin’ it in his face.” He turns to Barry. “Bartholomew,” Barry cringes at his full name. “You know ya screwed the pooch on this one, right?” Barry nods. “No more of that priorities bullshit that you spewed earlier?” Barry nods again. “Good. Now apologize to each other.”

They both mumble a sorry to the other.

“Alright, now eat.” He shoves two plates in front of them. They nibble at the salmon and peas with garlic butter that Mick made them. “I swear, both of ya are children. How I’m the adult here, I’ll never know…” Mick grumbles under his breath as he starts washing the pan by hand.

~~~~~~

Early the next morning, Len joined Barry to S.T.A.R. Labs. After everything with Wells, Len doesn’t trust him not to whisper in Barry’s ear to do something that’s against his son’s morals again. Len is lounging with his feet up to the right of Cisco as the genius studies how Hailstorm’s cold and heat gun work. Len still keeps half an ear on the conversation going on in the treadmill room.
“Must you really have your dirty combat boots up near me?” Cisco complains.

“Yup.” Len pops the p. He puts his feet down anyway and rolls closer, really studying the blueprints. “So my cold gun is stronger, yeah?”

“If by ‘stronger’ you mean it gets colder? Then yeah, my cold gun is stronger.”

Barry and Wells come into the room. “Can you guys have this fight again some other time?” Barry groans. He goes between Cisco and his dad, while Wells rolls up to the left of Cisco.

The other two drop the feud for now as Cisco pulls up the schematics for Hailstorm’s heat gun. “Similar to Hailstorm’s cold gun, his heat gun is also weaker. It heats up the air around it pretty hot, but not to absolute hot.”

“So, if my cold gun went against his heat gun, mine would win.” Len concludes.

“Well yeah, it would get rid of the heat gun, but his cold gun would still work and that’s the one that could hurt Barry the worst.”

Len waves his hand. “Don’t worry about that, I already have a plan for his cold gun.”

Barry’s phone rings and he turns away to answer. “You know,” Cisco continues. “For a guy who didn’t finish high school, you’re picking all this up pretty quick.”

Len shrugs with a smirk. “Kid had to get his brains from somewhere, and it certainly wasn’t his mother.” He mumbles the last part.

“About that, you’ve never said who -” Cisco gets cut off by Barry zipping out of the lab without a word. Cisco scrambles to grab the fly away papers. “Man, we really need to invest in paper weights.”

Len’s phone rings next. He checks it and sees it’s Joe. “You the reason Barry just ran out of here like a bat outta hell?” He answers. Cisco and Wells have their full attention on him now.
“Yeah, about that, are you at S.T.A.R. Labs?”

“Yes?” Len listens as Joe explains the situation and Len could hear Barry arriving where Joe is. His eyes widen and he looks up at Wells and Cisco. “It’s Caitlin, she’s been kidnapped by this Hailstorm.”

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The three stay in the lab and work on where Hailstorm might have taken Caitlin. Joe told them that the last place she was seen was Jitters parking lot last night, where her car was found this morning iced over. All the monitors in the room flicker onto a video feed showing the inside of a warehouse, including all the computer monitors.

“What the hell, Cisco?!” Len exclaims.

“I don’t know man! It just changed on its own!” Cisco starts typing up a storm.

The camera turns around and Hailstorm’s face appears. “There! Much better!” He says as he takes a couple steps back and flicks the collar of his black trench coat up. He strolls to a tied up Caitlin who is gagged. He leans forward on the back of the chair Caitlin’s tied to. “Hey-o, Central City!” He waves. “How is everyone doing this brisk tuesday morning? Oh yeah, duh!” He face palms. “How rude of me, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Lucas Hayward, but you might also know me as Hailstorm. Now, here’s a little psa for everyone, have you guys been hearing the rumors that Central City has it’s very own speedy vigilante? Two in fact, if you count his little sidekick Jack Frost.”

Len growls at that.

“Well, hold onto your seats, because it’s all true. Our very own little roadrunner has a thing for red and likes to go by the name of Flash. So Flash, if you’re watching this, meet me at Porter and Maine tonight at sunset. Prove to everyone that you’re real, and hey, since I’m such a nice guy, you can even bring your buddy in blue. Also, it should go without saying, if you don’t show, this nice, young, woman will be a nice, young, ice sculpture.” He pats Caitlin on the head like a dog.

Caitlin gets the gag loose. “No, don’t come! He’ll hurt-” The feed cuts off there. All the monitors turn back to how they were before the interruption.
“Can you trace that?” Len asks.

“Already on it.” Cisco says with his eyes glued to the screen.

“Just hurry…”

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Barry and Len found themselves alone in the cortex. Barry was pacing in front of the control panel where Len is sitting. Len himself is double and triple checking every inch of the cold gun. Barry’s phone rings and he quickly answers it, putting it on speaker.

“Hey.”

“Okay,” Joe’s voice came on over the speaker. “You two are on. Good luck.”

Joe takes a deep breath, whispering the next part. “After tonight, everyone is gonna know The Flash and Captain Cold exist. Are you ready for that?”

Barry turns to his father where he nods. He turns back around and studies his suit on the manikin. He sighs. “We’ll see you soon.”

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Barry zips through the street with Len. He weaves around the police blockade and the two come to a stop a couple yards away. Len wavers a little but finds his footing soon enough.

“You okay?” Barry whispers. Len only nods in response.

“It’s them! It’s really them!” They hear an officer cheer.
“I don’t believe it,” Another one says.

Flash and Cold turn around as one to face the cops. “Believe it.” Thawne says to Captain Singh. They turn back around at the sound of clapping. Hayward is strolling down the middle of the street like he owns the place.

“What an entrance gentlemen, what, an, entrance! I’m so glad everyone could make it this evening!”

Len pulls out his cold gun and rests it on his shoulder, while Barry has lightning flicker in his eyes. They both start marching slowly toward their opponent.

“Not even a thank you?! You two really need to learn how to take a compliment!” He pulls out both of his guns. “Well then, class is in session then!” He fires both guns at the same time, cold at Barry and hot at Len. Barry tries to dart forward to the far end of the block, but is tripped by the ice. He manages to duck behind a car. Meanwhile, Len fires straight forward and the two guns meet in the middle.

“You alright, Kid?” Len mutters into the comm, the two guns still firing dead on at each other.

He hears Barry groan then a hissed affirmative. Len’s cold gun starts to overpower the heat gun. Hailstorm promptly quits firing and sidesteps to the left to dodge the ice. He then fires the heat gun again at Len’s exposed side. Len pivots and shoots again, this time the beams meeting closer to him, causing a blast, and he gets slammed into the side of a wall by the force. Barry flashes in and the spot Len was at moments ago is now coated in soot.

Len braces against a car when they come to a halt. Barry is about to ask if he’s okay when Len waves him off. “I’m fine,” He growls out of breath. “This lil shitstain isn’t gonna to be when I’m done with him though.”

“We need a plan.”

“Distract him for me.” Barry nods and zips off. Len could hear Hailstorm laugh as he shot at Barry. He peaks from his hiding spot and sees Hailstorm’s back is to him. He takes the chance and fires, but Hailstorm turns at the last second and fires his heat gun again. Hayward doesn’t get hit, but his heat gun flies out of his hand. Barry speeds in, grabs it mid air, then drops it off in an officer’s hands in a gust of wind.
“Hey, that’s no fair!” Hailstorm whines.

“Good job. That’s one gun down,” Wells comes on over the comms.

“And one to go.” Barry mutters as he keeps Hailstorm’s attention on him as he lets Len creep to a new hiding spot.

“Exactly. This would be a good time to divulge your plan for his cold gun, Mr. Snart.”

Len studies the street they are on. “All in good time, Doc. Everything is falling into place nicely.” He says under his breath. “Alright, Kid,” Len speaks to Barry. “Lead our friend here away from the manhole.”

Barry stops. “Got it. Hey!” Barry waves at Hayward. “You really think you could get me just standing in the same spot the whole time?” He taunts. Barry runs down the sidewalk.

Hayward marches forward and fires an ice beam at a fire hydrant ahead of Barry, causing a cascade of water to freeze as it shoots into the air. He tries to stop, but the momentum propels him forward and he crashes into the ice. Barry rolls and tumbles to a stop. He stirs on the ground, but doesn’t get up.

“Damn it.” Len rushes out from his hiding place and bodily protects Barry, his gun up.

“Oh, so you’ve finally come out to play? ‘Bout time!” Hayward and Len fire at the same time, the two guns meeting in the middle. A blast of cold air surges toward Len and he loses his grip on his gun. Len curses as it gets blown a couple yards behind him and Barry. Hayward stops firing with a smirk. “Looks like I win, bye bye.” Len keeps his son behind him as he braces for the cold gun. He hears it fire, but the cold never comes. He opens his eyes and finds Thawne in front of him with one of Cisco’s shields.

“Go, get out of here!” Thawne grits out as he braces the shield up.

Barry nods and flashes Len out of there. Before he gets a chance to go back for Thawne a blast from a heat gun engulfs the ice.
“Now ‘m not a big fan of those pigs, bu’ that one is close ta one’f the few people I care ‘bout!” Mick Rory bellows in a firefighter’s jacket. “So that means he’s off limits!” Mick starts walking around, keeping Hayward’s attention away from Thawne.

“Go!” Len whispers to Barry. “Get Thawne while his back is turned.” Barry nods and follows directions. While Barry does that, Len runs out and grabs his gun back, and joins Mick’s side, both of them have their guns pointed at Hailstorm.

“Now this is really unfair!” Hayward complains. He flicks his hair out of his face. “This isn’t Who Wants to be a Millionaire, you can’t just phone a friend!”

Len shrugs with a smirk. “Guess you shouldn’t have put that broadcast on live tv, never know when someone might crash the party.”

Hayward fires again, as does Mick, and this time it’s Hayward who gets blasted off his feet and his cold gun flies a couple feet from him. He scrambles to go grab it, but is stopped by a red boot standing on it. He looks up and finds The Flash with his arms crossed. Mick keeps his gun pointed at him while Len crouches down and tilts his head.

“Also, the name’s Captain Cold and I’m not just some sidekick. Best you don’t forget it.”

Hayward laughs. “I’ll remember that for next time.”

“There won’t be a next time.” Barry says. Thawne shows up with his gun out as well. Barry blurs his face and disguises his voice. “Thank you, Detective.” Barry then flashes out to there with Len and Mick.

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Barry leaves Len and Mick at S.T.A.R. Labs as he goes to the station to watch Hayward be brought in. Barry stands beside Joe as they watch Eddie bring in a smirking Hayward. The other cops standing around start clapping and patting Eddie on the back.

“You know I’m gonna wanna meet that friend of your father’s.” Joe whispers to Barry.
Barry nods. “I figured.” He whispers back. Eddie hands Hayward off to an officer. He then turns and grabs Hayward’s guns from another officer. “Good work, Eddie.” Barry smiles.

“Thanks, but it wasn’t me. It was The Flash and Captain Cold. They were both heroes tonight.” He hands the guns to Cisco. “We’re not gonna be needing these for trial. You’ll make sure-”

“They will never be used to hurt anyone again.” Cisco finishes as he puts them in a plastic container.

Captain Singh comes up behind Cisco. “Mr. Ramon,” He holds out his hand. “Thank you.”

Cisco straightens his back and shakes his hand with a nod. Barry walks over with a smile after Captain Singh heads back to his office. “Takes a lot to get the Captain’s praise. I think he genuinely likes you.”

“He still scares me, I think a little pee just came out.” Barry laughs and throws his arm around his friend. “Yup, definitely pee pants city over here.” Cisco grabs the container and the two start walking out to head for S.T.A.R. Labs.

“He was like a lightening bolt through the city! You should have seen the way The Flash and Captain Cold worked together!” One officer from a group says as they past them.

“That sounds amazing!” The other one says.

“I wonder who they are?” The third one asks.

“You ask me, they are heroes.”

Barry and Cisco share a smile. Cisco’s grows into a smirk as they get on an elevator and the doors close. “Oh, I am so teasing Len about that!” Cisco lowers his voice to mimic Len. “I’m no hero.” Cisco scoffs.

Barry laughs too. “Dad is going to hate this! I’m gonna have to listen to him complain about this all night, you realize this, right?”
Barry and Cisco walk into the cortex - after locking the guns up downstairs - to find Len alone, Dr. Wells having already headed home for the night. Len has his feet up on the console as he watches a national news station replaying scenes from the fight. Some clips are from a shaky phone camera on the street and others are overhead from a helicopter. He’s already changed into normal clothes, his glasses on, and is munching on a bowl of popcorn. He cranes his head around with a grin. “I’m starting to like this gig.”

Cisco shoves his boots off the table and away from the expensive computer equipment, while Barry sneaks a handful of popcorn and sits to his left. “Seriously?” Cisco drops down to the right of him and grabs some popcorn too. “What happened to not being a hero? Also, what’s with the glasses? Because with those babies on, you’re starting to look like one of us ‘uber-nerds’.”

Len shrugs. “The soot from the heat guns got in my contacts, so I had to take them out. Anyways, it’s a small price to pay for fame. We’re like celebrities, this fight is on every channel.” He scoots forward and puts the bowl in front of Barry. He uses the keyboard to start flipping through the different stations. “We’re all everyone is talking about, some are saying we’re even better than Robin Hood’s team down in Starling.”

Barry leans back with a look of understanding. “That’s what this is about, you’re just happy you got one over on Oliver.”

Len leans back as well with a smirk. “Hey, I can’t control what people think, but if they like me better than that’s their prerogative.” He puts his hands behind his head. “You wouldn’t happen to have his number, woulda Kiddo? I just want to send him a couple links.”

“No, you are not going to tease him about this.” Barry tries to stay serious, and fights the grin from growing on his face.

Len waves him off. “It’s fine, I’ll just get his number from your phone after you fall asleep tonight.”

Barry is fully grinning. “Dad, no.”

Cisco slides a piece of paper over to Len. “Dude, count me in. Here’s his number.”
“Cisco!” Barry exclaims as Len puts the paper in his pocket for later. “You both are horrible!” Barry shakes his head.

Len and Cisco ignore him. “Think he has a snapchat?” Len asks.

“You know what snapchat is?” Cisco looks at him shocked.

“My sister showed me last time she was in town. When we, acquire, real ugly paintings, we send each other pictures of it with the caption ‘This is you’.” Cisco snorts. “That, and random dogs she sees. She’s a dog person. I send her cat photos too.”

Cisco’s eyes widen. “This is something I didn’t know I needed in my life until now.”

Len smirks. “I also take pictures of Barry as he sleeps.”

“Please, I need your snapchat. I’ll give you Oliver’s if you give me yours.”

Barry smacks Len on the shoulder. “I didn’t know you did that.”

“That’s the point.” Barry rolls his eyes and Len turns to Cisco. “And that is a deal. I wish I could see the look on his face when he sees the headlines.”


“Showering. He’s pissed my plan meant that he had to go through the sewer.”

“That’s ‘cause your plan was shit, both literally an’ figuratively.” Mick walks in with fresh clothes on and a towel around his neck. He ruffles Barry’s hair as he walks past. “Hey, Cub.” He greets Barry in a softer tone.

“Hey. Cisco this is Mick, Mick this is my friend Cisco.”
Mick grunts a greeting and Cisco zeros in on the heat gun. “Whoa, that gun is awesome. Can I check it out?”

Mick pulls it out of its holster. He holds it just out of reach. “Break it an’ I’ll light ya on fire.” He hands over the gun.

Cisco starts turning it all around in his hands and studying every inch of it. “Dude, this is amazing! It heats up the air around it, and I bet it reaches planck temperature,”

“Or absolute hot.” Barry adds on.

“Since it was able to overpower Hailstorm’s cold gun in that giant heat wave.” Cisco head snaps up to look at Mick with a grin and snaps his fingers. “Heat Wave!”

Mick looks concerned at Barry. “Why’s ‘e lookin’ at me like that?”

“You were just named by the great Cisco Ramon.” Barry explains. Cisco hands the heat gun back to its owner.

“Only the cool kids get named by him.” Barry elbows his dad. “Hey, you make fast puns all the time.”

“Nerds.” Mick eats the last of the popcorn. “C’mon Cub, time for ya ta learn cooking that’s not ramen and mac ‘n cheese.”

Barry jumps up and starts walking out with Mick. “Can we make those cheese stuffed burgers you talked about last night?”

Mick shrugs. “Don’t see why not.” He stops and turns back at Len who’s still sitting with Cisco. “You too, Stringbean. Popcorn ain’t dinner. Ya need real food in ya. And you,” He points at Cisco. “When’s the last time you ate a proper meal?”
Cisco gives a deer in the headlights look. “Um…”

Mick gestures for him to follow too. “If ya have to think ‘bout it, it’s been too long.”

Len sighs as he gets up. “Don’t fight it, Kid. This is a fight you’ll never win.”

Cisco gets up slowly. “What about Caitlin? She should be just getting done with her interview at CCPD.”

Barry and Len have a silent conversation; Barry gives his signature puppy eyes and Len rolls his eyes. “Fine, you can text her the address. She probably shouldn’t be alone after that kidnapping anyway.” Len mutters the last part.

Barry grins and pulls out his phone. The group starts heading to the elevators. “Aw, Cold does have a heart.” Cisco teases.

Len glares. “Repeat such slander and you’ll be hearing from my lawyers.”

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Later that night, Mick and Len are sitting on the couch, while Caitlin, Barry, and Cisco are laying on the floor with blankets and pillows. After they had finished eating the burgers, Cisco announced they were going to have a movie night, much to Len’s chagrin. About an hour into *Lord of the Rings* all three members of the younger group had fallen asleep. Mick was close on his way there too, by the state of his nodding head. Len carefully pried a nearly empty beer bottle out of Mick’s hand and set it on the coffee table that had been moved to the side earlier in the evening.

He feels his phone vibrate from a text, and is glad that he had the forethought to silence it before the movie. He pulls it out and sees it’s a text from Joe.

**From: Joe West** *Barry staying with you?* The text simply read.

Len replies with a picture of him fast asleep sandwiched between Caitlin and Cisco.
From: Joe West I’ll take that as a yes. I’ll be there in the morning, your friend with the flamethrower better still be there.

To: Joe West Fine.

Len rolls his eyes and puts his phone away. He settles in on the couch and falls asleep to the hobbits camping out at the stone trolls.

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Len awakens instantly to the sound of someone knocking on the door. The Lord of the Rings title screen is playing on loop and he turns the tv off. He pushes his glasses up and looks around. Everyone is still sleeping soundly where they were the night before. The knocking continues, more insistently now, and Len carefully walks around the group sleeping on the floor.

“Are you finished?” He opens the door with a whisper. “When you said morning, I didn’t think you meant the ass crack of dawn.” Len steps to the side to let Joe and Iris in, who both chuckle. Iris pulls out her phone and starts taking photos of the three, while Joe follows Len into the kitchen.

“Wake up on the wrong side of the sofa?” Joe asks. Len levels a glare at Joe as he gets the coffee machine started. “That your friend there?” Joe gestures to Mick on the sofa.

Len nods, the conversation getting a little more serious. “He’s trustworthy. He’s had my back the past thirty years and was one of the few people I told about Barry when he was born.” Len pours two mugs of coffee and hands one to Joe, who thanks him.

“Nooo, Iris, go ‘way.” Barry’s voice whines from the living room. Len and Joe share a look before walking into the living room to see what’s going on.

They find Caitlin and Cisco up on the couch with Mick, while Barry is trying to hide under a blanket on the floor with Iris kneeling over him trying, and winning, to get the blanket off him. “No way Barry, you promised that you would help Eddie move my stuff out of Dad’s house today.”

Iris gets Barry’s head free. His hair is all over the place and he glares. “But that was before I had to
fight Hayward last night. Can’t we do it tomorrow?"

“No, because this is the only day this week that both Eddie and I have the same day off.” Iris crosses her arms and pouts. “You pinky promised.”

Cisco yawns. “Dude, you have to do it. A pinky promise is the most sacred of all promises.”

Barry groans as he climbs to his feet. “Fine, but you owe me lunch. And let me tell you, speedsters eat a lot.”

Iris hops up and does a little clap. “Yay! Thank you!”

Mick gets up and walks around the two. He grabs Len’s coffee out of his hand and takes a sip, cringing at the taste. “Here, have my coffee.” Len says sarcastically.

Mick hands it back. “You can have tha’ crap. Don’ know how ya drink it with all that sugar in it, it’s not even coffee no more.” Len just puts the mug to his mouth and sips loudly, keeping eye contact with Mick the whole time. Mick shakes his head. “Freak.” He mutters as he goes to the kitchen to get his own coffee.

Joe and Len follow him into the kitchen as Cisco puts the movie back for himself, Caitlin, and Iris, who’s waiting on Barry to finish getting ready in the bathroom. “You all better leave when Barry does.” Len calls over his shoulder.

Cisco gives a thumbs up that he heard.

The three adults gather in the kitchen. “I never got your name.” Joe says to Mick, gesturing to him with his mug.

Mick crosses his arms. “Mick Rory.”

Joe gives Len a look of disbelief. “You gave a known pyromaniac a flamethrower? The hell is wrong with you?”
Len shrugs. “I needed help,” Len glances in the living room to check that Cisco and Caitlin weren’t listening, and whispers the next part. “Looking into Wells and he’s one of the few people that I trust completely.”

Joe shakes his head and takes a deep breath. “Fine. But you will keep an eye on him.”

Len simply nods. Barry comes into the kitchen freshly showered. He yawns and stretches his arms above his head. “Alright, I’m all ready to go. Ooo, coffee.” Mick hands Barry a mug. He takes a sip and nearly spits it out. “Ew, that is way too bitter. How do you drink that?” Len hands Barry the sugar and Barry dumps a ton in. He takes another sip. “Ah, much better.”

Mick rolls his eyes. “Both freaks. Must be genetic.” He mutters.

Barry looks to his dad. “What’s he talking about?”

Len waves him off. “Ignore him.”

Barry shrugs, dropping it. Joe checks his watch. “We better get goin’ Barr.” He turns to the living room. “C’mon Baby Girl, bus’s leavin’.”

“Kay. Bye Cisco, glad you’re doing okay Caitlin.”

Caitlin smiles. “Thanks, Iris.”

The Wests and Barry head for the door. “Hey, Kid.” Barry turns around as he puts his shoes on. “You’re cleaning up from your little sleepover here when you get home.”

“Got it! Bye Dad, bye Mick!” Len nods.

“See ya later, Cub.” Barry waves one last time, then leaves the apartment.
Len turns to the two remaining people. Caitlin smiles as she gets up. “We’ll get out of your hair. Thank you for letting us stay here.” She says politely.

Len gives her a small smile. “It’s no problem. It’s for the best that you were with your friends after what happened.”

Caitlin smiles again then elbows Cisco to get up and gives him a look. “What? It’s movie night and we still haven’t even finished one movie.”

Len crosses his arms. “Goodbye, Cisco.” He stresses.

Cisco pulls himself up. “Fine, I can see when I’m not wanted. But we are doing this again next week.”

“We’ll see.” Len says as he herds Cisco out the door.

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That evening Barry finally made it back to the apartment. He collapses on the couch next to Len. He watches the tv for a moment. “Shark week?”

“Best week of television there is. So, how did it go? Get everything moved out?”

Barry slouches even further and puts his sock clad feet up on the coffee table. “Yup. And Iris bought me pizzas, as per the conditions. Joe’s going a little empty nester on us, but he said he’ll be fine.”

Len hums as he leans forward to grab the two beers on the coffee table and mirrors Barry’s position. He holds one out to Barry. Barry grabs it with his brows furrowed. “Why did you have two beers out?”

“One was Mick’s, but he left when I put this on. He grumbled about having to watch this for the past thirty years and that he couldn’t stand another minute of it. He’ll make his way back here when he’s hungry or needs to crash, whatever comes first.” He takes another sip and they sit watching until the next commercial break.
“Think I can do another load of laundry here? The machine in my building is still broken.”

Len snorts. “That machine has been broken for the past month now. Why did Joe ever let you move into that death trap in the first place?”

Barry squawks. “It’s not a death trap, it just has a couple safety codes that need to be updated.”

“Kid, that place had safety codes that needed to be updated when I was your age. Guess the point is mute though, since you stay here most nights anyway.”

Barry thinks about it for a minute. “You know, you have a point there. I’m just wasting money on the rent for that place, I don’t even remember the last time I cleaned the fridge out. I’m pretty sure I have milk there that’s like, a month out of date. Plus ninety percent of my belongings are here now too.”

Len shrugs. “It is the in thing now for kids to move back in with their parents, and rent here in Central is skyrocketing.”

Barry nods. “It is what us millennials are known for doing.” A grin grows on Barry’s face and he vanishes in a gust of wind. He’s back a moment later in the doorway with a duffle bag. He leaves the bag where he is and drops down back on the couch. “So, what do you wanna do, roomie?”

Len eyes the bag by the door, but decides to leave it alone. “Beer and shark week?”

Barry takes his beer back and holds it up. “You know this does nothing for me, right?”

Len grins and bumps Barry’s shoulder. “Just shut up and drink it.”

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It was around one in the morning when Oliver made it back from his rounds. He hangs up his bow and makes his way over to Felicity who is still sitting at the computers. She yawns as she spins
around to face Oliver. “Great work tonight.” Her eyes widen. “Not to say that you don’t do a great job every night! I just mean in general, you did another great job, just like every night.” She pauses. “I’ll just stop talking. Oh! I almost forgot.” She spins around, grabs his cell phone, then spins back around. “You got a text while you were out.”

Oliver smiles. “Thank you, Felicity.” He takes his phone and sees it’s a text from an unknown number.

While Oliver does that, Felicity remembers something else. “Another thing, people are officially calling Barry and Len heroes now.”

Oliver frowns at his phone. “I can see that.” He says as he hands the phone to Felicity to show her the text. “It's from Snart.”

Felicity snorts as she looks at the text. Someone had managed to get a photo of the exact moment that Len and Barry, in full costume, had turned around to look at the police blockade. She can even make out a couple cheering faces of police officers in the background. A national news site had used the picture and the headline over it read ‘CENTRAL CITY PROTECTORS MORE ACCEPTED THAN STARLING CITY ARCHER’. She then reads what Len had written underneath.

People like me more than you~ sorry not sorry Green.

Oliver sighs. “Go ahead, laugh. I know you’re dying to.”

Felicity gives him a sympathetic look. “Sorry, but you have to admit, it’s a little funny. Not to mention, the irony game is very strong. If you had heard how much he was denying he was a hero, you’d be laughing too.” She hands him his phone as his face softens.

“I guess you’re right, it is a little funny.” His phones buzzes and he checks it. “Hey Felicity?”

She has turned back around to do something on her computer. “Yeah?” She asks distracted.

“Since when have I had a snapchat?”
She spun back around quickly with a guilty look. “Don’t be mad, but Cisco and I made you one. We thought it would be cool for you to have one as The Arrow. The public snaps you could do in costume and other ones to people in the know would get erased after they are viewed. Don’t worry, we made it super secure. No one will be able to hack it. Oh, and we may have also made you a twitter and instagram.” She smiles at him.

He glares but doesn’t comment. He looks back to the phone and he raises an eyebrow. “You guys made my account name timeflieslikeanarrowtotheknee?”

Felicity shrugs. “We thought it was funny?”

Oliver shakes his head and looks at the snap that got sent to him. “Parkas_are_cool?” He reads aloud. He shifts his eyes up to Felicity. “Did you two make one for Snart as well?”

She shakes her head. “We made a joint instagram for Barry and Len, but that was it.” She gets up to watch over his shoulder. When Oliver plays the video, she can see by the circle in the corner of the screen that a couple videos are queued up to play. The first video starts out by showing a tv playing what looks to be shark week. They hear Barry laugh in the background.

“You turn the screen around like this.” They hear him say. The screen flips to show Len, his face with a red flush to it and he’s wearing glasses.

“Thanks, Kid.” He says to Barry off screen. “Hey Robin Hood, guess who is more loved in his city than you?” He points to himself. “This guy!” They hear Barry snort with laughter in the background as the video ends.

The next one plays automatically. The screen is still on selfie mode, this time both Len and Barry are in the frame. Len is in the foreground, staring right at the screen, while Barry is holding a beer in the background, deeply into whatever is on the tv. “Hey, kid.”

“Yeah?” He asks, not looking away from the tv.

“You didn’t say hi to Ollie. Being impolite isn’t very hero like.”

“What?” Barry turns and sees he’s being filmed. They see Barry fighting a grin. “Dad, no! I told you to just send one.”
Len shrugs with a grin. “Oops, I lied.”

The video ends there, and next is just a picture of Barry in the kitchen putting something in the fridge. The caption just reads, ‘He took away my beer’ and then a whole bunch of sad face emojis.

The next is another video. This time the camera is facing forward, showing Barry and a larger, bald man with burn scars on his arms and shoulders. They’re backs are to the camera as they cook something on the stove. Len had written a caption over the video that reads, ‘He’s been nagging us for the past twenty minutes straight’. A deep voice is in the middle of grumbling, most likely the mystery man. “-Swear the two of ya will starve if I’m not here ta make ya real food.”

“We eat. We make things from our local freezer aisle all the time.” They hear Len say, practically hearing the grin in his voice. Barry is the only one to turn around. He sees Len filming and rolls his eyes.

“Damn it, how many times do I have ta tell ya-.” The video cuts out as the mystery man starts up another rant.

Another video starts playing. It’s from the same angle, this time only the mystery man is cooking at the stove. His back is still to Len. “Hey Mick, Barry was wondering why you hate sharks.”

Barry’s voice is heard yelling somewhere off screen. “He’s a liar! I was just wondering why you didn’t want to watch shark week!”

The mystery man, Mick his name is, spins around. He’s looking off camera, most likely at Barry. “Cause the nerd ruined it by watchin’ it nonstop for three months straight!”

“Maybe ‘cause I wanted to grow up to be a marine biologist, ever thinka that?” Len slurs a little off camera.

Mick levels a glare at Len. “Ya gag at the smell of fish at the market, idiot.”

There’s a pause, then Len let’s out a quiet “Oh yeah.” The video ends with Barry barking a laugh off screen.
The last thing queued up is just a picture. Len is on the couch with his feet up on the coffee table, and his head is down resting on his chest. His glasses are crooked and he looks fast asleep. He has one hand resting in Barry’s hair and the other on Barry’s arm. Barry himself has his head resting in his father’s lap and he looks fast asleep too. Mick must have taken the picture and wrote the caption. ‘Nerds finally knocked out’.

“Aww, even you have to admit that was a little cute.” Felicity says.

Oliver looks like it physically pains him to say what he’s about to say. “Barry does look like he’s happy and safe with Snart, surprisingly. I just hope he doesn’t make a habit of sending these.”

(Len does make it a habit. Oliver gets a snap every couple of days. He will never admit that he actually looks forward to them now. Nope, definitely taking that secret to the grave with him.)

Chapter End Notes

I had a little too much fun writing all the snapchats. Drunk Len is my absolute favorite to write. If anyone has requests for the snapchats, I might just make them their own little thing. They really are fun to write.
Since both Iris and Barry have moved out of Joe’s house, Barry has talked Len into having dinner at Joe’s at least once a week (normally on Sunday). It didn’t take much to convince Len since Joe is a surprisingly good cook. He also uses recipies left by Grandma Esther, God bless that woman and her talents in the kitchen. At some point, Joe and Mick made a temporary alliance and have teamed up, and between the two, they make sure him and Barry eat some type of vegetable every couple of days.

Len and Barry had just finished taking care of the Royal Flush gang. Barry with his speed and Len on his bike, when Joe texted saying he was making lasagna. After Cisco made them all take a picture together, the two made their way to Joe’s.

Iris rushes past them as they walk in through the front door. “You know the whole point of moving out is not being at home anymore, right?” Barry jokes with her.

Iris gives a mock laugh as the two take off their jackets. “I forgot a few things.”

Len wanders over to the dining room. “Smells good, Joe.” Len calls out. “And what vegetable are we going to have to bury in this lasagna?”

Joe comes out of the kitchen with a large bowl of lasagna. “Broccoli. And I was told to make sure you both have at least one helpin’ each.”

Len pushes off the pillar he was leaning against and rolled his eyes. “Goody.” He says sarcastically.

“Quit whinin’, I put cheese on it too.” Joe turns to Iris, who’s packing things into a box on the couch. “You sure you don’t wanna stay for dinner? I won’t even make you eat the evil broccoli.”
“As tempting as that offer is, Eddie’s been painting all day and I promised I would help when I got home. Although, I’m really just gonna do that thing where I get paint on my hair and my nose.”

They all laugh. “I used to do that with Mick.” Len says nostalgically. “I would say I was too tired to do something because Barry was up crying all night.”

Joe and Iris gave him a shocked look, while Barry looks mildly offended. “Did it work?” Iris asks.

Len scoffs as he sits at the table. “Hell no. He would say tough shit and that I should have thought of that before I became a teenage, single parent.”

Joe snorts as he sits at the head of the table and Barry shook his head with a smile as he sat across from Len. Joe spins around to Iris. “Oh hey, someone from Central City Picture News called you the other day. I left the number on the fridge.”

Iris’s eyes widen. “What? Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Chill, I just did.”

Iris runs into the kitchen. Len looks proud. “Was that a cold pun I heard?”

Joe glares as he pours a glass of wine and passes the bottle to Len. “Not everything is about you. Now eat your damn broccoli.”

All three of them freeze when they hear Iris shriek in the kitchen. “Was that a good scream or a bad scream?” Joe calls out.

Iris comes into the room beaming. “Good scream. Definitely a good scream. I just got offered a job as a reporter at Central City Picture News!”

“Seriously? That’s awesome!” Barry says.

“I have you and Len to thank for it too. The editor is a fan of my blog.”
Barry gets up to hug her. “That’s amazing.”

Joe takes a healthy gulp of wine. “Oh, God.” He mutters under his breath.

Len smirks since he’s the only one to have heard. He raises his glass to Iris. “Good job, you deserve it.”

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The next day, Len was waiting patiently at S.T.A.R. Labs for everyone to get back from Wells’ house. Barry had gotten a call earlier that morning that his place had been vandalized. Cisco and Caitlin had called and offered if Len wanted to go with them, posing as someone who works at S.T.A.R. Labs, but he declined. His face is just a little too recognizable as Leonard Snart, plus Captain Singh himself was going to be there and Len remembers being arrested by him personally a handful of times about fifteen years ago.

When the others finally made it back, they were quick to fill him in on everything he missed at the scene, and their most likely suspect. While Wells was explaining Rathaway’s background, Joe snuck a couple questioning looks Len’s way. Len subtly shakes his head, giving Joe the answer that no, him and Mick still haven’t found him yet.

After Wells finished explaining, Joe starts to ask questions. Things like why he would want to hurt Wells and why he was fired in the first place. Len takes an interest too, wanting to hear how he’ll talk his way around this while still sounding like a saint in front of Barry. He flounders, but Barry steps in, saving him from having to explain anything.

“Let’s get back to my lab, alright?” Barry motions for Joe to follow, who’s still studying Wells.

Len follows the two out of the cortex as well, falling into step with Joe. Joe motions for Barry to go ahead. “I’ll meet you at the station,” Joe says as they step outside. “I just wanna talk to Len for a minute.” Barry nods and speeds off, probably happy he doesn’t have to sit in a car that’s equivalent to a snail’s pace for him.

“You need to find Hartley before Wells does.”
Len nods as he sits on his motorcycle. “This is just the opening I needed. He made the first move and left himself open. Mick and I should find him pretty quickly now.” Len puts his helmet on and starts the bike up.

“Ya know, all my fatherly instincts are screamin’ for you to get off that bike.” Joe yells over the engine.

Len smirks as he zips his leather jacket up. “Good thing you’re not my father then.” Len tears out of the parking lot.

Joe shakes his head. “And thank the Lord for that.” He mutters.

~~~~~~~~~~

Len is on his way to meet Mick when he spots Hartley on the sidewalk. He has a hood on, but Len is very good with faces, that was definitely him. He pulls over and tosses his helmet in the side compartment. Len starts tailing him, trying to figure out where he’s going when it hits him, Rathaway Industries is in that direction. Mentally throwing out his plan to just tail Hartley, Len decides to improvise and jogs up next to him.

“Whatever your planning on doing, I would highly advise against it.” Len says casually.

The kid jumps. “Listen creep, I don’t know who you are, but how about you get lost.” Len rolls his eyes and drags him into a nearby alley. “What the-”

Len puts a hand on his mouth. “I am not your enemy, you over entitled little brat. It’s quite the opposite really. Now are you going to stop your squirming and listen to what I have to say?”

Hartley nods slowly and Len pulls his hand back. “How do you know me?”

“Harrison Wells. That ring any bells for you?”

Hartley’s eyes widen. “How-” He then pauses as he thinks. “What did he do to you?”
Len shakes his head. “Not me, my son. That machine of his put him in a nine month coma. I’ve been doing a little digging into him, found your termination right before the accelerator got turned on a little suspicious.”

Hartley crosses his arms. “My, my, you did do your homework. But I think we should have this conversation somewhere a little more private, don’t you think?”

“My apartment’s not too far.”

Hartley smirks and looks him up and down. “I was always told not to follow strange men to their apartment’s.”

“Don’t flatter yourself kid, my son is the same age as you. I wouldn’t touch you with a ten foot pole.”

Hartley shrugs. “Your loss.”

They make it back to Len’s and he notices that Hartley’s holding on to his backpack for dear life. “What’s in the bag there? The thing you used to shatter all of Wells’ windows?” Hartley flinches. “I’ll take that as a yes. You hungry? Thirsty? I think I got some chilli left over, it’s the only thing my bottomless pit of a son doesn’t like.” Len’s already digging through the fridge.

Hartley sits at the island bar. “Water’s fine.”

Len fishes out a water bottle and tosses it to him. He leans back against the counter with his arms crossed. “So what did you find out that made Wells fire you?”

“Wouldn’t you like to know.”

Len rolls his eyes. “I’m done playing games here kid, what is Harrison Wells hiding?”
“His precious accelerator? I told him there was a chance it would blow. He knew the risks and shut me up, tore apart my life, just so I wouldn’t go to the authorities.”

Len pushes off the counter and grabs his keys. “I need you to come to S.T.A.R. Labs with me.”

“What?! No way, I am not going near that monster.”

“Too bad, I’m not leaving you here alone where you could run off and destroy your parents’ building.”

“I wasn’t-”

“Don’t even try and lie about it. That’s where you were walking to and why you have that device in your bag.”

Hartley looks genuinely scared. “Please, I’ll stay here. I promise. The only reason I was going to do that was so that the Flash would take me there. Now that I told you Harrison’s secret, there’s no reason for me to go there. Please.”


Hartley nods. “Do you think I could have that chilli now?”

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Len marches into S.T.A.R. Labs where everyone is gathered, excluding Joe, and waiting for him in the cortex. “Now that we are all here, Mr. Snart, would you like to explain why you wanted us all to meet so hastily?” Wells wastes no time.

Len crosses his arms and glares at him. Len walks over and stands beside Barry. Barry is sitting at a
table with Caitlin and Cisco. “I think it’s time to do a little explaining of your own. You haven’t been telling everyone here the truth.” Everyone turns and looks at Wells.

Wells staples his fingers together. “I assume this means you have found and spoken to Hartley.”

Len nods. “Would you like the honors, or should I?”

Wells looks at the others, realizing he’s trapped. “Dr. Wells, what is he talking about?” Caitlin asks.

Wells takes a deep breath. “I have not been honest, with any of you. Hartley warned me that there was indeed a chance that the accelerator could explode.” Len glances down at Barry and sees a shocked look on his son’s face. “His data did not show one hundred percent certainty. Just that there was a risk, but it was a real risk…” Barry looks up to Cisco’s shocked face as well, and Caitlin couldn’t make eye contact with anyone. “... And yet I made the decision that the reward, that…” Caitlin finally looks up. “Everything we could learn, everything we could achieve, that all of that… simply outweighed that risk. I’m sorry.” Cisco squints at Wells, while Caitlin stood up.

“The next time you choose to put our lives, and the lives of the people that we love at risk, we’ll expect a heads up.” She takes a deep breath and leaves the room. Cisco glares at Wells for a moment before following Caitlin out.

Wells, Barry, and Len watch him leave. Barry stands up. “After the explosion, when everyone else left you,” Barry nods in the direction that the two left in. “Caitlin and Cisco, they stood by you.” Wells hangs his head. “You owe them more than an apology.”

“They might get more than that with Hartley so intent on sending me to the next world.”

Barry shakes his head. “That wouldn’t make it right with them.” Len reaches out to keep Barry from walking forward, but Barry just shrugs him off. “You broke their trust, our trust.” Barry shakes his head again and walks out.

Len goes to follow but is stopped by Wells’ voice. “I hope you’re happy now.”

Len glances over his shoulder, Wells isn’t even looking in Len’s direction. “You’ve hurt my son, in more ways than one. So no, I’m not happy.Honestly, I want to put an icicle through your chest, but that would just cause more heart break for my son. I think he’s had enough for today, don’t you?”
Len doesn’t give him a chance to answer as he marches out of the cortex.

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Barry slinks into the apartment behind Len. He freezes and blinks at the sight before him. Mick is lounging on the couch with his feet up, but that’s pretty normal now since Mick’s been sleeping on the couch. The strange thing that threw him for a loop was Hartley sitting ramrod straight next to him.

Barry just shrugs. “You know what, I’m not even surprised.”

Len grabs him before he could go to his room. “Nope. No brooding in your room alone. Go sit at the table.” Barry looks like he’s about to protest. “No buts, go.” Len shoos him off and Barry goes to the dining room off of the kitchen.

Hartley scoffs. “The mighty Flash has to take orders from his dad?”

Everyone in the room freezes. “How?” Barry starts to ask.

Hartley rolls his eyes. “I was told you were in a coma for nine months, The Flash starts showing up nine months after the accelerator exploded. Every time The Flash left a crime scene, he went in the direction of S.T.A.R. Labs. He just went to S.T.A.R. Labs and came back with you. Argo, you are The Flash.” Hartley spoke to them like they were two years old. “Don’t worry, I won’t tell anyone.”

There’s a knock at the door and Len answers it to find Iris. She looks distressed and just walks right in. “Please, come in.” Len says sarcastically. “Alright, everyone to the dining room.”

“Even me?” Mick asks.

“I don’t really care what you do.” Mick shrugs and stays where he is.

Hartley looks like he’s about to argue. “You, on the other hand, need to.” Hartley gets up, glad to be away from Mick, and follows Barry and Iris to the table in the other room. Len hears Iris introduce herself and Hartley tease Barry about his Flash suit. Len gets to work in the kitchen and Mick
“You makin’ your hot chocolate?”

Len sighs. “It’s a hot chocolate kind of day.”

“How did the Cub take his mentor bein’ a bag of dicks?”

“About as well as you expect.”

“That bad?”

Len holds up the spoon he’s using to stir the chocolate. “Hence the hot chocolate.” There’s another knock at the door. “Can you get that?”

Mick nods and goes to the door. Cisco and Caitlin are there. “Hey.” Cisco gives a weak smile.

They come in and go to the kitchen. Cisco sticks his hands in his pockets, and rocks back and forth on the balls of his feet. “Is it alright if we hang here? We don’t really wanna be around Dr. Wells right now.”

Len nods. “Everyone is in the dining room. This should be done in a minute.”

Cisco nods and takes Caitlin’s hand, who looks a little out of it, and go to the dining room.

Cisco and Hartley start bickering, so Len ignores it as he divides up the hot chocolate. “Hey Mick, can you-” Mick holds up a bag of mini marshmallows. “Thanks.” He puts a handful into each mug and Mick helps carry all of them out to the table.

Barry smiles when he sees the drink. “We really look that bad that you had to make your magic hot chocolate?”
“Magic hot chocolate?” Hartley asks.

“For once I’m as clueless as Hartley.” Cisco says as Hartley elbows him in the side. “Ow, dude. You have the boniest elbows.”

Len hands out the mugs. “Children, keep your hands and elbows to yourself.”

“Dad says that his hot chocolate fixes everything. He makes it from scratch.” Barry says as he blows on his.

“’Cause it’s the only thing he knows how to make from scratch.” Mick mutters.

Len glares. “If you don’t want yours,” He leaves the threat hanging. Mick pulls it out of Len’s reach as he plops down next to Barry. “I know why we’re having a crappy day, but what about you Miss West? I thought today was your first day at CCPN.”

Iris shrugs. “My day hasn’t been nearly as bad as yours, It’s nothing.”

Len sits down at the head of the table between Caitlin and Iris. “This isn’t a competition. You came here to talk so you should.”

Iris fiddles with the mug. “Well, turns out, the real reason they hired me is because they think I have some sort of connection to The Flash and Captain Cold.”

“Dude, you’re having hot chocolate with Captain Cold and The Flash right now. I’d say that’s a pretty big connection.” Cisco takes a sip. “Damn, this is good!”

Iris gives him a flat stare. “I know that, but they don’t. Oh, and to top it off, they paired me with Mason Bridge, who is a legend, who I admired, before he told me I am a worthless, talentless, millennial.”

“I think we have a theme for the night, never meet your heroes.” Hartley says.
Barry raises his mug. “Amen to that. And if this Mason guy doesn’t see what a talented journalist you are then he’s probably a lousy writer.”

Iris gives Barry a pitiful smile. “He won the Pulitzer. Twice. I think.”

Barry puts his mug down. “Oh. Good for him.” Iris starts laughing, then Barry, then everyone else joins in. Even Mick and Len chuckle a bit.

“Thanks, Barr. I really needed that.”

The group stayed up for a couple hours, just talking. They even got Caitlin to open up and she told a couple stories about Ronnie when he worked at S.T.A.R. Labs with her, Cisco, and Hartley. Iris left first, having to get back home with Eddie, then Mick went and passed out on the couch. Next to head off to bed was Len, who told the others they can stay the night if they want. Barry offers up his bed to Hartley, who gives him bedroom eyes. “Are you included?”

Barry scoffs and shakes his head, not dignifying that with a response.

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The next morning, Caitlin and Barry wake up on the floor. Cisco and Hartley are at the bar huddled over something. Barry turns around to Mick and yawns. “What are they doing?”

Mick shrugs “Beats me, Cub. I jus’ know whatever it is, they’ve been doin’ it for the past hour.” Barry turns to Caitlin but she shrugs too.

Len walks to the kitchen, holding up his phone. “And now you see the two nerds in their natural habitat, making a mess of my kitchen once again.”

He gets two twin glares on him. Barry gets up and stretches. “Pretty sure Oliver is going to actually kill you if you don’t stop sending him snapchats.”

Len is fiddling with his phone, no doubt sending the snap as they speak. “Please, he loves getting these.”
Barry looks at his phone as it buzzes. “I literally just got a text from him saying ‘Barry please tell your father to stop flooding my phone with snaps, they aren’t as funny as he thinks they are.’ Wait a minute, are you sending more snaps of me sleeping?”

Len pauses. “...No.”

Barry holds out his hand. “Let me see your phone then.”

“No way. It’s private and has private criminal things on it.”

Mick and Caitlin move out of the way to the kitchen as father and son start fighting over the phone. Hartley looks on in horror. “These two are The Flash and Captain Cold, the first line of defence against metahuman threats in Central City?”

The four watch as Len stands on the couch with his phone above his head, while Barry jumps up and down trying to grab the phone from him. “Yup.” Mick, Caitlin, and Cisco say in unison.

“We’re screwed.” Caitlin pats him on the shoulder while Cisco pulls out his phone and starts filming them. (He sends it to Oliver with the caption ‘Look what you started’)

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Barry called in sick from work since he’s still reeling from the revelation about Wells the day before. Mick’s making pancakes for everyone for brunch when Barry gets a text from Joe. Len had talked to Joe on the phone last night and explained everything going on with Wells and Hartley.

“That’s weird, Joe said to turn on the news.” Everyone gathers around the tv and Len turns it on. Wells is in the police station in front of a podium. “A press conference?”

“Thank you for coming on such short notice.” Wells’ voice comes from the tv. “And for those of you that read the ten volume report issued by the Norris commission, well, I commend you on your tenacity. You already know, then, the circumstances that led to the explosion of the S.T.A.R. Labs particle accelerator. Or rather, you think you do. Now, the commission’s finding was that the catastrophe was caused by a chain of events that nobody could have predicted, including myself.”
Hartley scoffs. “The truth is, I was warned there was a chance the particle accelerator might fail. I was warned by a former colleague, a friend. I chose to ignore the warning, and in so doing I let down all of you. As a new friend pointed out, I failed this city. I failed this city, and I failed those who trusted me the most. But coming forward today it’s my hope I’m taking the first step toward regaining that trust. And your trust as well. Are there any questions?”

A man steps forward and talks over everyone else. “Mr. Wells, do you have any intention of rebuilding the particle accelerator?”

Wells is about to answer when he pauses. “Miss West, do you have a question for me?”

The reporters on the screen part to show Iris in the back holding up her phone to record the audio. She takes a step forward. “I don’t believe you answered my colleague’s question, Dr. Wells, so I’ll ask it again. Do you have any intention of rebuilding the particle accelerator, either now or in the future?”

Barry looks at the others in the room with an impressed face. “Of course not.” Wells says.

“Thank you for your answer, doctor.”

“It’s my pleasure.” All the other reporters start calling out Wells name, trying to get his attention. Wells leans forward into the mic. “No further questions.”

Len turns off the tv. Hartley crosses his arms and shakes his head. “Did you enjoy that Flash? The city already hates him, that whole performance was all for your benefit. He just doesn’t want his precious scarlet knight hating him.”

Barry shrugs, thinking. “I believe it takes a lot of guts, doing what he just did.”

“But he’s also the reason Ronnie’s gone.” Cisco points out.

Hartley turns to him shocked. “Cisqueto, are we actually agreeing on something?”

“I know, it’s freaking me out too.”
Barry turns to Len. “What about you, Dad? You’ve been pretty quiet this whole time.”

Len crosses his arms and puts his hand up to his mouth. “I just have this feeling in my gut that his apology there was disingenuous. I’m not sure though. All I do know is that you don’t want to be on his bad side unprepared.”

Hartley steps up. “And we won’t be. We’ll be getting a little help from an old friend, or two I should say.”

“Who?”

“I know what happened to Ronnie Raymond and Professor Stein the night of the particle accelerator explosion.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry again for the shorter chapter. Since Len stops Hartley from attacking Rathaway Industries, a lot of events from the episode never happen. I didn't want to go any further because than I would be going too much into the next episode.
Happy Monday!

Thank you Katyakora for the awesome idea for Oliver’s snapchat to Len.

Everyone stood around Hartley in shock. Cisco is the first to speak. “You are such an utter *dick*. You’ve know what’s wrong with Ronnie and where Professor Stein is this *entire time* and didn’t say anything?”

Cisco went to lunge at him, when two big arms held him back. He claws at the arms, but Mick just pulls him across the room and away from Hartley, who looks smug. Caitlin steps forward. “Cisco, stop. Hartley had pulled me aside last night and told me. I said I didn’t want to know.”

Mick lets Cisco go since he stopped fighting to get away. Cisco gives her a betrayed look. “Why?”

“Because, Ronnie told me to forget him and move on. You should do the same.” Caitlin picks up her purse and coat. “Thank you again for letting us stay Len.” With that Caitlin breezes past Cisco and leaves the apartment.

Hartley clears his throat. “Awkward.” Cisco throws him one last glare before stomping out too.

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Barry’s had one of the most tense weeks of his life. The whole dynamic with Team Flash has been completely disrupted. All three are tip toeing around Dr. Wells after they found out what he did to Hartley. On top of that, Barry’s been stuck in the middle of Caitlin and Cisco flat out not talking to each other.

Back at home, his dad’s been letting Hartley stay with them since he found out that Hartley’s been living out of a Motel 6 in a sketchy part of town for the past year. After being cut off from his parents, then having his reputation destroyed by Dr. Wells, it was the only place he could afford. His dad may act like a hardened criminal, but really he’s just a big softy. Barry called him on it, and he just mentioned that he could empathize with Hartley and was in a similar situation after Barry was
The bedding situation got changed up. His dad went out and got a sofa bed for Hartley to replace the couch in the livingroom, and Mick’s just been sleeping in his dad’s room with him since he has a queen size bed. (Hartley gave him A Look. “So you and the big guy huh?” Barry thought his dad’s eyes would roll out of his head. “I’ve known Mick since I was fourteen, he’s been like an older brother to me. Only an older brother. Plus I’ve shared a cell with him and is the only person who could put up with his snoring.” “I don’t snore.” “Yes you do.” All three say at the same time.)

By some miracle this morning, Hartley, Barry, and Mick got up before his dad did. Len leans against the kitchen island and steals a piece of Barry’s bacon. “Hey, get your own! I’m a hungry speedster who needs the calories! And I thought you weren’t suppose to eat bacon, being Jewish and all.”

Len shrugs. “If God made food that good, than He would want everyone to enjoy it.”

Mick cracks an egg into a pan. “In other words, he only eats kosher if he’s in prison ‘cause those meals are better than the regular slop everyone else gets. Now if you’d jus’ wait a minute, I’m making your food now, Sleeping Beauty.”


“Wha’ seriously?” Barry says with a mouthful. He swallows. “I didn’t even think he knew how snapchat worked.”


“The Arrow down in Starling. Dad had to work with him once, and they both have… clashing personalities.” Barry explains.

Len holds out his phone and both Hartley and Barry lean over to watch. It’s just a picture of a green hoody on sale with a caption ‘Proof my city loves me’. Len grins and starts searching something on his phone. Mick frowns as he puts a plate of food in front of him.

“Oh no, he’s got ‘is schemin’ face on. This can’t be good.” Mick looks more put out than surprised.
“Dad, what did you do?”

“Nothing. Just sent him a link to all the different stores in the area that sell blue parkas as a ‘Captain Cold Parka’.” Len checks his phone and sees it’s a reply from Oliver. “That was quick.” He opens it and bursts out laughing.

Barry leans over to look and sees Oliver just holding up a middle finger. “You totally deserve that.”

Len holds a hand over his heart. “You wound me, Kid. Hartley would you like to be my new son since my first one has utterly betrayed me.”

Hartley shrugs. “Sure.”

Barry’s phone starts ringing. “You two are the worst.” He sees it’s work and goes to answer it away from everyone. Barry comes back a couple minutes later - and finds all his bacon gone, seriously those two really are the worst.

“Flash duties or CSI duties?” Len asks.

“CSI. Someone broke out of Iron Heights last night.” Barry starts going around and collecting his things.

“Nice.” Barry glares. “I mean, oh no, what a horrible thing to happen.” Len says in a monotone voice. After a small chuckle he gets serious. “You know who it was that got out?”

“Joe said it was a Clay Parker. You know him?”

Both Mick and Len snort. “He had help, there’s no way he did it himself.”

“Guy’s as dumb as bricks.” Mick adds. “One more thing, try this.” Mick tosses Barry a protein bar. “Been workin’ with that long haired kid to make ‘em taste better. You’ll need it since the two idiots ate your breakfast.” Mick gives Len and Hartley a side eye.
Barry nods. “Thanks for the tip, and this. See ya later.” The three wave goodbye.

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After doing some research at S.T.A.R. Labs, Barry went to have lunch with his dad at The Cracked Mug. Barry still prefers Jitters, but Jitters is only a block away from CCPD and is frequented by a lot of cops, many of whom would recognize Len in a heartbeat.

“So how’s the case with Parker’s escape going?”

“You were right, he did have help. An old girlfriend by the name of Shawna Baez. We think she’s some sort of metahuman.”

Len ticks his tongue. “Poor kid. I’ve heard of her, always bailing out Parker and taking the fall for him.”

“On a brighter note, I saw Dad today. No glass, no phones, just face-to-face. Joe arranged it.”

Len raises a brow. “Mark one up for Joe. How is Henry?”

“About as good as expected, but he seemed happier than I’ve seen him in a long time.”

“No doubt. You know, I could always make him disappear from Iron Heights too. All you have to do is say the word.”

Barry chuckles. “Believe it or not, I’ve already thought of doing that. Ever since I got these powers, that was the first thing I wanted to do. It would be so easy for me to just flash in and out of there in a second, but Dad told me not to. He wants to-

“-Get out the legal way.” Len finishes with a grin. “Yeah, he’s told me as much.”
“Then why offer in the first place?”

Len shrugs. “Because, it’s easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.”

Barry kicks him under the table. “Well on this, I’m gonna stick with getting permission. So how’s Hartley been today?”

Len shifts. “...Fine.”

“Dad? What are you not telling me?”

“Cisco, may have, called and they went out to investigate what happened to Stein and Ronnie Raymond.”

Barry leans back in his chair. “I thought Caitlin wanted them to leave that alone.”

“She still does, which is why you can’t tell her.”

Barry closes his eyes for a moment to gather his thoughts then opens them. “You know what, I didn’t hear that. I am not going to be a part of this. This is me,” Barry brushes his hands together. “Washing my hands of this. They are both my friends and I don’t want to be stuck in the middle of this.” Barry grabs his coat and gets up. “I need to go meet Joe, I’ll see you tonight.”

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Barry and Caitlin have just walked into the karaoke bar when Barry gets a text.

From: BioDad You got shot?! Why did I have to hear about this from Caitlin?! Bartholomew Henry Allen where the hell are you?!

Barry winces at his full name. Caitlin orders a drink and Barry just gets a water so the waiter will leave. He leans forward so he won’t be overheard. “You told my dad I was shot?! Why would you do that?!”
Caitlin gives Barry a wide eyed look. “He asked me to text him whenever you got hurt. If he found out I kept something like that from him, he would be pissed.”

“Well he’s pissed right now! Look.”

Barry slides his phone to her. She winces after reading the text. “Full name?”

“Full name.”

“Ouch.” She hands the phone back and Barry writes a reply.

To: BioDad I’m fine. I caught the bullet and it barely grazed me. I’m with Caitlin working on the case, don’t wait up.

Barry’s phone starts ringing. “Hey, Dad.” Caitlin winces at how fake casual Barry just sounded.

“Where. Are. You.” Oh no, he’s using his scary calm voice.

“At a karaoke bar that Shawna and Clay used to frequent?”

“So you’re out looking for the guy that shot you?! Are you dumb? I know I didn’t drop you on your head, so why would you think that’s a good idea? That’s it, Hartley you are now my favorite son since my other one is an idiot!”

Barry hears Hartley give a half hearted cheer in the background. “It’s not a bad place, we’re in a good part of town. Listen, Caitlin and I just needed to get away for a while, have a life outside of Flash stuff and netflix. I’ll make sure to text you, I have my phone with me and everything.”

Barry hears his dad sigh. “Fine. But keep your phone on. And if you don’t text back when I text you I’m going to make Hartley track your phone.”
“Okay, I will. Love you.”

“Love you too.”

Barry sighs as he hangs up. “And here I thought the criminal dad would be a lot more laid back than the cop dad. Guess I was wrong about that one.”

“So, are you ready to get yourself back out there?” Caitlin holds up her glass of Gin and Tonic.

Barry clinks his glass of water against it. “You know what? I am.”

“Good. Than to liquid courage.” Caitlin chugs her whole glass in one go.

Barry’s eyes widen. “Wow, that is very fast.” He’s not sure what he’s gotten himself into.

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Barry finally makes it home around two in the morning. He tiptoed in and locks the door as quietly as he could. He shrugs off his coat and shoes, when a lamp is flicked on, making him jump. His dad is sitting sternly on the couch with his legs crosses. All that was missing was a cat for him to be petting. “Do you have any idea what time it is, young man?”

“Wha- Have you been sitting here in the dark this whole time waiting for me?” Barry hisses.

His dad cracks a smile. “I couldn’t resist. You should have seen the look on your face.” Barry groans and falls next to him on the couch. Len wraps an arm around him and pulls him to his side.

“You are such a jerk.” Barry mumbles into his shoulder.

“Now you know how I felt. You really scared me today when I got that text from Caitlin. I just got you back, I’m not ready to lose you again.” Len rests his cheek on top of Barry’s head. “I know you think you’re invincible with these powers, but you’re still not bullet proof. And I know Joe has told you a lot about criminals already, but I’ve lived my whole life around people ten times worse than
Parker. And it hurts to even imagine what it would be like if one of those people got a hold of you.”

“I know. And I’m sorry I didn’t tell you I got hurt. I should have.”

“Yes, you should have.” Len leans away from Barry. “Now go change, you reek like a bar and puke.” He shoves him away lightly.

Barry siffs his shirt and cringes. “Yeah, that’s pretty bad. Turns out Caitlin can’t hold her liquor.”

“That I knew about. Summer lovin’-” Len smirks.

Barry lays his head back and covers his face with his hands. “How in the world do you know about that?”

“Hartley found a video of it online. I guess we can chalk that up to another thing you got from me.”

Barry sits up. “You can sing?”

“Yup, and you’ll never hear me. Now take your clothes and go change.” Len throws Barry a bundle of clothes.

Barry struggles to catch them. “Why are my pj’s out here? And where’s Hartley?”

Len gets up from the couch. “Oh, since he was here and you weren’t, I let him have the bed.” Len walks past and pats him on the shoulder. “Have fun on the sofa bed.”

Barry’s shoulders drop. “Is this you punishing me for not telling you I got shot?”

Len turns and walks backwards down the hall. “Now why would I ever do that? Night Kiddo, sweet dreams.”
Barry’s heart froze when he heard Joe say that his dad’s been stabbed in Iron Heights. In a daze, he asked if his other dad knew yet and Joe told him he was just about to call him. Barry told him he doesn’t have to and that he’ll race to the apartment to tell him. He runs to the apartment on autopilot and tells Len what Joe had told him on the phone. Still in shock, he vaguely hears Len’s voice.

“Barry? Kid, you need to sit before you fall.” Len directs him to the couch and gets him to sit down. Barry hears Len on the phone yelling, then Len calming down and curtly thanking whoever was on the other line. He disappears down the hall for some time, Barry’s not sure how long though. Time keeps slowing down for him, and then speeding back up. Someone crouches in front of Barry and puts their hand on his knee. “Kiddo?” Barry looks up from the hand to his dad’s face.

Barry’s eyebrows stitch together in confusion. His dad’s wearing his glasses in the day - something he never does - is wearing some beanie Cisco had forgotten here, and one of Barry’s sweaters. “Why are you dressed like that?”

“Because, while it has been ten years since I’ve been to Iron Heights, I don’t want to risk one of the older guards recognizing me. I talked Joe into getting me to see Henry too without having to check in.”

Barry feels a hint of a smile on his face. “Really? We all get to be in the same room together?”

Len nods and pushes a piece of hair out of Barry’s face. “Yup. Joe’s waiting outside now.” Len pats Barry on the shoulder and stands up. “Let’s go.”

The hour drive up to Iron Heights was the longest hour of Barry’s life. He could have made it there and back a thousand times over in the time it took to get there. When Joe finally parked, Barry jumped out of the backseat before Joe had even fully turned off the car. True to his word, Joe was able to get Len through without much hassle. Joe claimed he was Barry’s cousin from out of town and wanted to see his ‘Uncle Henry’.

A guard leads them into the infirmary and stands by the door. Henry’s bruised face lights up when he sees Len and Barry. “Well aren’t you a sight for sore eyes, how is my little Leo the Lion?” He turns to Barry. “Hey, Slugger.”
Len ducks his head down, trying to hide his smile. “Better than I have in a long time.” Len sits to the left of Henry and Barry is to the right. Joe stays standing behind Barry.

Henry takes Len’s hand as best he can while still being handcuffed to the bed. “I bet.” This is the most relaxed Barry has ever seen Len and he feels bad for having to interrupt.

“Dad,” Barry speaks up and Henry turns to him. “What happened?”

The smile slips off Henry’s face. “A rather stern reminder, I’d say, not to poke around Marcus Stockheimer’s business.”

“Dad, I told you to stop.”

Joe shuffles uncomfortably. “Your dad called me with more intel.” That gets twin glares from Barry and Len. “It helped us track down Clay and Shawna, and arrest Stockheimer.”

“I managed to screw up Marcus’ big heist too.” Barry could tell from Len’s shock that he didn’t know about any of this either. “It isn’t his fault. I did it to help you,” Henry looks back and forth between Len and Barry. “Both of you.”

Barry shakes his head. “You getting stabbed and beaten isn’t helping us.”

“Look, I don’t get to feel useful very much in here. So if I can help you for a change, I’m gonna want to be there for you. Just like you’ve been here for me after all these years.”


“You said Marcus has a big heist coming up?” Joe asks and Henry nods. “Do you know anything else about it?”

“Dad. Tell me who did this to you.” Barry interrupts.
“I was wondering that myself.” Len adds.

Henry shakes his head. “It doesn’t matter.”

“You said you wanted to, so help me.” Barry says.

Henry pauses as he thinks about it. “One of Marcus’ boys. Julius.” He squeezes Len’s hand and looks him in the eye. “Hey, if you do something to him to get yourself in here, I’ll kick your ass, you got me?”

Len nods. “Yes sir.”

Henry turns to Barry. “Same goes to you, Slugger.”

Barry nods too. “Okay.”

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Barry has been struggling trying to fight Shawna in the tunnel alone. His dad headed to S.T.A.R. Labs with Joe after they finished visiting his other dad in Iron Heights. Len offered to go with Barry to question Julius - Barry gets the feeling that he wanted to do a little more than just ask some questions - but he turned him down. He didn’t think he would be racing straight to the heist right after talking with Julius. After saving the construction worker and fighting with Shawna some more, Barry hears some engines revving. He spins around and finds Clay barreling towards them. He hears Shawna poof away behind him and the next thing he knows, she’s sitting in the passenger's seat next to Clay. Barry gets out of the way in record time and watches as they speed away.

“Barry remember, she cannot teleport if she cannot see. Limit her field of vision.” Dr. Wells says over the comms.

Barry starts looking around frantically to find something to work with. He sees a couple wrenches on the ground and a plan starts to form in his mind. Before he gets a chance to act though, he hears a motorcycle screeching to a halt behind him. Spinning around, he was expecting to see his dad and is shocked to find Hartley instead. He’s dressed the same way as when his dad brought him home, black hoody on and all. The only difference is that he has some type of gloves on that have green lights and buttons.
“What are you doing here?”

“Helping obviously. I’d cover your ears if I were you. Things are about to get a little loud.”

“Wha-” Barry gets cut off as Hartley steps in front of him and raises his arms. A deafening noise comes from the gloves and Barry doubles over in pain, covering his ears. All the lights in the tunnel shatter and Hartley stops. The only light visible is the brake lights of the car ahead.

“There you go, Flash. Now you can go and collect your rogue meta.” Hartley turns and walks away, his job done. Barry’s pretty sure the others are yelling out questions over his comm, but honestly he can’t hear a thing.

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That night, Barry and Len walk into the apartment together to find Hartley lounging on the couch with his laptop. Len marches up to him. “You ever steal my bike again, and you’re grounded for a year.”

Barry fights not to chuckle as Hartley rolls his eyes. “Yes, Dad.” He says sarcastically. He closes his laptop and puts it on a table beside him. “So, did you catch your meta?”

Barry plops down on the left of Hartley and Len sits down on Hartley’s right. “About that, how exactly did you know where I was and what I was doing?” Barry asks.

“And how did you know that Barry needed it pitch black in that tunnel?”

Hartley finds himself trapped between the two. “I got bored and decided to see if I was able to hack into S.T.A.R. Labs, check to make sure Cisco’s firewall is up to snuff. And you’re lucky security’s horrible. I got there just in time to bail you out.”

“And you hacking into my suit’s GPS and the comms had nothing to do with you being worried about my safety or anything.” Barry says sarcastically.
“Of course not.” Hartley answers a little too quickly.

“You know, there’s always room for you here on Team Flash.” Barry offers offhandedly.

Hartley snorts. “I’m going to have to take a hard pass on that. Harrison’s already ruined my life enough as it is. Plus I’m going to be busy starting next week.”

“Oh yeah?” Barry shifts to face Hartley better.

“I just had my final interview with Christina McGee personally over at Mercury Labs this afternoon. Since that press conference that Harrison held cleared my name and reputation, she liked what I could bring to her company. It’s also an added bonus that we have a mutual dislike for Harrison Wells. But if something comes up that you just can’t get done without me, I’ll be around to pitch in.”

“Thanks, for everything. You’ve been a great help.”

Hartley nods. “No problem.”

“Aww, my two kids are finally getting along, it’s a miracle.” Len fake sniffs and pretends to wipe a tear from his eye.

Hartley is about to argue, but is stopped by Barry putting a hand on his arm. “Don’t even bother when he gets like this, I’ve learned it’s best to just ignore him.”

Len shakes his head. “Now that’s just rude. To think, I’ve been shunned by both my kids, heartbreaking.”

Hartley just stares. “You’ll get over it.” He says flatly.

Barry laughs at his father’s offended face. He holds up his hand for Hartley to high five. “Now you’re getting it.” Hartley high fives him with a small smile.

The three settle in on the couch and Len turns on the tv. “Shark week reruns?”
“That’s cool with me. What about you, Hartley?” Hartley’s shocked that they genuinely want his opinion on what they all watch. He just nods, and Len and Barry each put an arm around the back of the couch behind Hartley. If this is what a family’s actually like, he thinks he could get used to it.

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The next night Joe was able to get Barry and Len in to see Henry again. He even got the guard to give them some privacy and wait out in the hall. Len’s in the same getup as he was last time and Hartley got a real laugh at Len’s glasses when they were heading out the door.

Henry smiles at Barry and Leo as they sit on opposite sides than last time they visited. “Barry had a lunch date today.” Leo blurts out before they even fully sit down. Henry turns to Barry looking shocked and proud.

Barry gives him a betrayed look as he leans back in his chair and rest his arms on the bed behind him. “So an actual date this time. Good for you. You didn’t tell her that your dad’s in the slammer, or that your other dad is an internationally wanted criminal?”

Barry takes a deep breath as he pretends to think about it. “No. I read in a magazine that that’s a big turnoff.”

They chuckle. “Smart.” Henry pauses for a moment. “So, word around here is that Julius was caught trying to escape, claims The Flash broke him out. Won’t be seeing Julius for a long time now.” He studies both Barry and Leo who pretend to look innocent. “Guess that’s karma for you.” He finally says. “Now, we didn’t get to talk about you last time, Leo. You staying out of trouble?”

“Haven’t been here since the last time you saw me ten years ago.” Leo deflects.

“You haven’t been caught in ten years.” Barry clarifies.

Leo leans back and crosses his arms. “Like I said, I haven’t been here in ten years. And I’ve been good this past year, haven’t even stolen anything.”

Barry scoffs. “You stole my bacon the other morning.”
“Henry, is it really stealing if I’m the one that bought it?”

Barry doesn’t give Henry a chance to say anything. He lets his chair fall forward on all four legs. “It was on my plate!”

Leo leans forward too. “Which are all plates I bought!”

Barry crosses his arms and pouts. “Still my bacon.”

Leo copies him. “Still my plate.”

“Alright, enough.” Henry cuts in when he realizes the argument is derailing. “Leo, no more stealing food off other people’s plates.” Henry says like they’ve had this talk many times before, which sadly they have. Leo always had sticky fingers when it came to food. Henry could never blame the kid since he never knew when his next meal would be when he was younger. Nora used to always make sure he would leave with extra food that would last him and his sister for a couple days at least. Henry sees Barry stick his tongue out at Leo. “Barry…” He says in a stern tone. Barry sends him a ‘who me?’ look and Henry just shakes his head.

After that the three got to talking again, just happy to all be in the same room again for the first time since Barry was one. Joe must have pulled a lot of strings because it’s way past the end of visiting hours and yet the guard still hasn’t come to collect Barry and Leo. It gets to the point where just Henry and Leo are reminiscing on the past and Barry just lays his head on Henry’s leg, content to just listen. Henry starts running his hand through Barry’s hair, and his breathing quickly evens out as he falls asleep.

“I hate Lewis for taking all of this from us.” Leo says softly, as if he didn't mean to say it out loud.

“I do too.” Henry agrees.

“He hasn't bothered you here has he? If he’s gone near you I’ll-“

Henry takes Leo’s hand, giving him pause. “Don't worry, I’m not even on his radar.”
Leo’s shoulders drop as the fight leaves him. He studies their linked hands. “I wish you had been my dad.” Leo whispers.

“Oh Kiddo,” Henry sighs. He raises his hand and cups Leo’s face. Leo closes his eyes and leans into the touch. “You will always be my son, you hear me? Always.”
Barry's gone through almost his entire closet of clothes now. It's his first date since moving on from Iris and he really wants it to go well. He puts on a button down, vest, and tie. He flashes out to the living room to show Hartley and his dad. Len's in an arm chair reading the paper and Hartley is on the couch, paperwork from his new job spread out covering every inch of the coffee table. Barry holds out his arms. “Well?”

Both Hartley and Len shake their heads. “Maybe if you’re going as a groomsman to a wedding. First date to a taco place? Not so much.” Hartley says.

Barry groans and speeds back to his room. He loses the vest, untucks his shirt, and adds a sports coat. He goes back to the living room and Hartley scrambles for his papers that almost blow off the table. That earns him a glare.

“Stop overthinking it and leave before Hartley murders you for messing up his paperwork. At this rate, I’ll help him hide the body.” Dad drawls.

Barry looks at his watch and sees Linda gets off work in two minutes. He flashes out of the apartment (and makes sure he doesn’t kick up an extra breeze that makes all of Hartley’s papers fly off the table, because that would be mean and wrong. Who is he kidding, it’s totally worth the yelling at he’ll get when he gets back tonight.)

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Shawna is startled awake by the sound of a mechanical door opening and closing.

“Hello?” she calls out. She gets up and starts banging on the mirror. “Hey, dickheads! You better let me out of here if you know what's good for you!” she takes a half step back when the mirrored wall hisses open. She doesn't hesitate to teleport out of the pod that The Flash left her in.
“There's no place for you to go, Miss Baez.” A deep voice drawls in front of what must be the only exit. “I just thought we could have a little chat over some Big Belly Burger.” Shawna stands from a platform on the other side of the trench from this mystery figure. He looks to be in his forties and has close cropped hair. He's wearing a leather jacket and has one hand in his jeans pocket while the other hand is holding two bags of Big Belly Burger. He steps forward and sets one of the bags down at the edge of his platform. Then he backs up and sits down against the door with his legs stretched out in front of him. He digs into his bag and pulls out a burger, unwrapping it and taking a large bite. Shawna’s stomach growls at the smell. She gives in and teleports over to grab the bag. As soon as she has a hold of it she goes back over to her platform.

She starts digging in, not sure what to say to the stranger. “I never get to eat these at home anymore.” He strikes up conversation again. “My friend’s been making me eat healthy, says I’ll drop dead of a heart attack at fifty from these things. I’ve never been big on listening though, so-”

“Who are you?” Shawna cuts him off, her curiosity getting the better of her.

“Leonard Snart.”

Shawna nearly chokes on her burger. “Holy shit, for real? I’ve heard of you, you’re like a legend. A ghost. In and out of a place without leaving a trace.”

Snart smirks. “Always pleased to meet a fan.”

“What are you doing here though? Are you here to make a prison break for us?” Then a thought hits Shawna like a ton of bricks. “Or are you working with that speedy freak? I’ve heard you’ve quit the game, did you make some deal with them so you won’t get stuck in here too?”

Snart drops his smirk and Shawna feels fear in the pit of her stomach from the glare he sends her. “Don’t call him a freak. He’s a good person who just wants to help.”

Shawna gives a wry laugh. “Help? He kidnapped me and is keeping me locked up here indefinitely. How does that make him a good person?”

“Everyone else in here should be here. They are all killers with no conscious, and have very dangerous powers.” Snart points a fry at her. “You on the other hand, just got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Clay Parker is an idiot, but you, you’re smart. You could do a lot better than him.”
phone starts ringing, interrupting Snart. He checks who it is and rolls his eyes, answering anyway. “This better be important.” He listens to the other line. “Is there a meta involved? No? Then let the kid handle it, I’m not a cop and I’m not helping CCPD on something as little as a robbery at some convenient store.” He hangs up without listening to a reply. “So sorry, now where were we…”

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Barry wipes his hands before answering his phone while Linda goes to wash her hands in the bathroom. He sighs internally when he sees it’s Cisco. “Hey.”

“Robbery at the convenient store on Brand and Paulson.”

Seriously? Don’t criminals ever take a break? “Oh, man, come on. I’m kind of on a date.” Barry turns to make sure Linda isn’t coming back. “Can’t CCPD or my dad take care of it?”

“Dude, I tried Len first, but he just said he’s not a cop and will only work on stuff that’s meta related. I guess you’ll just have to read in the paper tomorrow about a poor little old lady getting robbed, and you could have done something…”

Barry rolls his eyes. “How do you know it’s a little old lady?”

“Please. It’s always a little old lady.” Cisco starts slurping some drink on the other line.

Barry takes a deep breath. He knows for sure his dad’s not helping to punish him for bothering Hartley, the ‘golden child’ that can do no wrong. “Okay. All right.” Barry goes to take care of it in less than two seconds. “No little old lady!” He needs to add to Cisco. He fixes his tie right when Linda walks back, none the wiser.

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Barry’s having a great time just walking and talking with Linda after getting some coffee from Jitters. Linda’s phone rings. “Uh, it’s work. Just a sec.” She answers the phone and walks off for some privacy. Barry’s phone rings a second later.
He checks and sees it’s Joe this time. “Hello.”

“Hey, I know you’re on a date, but we’ve got a jumper on 52nd and Waid.”

Barry doesn’t even try and argue. He flashes there without a word and drops the guy off in front of Eddie, all without stopping. He gets back to Linda right as she hangs up.

~~~~~~~~~~

Len and Joe are waiting in the cold for Cisco outside Henry’s old house early the next morning. “Have a lot of good memories in this house.” Len comments.

Joe glances over at him. “You come here a lot?”

Len nods. “After Barry’s mother left him on my doorstep this is the first place I went to. Spent most of my teen years here too. I never thought I’d be back here.”

“After what happened to Nora, I didn’t think I’d be back here either.” The two are interrupted by a S.T.A.R. Labs van pulling up. Cisco jumps out of the driver’s seat. “Hey.” Joe greets him.

Len gives Cisco a small wave from behind Joe. Cisco pulls out a large bag. “Hey, man. Sup, Len.”

Joe shakes Cisco’s hand in full business mode. “Thanks for meeting us.”

Cisco closes the van door and looks around. “No problem. What exactly are we doing here?”

The three walk up to the older house. Len hangs back and lets Joe take the lead. “That’s Barry’s old house.”

“Where Barry’s mo-” Cisco glances back at Len. “I mean, Mrs. Allen was murdered?”
Len waves Cisco off. “It’s fine. Nora was Barry’s mom. She raised the kid, she deserves that title more than his biological mother.”

Cisco nods and turns back to Joe. “So Len and I have been working together, and we have a theory on who might’ve been involved in Barry’s mother’s death. Thought you could help us re-examine the scene. You could apply your expertise, and help us prove who did it.”

“Sure. We should get Dr. Wells and Caitlin in on this.”

“That won’t be necessary.” Len jumps in. “I don’t feel comfortable with Wells on this, and Caitlin might mention something to Barry. Joe and I don’t want him to know we’re doing this, might get his hopes up for nothing.” Len figures that’s a good enough cover for not getting Wells here. Cisco will just assume that Len’s still pissed at Wells for everything that happened last week.

Joe knocks on the door and a middle aged woman, who still dresses like she’s twenty, answers the door. She’s also clearly had a lot of work done. And not just on her face. “Hello ma’am. I’m Detective West. This is Cisco Ramon and-”

Len waves from the back. “And I’m Leonard Allen.”

“Please, it’s Sherry. Like the drink.” No one knows quite how to respond to that. “So, what can I do for you, detective?”

“I don’t know if you’re aware, but there was a homicide in this residents about fifteen years ago.”

“Oh, I know.”

“We’ve reopened the investigation. Do you mind if we come in and take a look around?”

“No, of course not. Come in.” She leans against the doorway and watches Joe and Len as they walk past her.

“Do you live alone?” Joe asks.
“Yeah, I’m divorced.” She twirls her hair. Len and Cisco share a look. They walk into the other room as Joe continues to talk with Sherry.

“Allen?” Cisco asks with a smirk as he puts his bag on the table.

“Figured it was safer than saying Snart. All it’d take is one google search and she’d be calling 911.”

Cisco shrugs. “True.”

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Len walks around the room as old memories flood him.

A nineteen year old Len frantically bangs on the door while holding the crying bundle in his arms. Henry and Nora answer the door in their pj’s.


“He won’t stop! And I don’t- help me, I don’t know what to do! She just left a note and birth certificate with him on my doorstep! She didn’t even check to see if I was home!”

Henry holds him by the shoulders. “Son, you need to take a deep breath and calm down. We’ll figure this all out, okay?” Len sniffs and does as he’s told. “Good job. Now, Nora will hold him for a minute while we go get you some dry clothes.” Henry looks at his wet clothes. “Did you run here?”

Len takes another shaky breath and nods. “I know it’s raining, but Mick had the car and the busses weren’t running this late. I wrapped him in the warmest jacket I could find and came here. I would’ve waited until morning, but it’s been over an hour and he wouldn’t stop crying.”

“Sweetie, you’re shaking. Let me take him so Henry can help you.” Len looks down at the red faced
Henry pulls him into a hug. “We’ll get this sorted, I promise.”


Len bats Cisco’s hand out of his face. “Peachy.”

“Do you need anything?” Sherry asks as she leans against the wall. “You’re looking a little pale there, Leonard, are you sure you’re alright?”

“Like I said, I’m fine. It’s just hard being here, it was my parents’ place.”

Sherry pushes off the wall and walks up to him. “Oh you poor dear. I heard a boy was here when it happened, was that you?”

“No, my son. He was staying with his grandparents while I was out of town on business.”

“You sure you don’t need anything?”

“Actually, can I ask one thing? Not to be rude, but a moment alone would be nice.”

She waves her hand as she walks backwards. “Oh, of course dear! I’ll just be in the other room if you need me.”

Len smiles his most charming smile. “Thank you so much.” He drops the smile after she leaves. Cisco’s staring at him like he just performed a magic trick. “What?”

“Man, you need to teach me how to lie like that. All of that sounded true.”
Len crosses his arms. “That’s because ninety-nine percent of it was true. Really, all of it was, if you count ‘business’ as stealing. Now,” Len’s eager to get off this subject right away before Cisco could ask anymore questions. “You need something that’s the same here?”

Cisco takes the hint and drops it. “Yeah, but everything here’s different. I mean, it has been fifteen years.”

Len holds up a finger. “That’s where you’re wrong. One thing here is still the same.”

“Wait seriously?” Joe starts flipping through all the pictures from the scene that night.

“Yup.” He points to a small vanity. “That hasn’t moved since I was sixteen.”

Joe holds up a picture. “Oh my God, you’re right.”

“Dude, how do you remember that?”

Len shifts, uncomfortable being put on the spot. “It was Nora’s mother’s. Nora and Henry didn’t like it, but they didn’t have the heart to part with it. Her mother had it since she herself was a little girl.”

Cisco pumps his hands in the air. “Yes! Can you guys pull it away from the wall? I’ll try scanning it with the super light.” Len and Joe each take a side and bring it to the middle of the room. Cisco neels behind the mirror and shines his light on it. Little flecks glow on the back. “Oh my God.” Cisco mutters.

Len tilts his head to the side. “What is that? Blood couldn’t have reached the back.”

“It’s silver nitrate.”

“Isn’t that the compound used in photography?” Joe asks.

“Yes, and it was also often used to back vintage mirrors.”
Cisco pats Joe on the shoulder as he rushes over to his bag. Len shrugs. “So for the people in the audience who failed high school chemistry, what does that mean?”

Cisco pauses and looks up at him. “You failed chemistry?”

“Turns out, you need to show up to a class every once in a while to pass said class.”

Cisco nods in agreement and gets back to what he was doing. “Anyway, if there were two speedsters there that night,” Cisco goes to the living room, and Joe and Len follow him. “The sparks from their movements would’ve generated enough flashes to actually expose images onto the silver nitrate.”

They all stop at the doorway. “Are you saying what I think you’re saying?” Joe asks.

“This mirror might contain photographs of what actually happened that night.”

“So if I’m getting this right, we could see whatever killed Nora, actually killing her?” Len clarifies.

Cisco starts getting technical with all the science talk and Len tunes him out. He feels sick to his stomach and he puts his hand over his mouth. He must have looked worse than he thought, because the next thing he knows Joe is steering him to the staircase. “Son, you need to sit down.” Logically he knows Joe is right next to him, but he sounds like he’s far away. He stumbles to sit and an arm steadys him, helping lower him to sit down. He can’t catch his breath and he starts to rock back and forth, unable to stop. He starts to pick at the back of his hand. “Len, stop. You’re gonna hurt yourself.” A hand settles over his. “I need you to take deep breathes with me, okay? In through the nose… one, two, three. Good, now hold that breath… now exhale through your mouth.” Joe had him do that a couple more times as he rubs circles on his back.

Len holds his head in his hands after the wave of anxiety has passed. “Haven’t had one of those in a long time…” He glances over at Joe who’s still sitting next to him and has a steady hand on his back, the weight being a reassuring pressure. “How did you know what to do?”

“After what happened that night, Barry would get anxiety attacks. His therapist taught me how to help him. Are you okay?”
Cisco shifts from foot to foot in front of him. “Yeah, you really got me scared, man. Is there anything I can do?”

“If it’s not too much trouble, could you go ask our host for a glass of water?”

“Of course, I’ll be right back.” Cisco speed walks down the hall.

Joe starts rubbing his hand up and down Len’s back again. “Didn’t want an audience?”

Len shakes his head. “Not a big fan of people seeing me like this. I used to just lock myself in the bathroom until it passed. Henry and Nora were the only-” The words get stuck in Len’s throat.

“Hey, it’s fine. Say whatever you’re comfortable saying, or nothing at all.” Joe says soothingly.

Len nods jerkily. “It’s stupid. I just- I’ve seen the pictures after it happened, I read Barry and Henry’s testimony of what happened, I feel like I’ve mentally prepared myself. But the idea of seeing it happen first hand-” Len shrugs. “Like I said, it’s stupid.”

“Len, look at me.” Len lifts his head. “That is not stupid, do you understand. Hearing accounts on what happened and witnessing something first hand are two very different things. If you don’t want to see-”

“No, I need to see what happened. I owe Nora that much.” Len interrupts.

Joe nods. “Okay. It’s all up to you.” Joe pats him on the back one last time and drops his arm down to his side. “And I’ll make sure to forget that you admitted to a cop a federal offence. Stealing evidence, even on a closed case, is still a pretty serious crime.” Joe shoves him lightly.

Len can’t help but laugh. “It wasn’t stealing. I put everything back, so that makes it more like borrowing.”

Joe laughs. “Oh, well in that case, you are free to go.”
Len gives a small bow. “Thank you very much.”

Cisco comes back with Sherry in toe. “Here’s a water, man.”

Len nods gratefully and takes a small sip. Sherry shifts with a large box. “I’ve had this in my closet for years, thought you might want it. It was left in the attic and didn’t think it right to just throw it out.”

Len sets the glass down by his feet and takes the box. He opens it up and gasps. Cisco and Joe peek in. “Books?” Cisco asks.

Len pulls one out. “Not just any books, it’s all of Nora’s photo books. This one is the baby book she made for Barry.” Len brushes some dust off. “I teased her for making it - being only nineteen I thought it was stupid - but she said someday I’d want to look through it.” He looks up at Sherry. “Thank you for this, truly. I never thought I would ever see any of these pictures again.”

Sherry seems to actually blush at that. “Oh, it was no problem. Like I said, pictures are something that shouldn’t be thrown away. I have another box, if the detective here wants to help me get it.” She points up the stairs.

Joe squeezes the back of Len’s neck. “Of course, show me where to.” Joe gets up and the two head upstairs. Cisco plops down where Joe was.

“So there are pictures of you as a teenager in there? And Barry as a baby?” Cisco points to the book still in Len’s lap. Len nods and cracks it open to the first page. The book is stiff from being closed after all these years. Len snorts at the first page. “Whoa.” Cisco leans over his shoulder. “Barry’s so tiny there.”

A young Len is fast asleep on his back on the couch. Barry is sleeping on Len’s chest and Len has a steady hand on his back, keeping him in place. Barry’s tiny fist has a tight grip on Len’s shirt. “That’s from the night I got him. His mother had left him on my doorstep and he wouldn’t quit crying, so I came here.” Len shakes his head with a chuckle. “I was a mess. Nora went down the street to borrow diapers and formula from a couple who just had a child of their own. After feeding and changing him, he knocked out on my chest. I had no idea she took this picture.”

“You look like a kid there.” Cisco comments.
“I was a kid there. I couldn’t even legally drink, and yet I was in charge of watching over this little life.”

Cisco leans back and shakes his head. “Dude, I could barely take care of myself at nineteen. I can’t even imagine what it’d be like having to take care of a little baby too.”

“You barely take care of yourself now.” That earns Len a glare from Cisco. “I was just lucky I had Henry and Nora, and even Mick. They were all a huge help.”

They hear footsteps of Joe and Sherry returning, and Cisco gets up to let them down the stairs. Joe hefts the box onto his hip so he could shake her hand. “Thank you for letting us look around. I’m sorry to say we have to come back again in a couple hours.”

She shakes his hand. “You can come around any time you like, detective.” Len puts the book away and closes the box. He hands her the glass before picking up his own box. Joe and Len head for the exit while Cisco runs to pack up his equipment. “Oh, and Leonard. That box,” She points to the one Joe’s holding. “Has a couple home videos in it too. Just to warn you, you’ll need to dig up an old vhs player though.”

“I’ll try to find one. Thanks again for this.”

Cisco shows up and they head out the door. She holds the door open for them. “No problem.” She flutters her eyes at Joe and gives a little wave. “Bye bye, detective. I’ll see you later.”

After the door closes and they’re down the driveway, Cisco gives a mock wave. “Bye bye, detective. Somebody has a crush.” Cisco does a singsong voice.

Joe completely ignores him. “You want me to take these boxes?”

Len glances at his bike. “Yeah, there’s no way I can take these on that.”

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Barry is ecstatic! It’s his second date with Linda in as many days and he gets the apartment to
himself. It was surprisingly easy to get his dad to hang out at Joe’s for a couple hours (His dad had said “Take all the time you need, kid.” and then winked at him. He’s not going to focus too hard on that, he still shudders when he thinks about it.) and Mick’s somewhere… Mick always goes to. Barry’s not sure where he disappears to, but do to his job, the less he knows, the better. (Barry ignores all the arson cases that appear on his desk the morning after Mick’s out for the night. He just makes sure to sneak it onto another CSI’s desk.) Hartley already has plans to go out drinking with some co-workers from his new job.

Or at least that’s what he would be doing if he ever left. “I know what you’re doing.” Barry says from his place in the kitchen. He’s trying to cook a simple dish for tonight. Luckily Mick left very detailed instructions and left everything out that he will need.

Hartley fixes his sleeve collar. “I have no idea what you mean, I’m just getting ready to head out.”

Barry levels a glare at him. “You’ve been ‘getting ready’,” Yes he used air quotes, so sue him. “For the past forty minutes. You’re just stalling so you can meet her.”

“I resent that. Some of us just like to be more presentable than others.” Hartley looks Barry up and down. Great, now the sweater is starting to feel like a bad choice.

The doorbell rings and Hartley smirks. “Hartley, no!” He beats Barry to the door.

“Hello.”

“Hi? Am I at the right door?” Barry hears Linda asks.

“You must be Barry’s date. I’m Hartley, his much smarter and more handsome brother-”

Barry scrambles to the door. “-Who is just leaving. Oh wow,” Barry gets his first look at Linda. “You look amazing.”

She smiles. “You’re not so bad yourself.”

Hartley groans and rolls his eyes. “You two are disgusting. So long.”
“Bye, Hart.” Barry closes the door and sighs. “Sorry about him, he’s… well Hartley.”

The two go over to the kitchen. “So you live with your brother?”

“And my dad. Is that lame?” Barry glances up from Mick’s instructions.

Linda shrugs as she looks around. “Not at all, I still live with my parents.”

“Really?”

She shakes her head with a grin. “No. That would be so lame.”

Barry laughs. “Well, I had planned a big night out, but then my uncle left me this awesome recipe.” Barry pulls the meal out of the oven. “Don’t worry, he said he made it idiot proof, so it should turn out really good. We just have to let it sit for a couple minutes.”

Linda comes up close to him. “I have a great idea we can do while that sits.”

“Wha-” Linda grabs him by the collar and pulls him into a kiss.

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Len is helping Cisco set up his, thing , in the other room while Joe takes care of Sherry.

Joe walks back into the room. “I sent Sherry to the movies.”

“Aww and you didn’t go with her? Bet she’s real disappointed in that.” Len teased and Joe levels a glare at him.
“Trust me, the best show in town is going to be in here.” Cisco says as he adjusts something on his table machine thing. Man, Len really should have paid a little bit more attention in school, but from the look on Joe’s face he doesn’t know what the thing is either. Joe starts asking questions and Cisco answers every one, talking about photography and light exposures.

Joe comes up to Len’s side. “You sure you wanna be here for this?” He whispers. Len nods without a word and Joe pats him on the shoulder. “Okay.”

Cisco takes a half step back. “Alright, everything is all set. Can you hit the lights?”

Joe turns off the lights and Cisco turns on his machine. It’s like a projector and is showing a 3D image in the middle of the room. Len swallows the lump in his throat as Cisco flips through the images one by one. Len tries not to focus on the young Barry screaming in the doorway. “Can you go through it again, slower this time?” Joe asks.

“What did you see?”

Joe studies each image. “That, right there!” He points into the other room. Cisco pauses the slideshow and they all go to the next room. They all see an image of a blood spatter. Joe peels back the wallpaper and they find a blood stain. “I bet this is from one of the speedsters that were here that night.”

~~~~~~~~~~

The next day, Len is on edge. Joe and Cisco need to run the sample the blood in Barry’s lab at CCPD. Both Len and Joe were paranoid about running it at S.T.A.R. Labs, and they knew Barry’s lab would be empty since he put in some personal time at work. Len and Joe both agreed it would be too great a risk trying to sneak Len into CCPD in the middle of the day, so Len’s stuck on the sidelines as he waits. He decides to kill some time and check in at S.T.A.R. Labs and see what’s so important that Barry took time off work for.

Len walks into the Cortex as Wells is speaking. “-Stein clearly thinks he can separate himself from Ronnie’s body using nuclear fission.”

He freezes in the doorway. “I’m no physicist, but isn’t nuclear anything pretty dangerous.” Caitlin and Barry nod in greeting with strained smiles.
Wells turns his chair halfway around. “Nice of you to join us, Mr. Snart. We must thank you for talking with Hartley, his observations on what happened to Professor Stein and Ronnie the night of the particle accelerator explosion were enough that we were able to track the two down.”

Len strolls over to Barry and Caitlin. “Glad to be of service.” Someone walks out of the medical area Caitlin has set up. “Who’s that now?”

The young man freezes at the sight of him. “Leonard? Is that you?”

Len tenses up. “How do you know who I am?”

Caitlin steps forward. “Len, this is Professor Stein.”

Len shakes his head. “No, Stein was a lot older. No offence.” He tacks on.

Barry steps forward now. “Dad, she’s right. That is Professor Stein. He’s just stuck in Ronnie’s body.” Barry then goes into more detail of the Firestorm matrix, most of it going over Len’s head honestly.

“So it’s like a DoctorDonna type thing.”

Barry nods. “If you want to compare it to Doctor Who, yeah. Like Donna’s body with The Doctor’s brain. So, how do you two know each other?”

Stein gets a glint in his eye. “Leonard here used to sneak into my lectures. I would allow him to stay though, he had this way of thinking, it was just marvelous. He would find ways around problems that my other students would never think of.”

If Len had any less self control he’d be blushing. “I’m just good at numbers. The rest went over my head.”

“Do not sell yourself short, Leonard.” Len nods, getting more uncomfortable by the minute.
“Sorry to interrupt, but I was wondering if I could run a couple tests, Professor Stein?” Caitlin asks.

“Of course, Dr. Snow. Lead the way.” The two head to the treadmill room where more equipment is kept.

Barry’s phone rings. He checks who it is and apologizes as he heads to another room to answer it in private, leaving Len with Wells. “I’m gonna go take a walk.” Len does not like the vibes that guy gives off and it makes his skin crawl to be alone in a room with him.

Wells turns and speaks before Len could leave the cortex. “I agree with Stein, you never seem to give yourself enough credit. You are very smart when you choose to apply yourself, sometimes a little too smart. I have to caution you, some could think of that as a threat, and act accordingly.”

Len turns to face him with a blank face. “Good thing you’re not a threat, right, Dr. Wells?”

Len suppresses a shudder, it’s as if Wells is looking right through him. Wells then plasters on a fake smile. “We are all on Team Flash, as Cisco would say. Have a pleasant walk, Mr. Snart.”

Len gives the same fake smile, turns on his heel, and walks out as calmly as possible.

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Len’s deep in thought as he paces the halls of S.T.A.R. Labs. Wells has never sat well with him, and that last conversation didn’t help his paranoia in the slightest. He’s so lost in thought about it that he doesn’t realize someone is walking the other way until they bump into each other.

“Sorry,” Cisco mutters distracted. He turns and sees it’s Len he bumped into. He glares. “Did you know?”

Len’s honestly lost for once. “Know what?”

Cisco marches up to him. “You’ve never liked Dr. Wells. Hell, it was probably your idea.” He hisses so they’re not overheard.
“Back up, Short Stuff. I have no idea what you’re talking about.” Len growls. He’s never been good with people invading his space.

Cisco stands his ground, even goes as far as to poke him in the chest. “You and Joe seriously think Dr. Wells had something to do with Barry’s mother’s murder? Why would he want to kill her? He didn’t even know Barry back then.”

Len pushes Cisco’s invading hand away. “I’m gonna let you get away with that because you are mad and lashing out, but if you ever touch me again you’ll be flat on your back before you can blink. Now listen here, Joe and I have twenty plus years of experience over you. We’ve dealt with criminals most of our lives, we know the signs and I can tell you this right now, Harrison Wells is hiding something. So don’t make me repeat myself for a third time, and back, up.”

Cisco’s eyes widen as he takes a couple steps back and gives Len some room. Len sighs at the look of fear on Cisco’s face and feels a twinge of regret for reacting the way he did. “I’m sorry, I just, I know what it feels like when someone you look up to lets you down. It took longer than I’d care to admit to realize just how horrible my father was.”

Cisco fidgets with his hands. “I’ll run the samples. I’m sorry about the yelling and poking and being all up in your space.”

Len rolls his eyes. “All’s forgiven, kid. Did Barry teach you his puppy dog face? Because you got it down pat.” Len turns Cisco around by the shoulders and gives him a little push. “C’mon, I bet the others need your help. We got a bit of a doozy this week.”

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Len snickers as Cisco looks to have a stroke meeting Professor Stein in his friend Ronnie’s body. “A little warning what have been nice.” Cisco mutters to Len after they enter the other room.

Len barks a laugh. “You should have seen the look on your face, it was priceless.” Len walks over to Barry who’s fighting a grin. Len leans over to him. “Don’t fight it, I know you want to laugh.”

Barry elbows him. “You are evil.”
“All joking aside,” Wells cuts in. “It seems Ronnie’s fight with the Flash has exacerbated the Firestorm matrix.”

Len hangs back and lets the nerds talk about Ronnie and Professor Stein’s condition, and how to separate the two without leveling all of Central City in a nuclear blast. Len perks up when Wells starts hinting at murder though. “We are not killing anybody.” Len says firmly. “Two lives for millions? How about spending these couple hours we have trying to help them, not sentencing them to death.”

“Can we have a minute?” Caitlin asks.

“Let’s go, Cisco. If he’s not going to help, we are.” Len turns and looks at Wells one last time. “For a scientist, you sure are pretty nonchalant about killing two people in cold blood.”

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Cisco is working on the quantum splicer in the lab with Wells when Len gets an idea. “I’ll be right back.” He says as he runs out of the cortex. He ignores Barry yelling out questions as he books it down to the pipeline. He opens the pod for Shawna. She’s lounging against the wall. “We need your help.”

Shawna shakes her head and scoffs. “You must be crazy if you think I’m gonna help the Flash.”

Cisco’s voice comes on over the intercom, interrupting their conversation. “Hey Len, I don’t know where you are, but you better get up here! We have a bit of a situation. Scratch that, we have a major situation!” Cisco must forget to turn off the intercom because he mutters the next part under his breath. “He’s not gonna make it. He’s gonna blow.”

Len then hears Wells in the background. “Get out of there. Barry, get out of there now!”

Len turns his attention to Shawna, who looks a little frightened at what she overhears. “Please, you need to save him. With your powers, you’re the only one that can get him out of there in time. If you do this one thing, you’re free to go. You never need to come back, now please, save him.”

Shawna looks at him with concern and thinks about it. “Where do I have to go?”
This almost didn't get done in time. I dug out my old game cube and have been addicted to Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life. It's just so much fun...
A couple hours late, but this chapter is super long to make up for it.

Life got in the way of writing, I started watching the new season of OITNB, went out drinking for a friend's birthday, and then we got our first real heat wave of the year. I'm from Washington, we don't do heat. I don't mind it at 85, but when it's almost 100 degrees, even that's too hot for me. I wrote half of this in front of a fan.

Heads up that there is very light hinting at ColdAtom. (At least onesided at the moment)

Thanks for all the kudos and wonderful comments. They fill my life with joy and make me so happy that your enjoying this so far.

Barry’s running as fast as he can. He can feel Caitlin holding on tight and the heat on his back from the explosion. There’s a pressure on his arm and then all of a sudden he and Caitlin are yards away from the edge of the radius of the blast. Barry tumbles to a stop and his cowl gets torn off in the process.

“Ow, learn to stop better there, Roadrunner.”

Barry scrambles to his feet. He knows that voice, it sounds like, “Shawna? What are you doing here? How are you here?”

Shawna gets up and brushes the dust and ash off her clothes. “Saving your sorry ass, that’s what. A thank you would be nice.”

Barry tilts his head to the side. “Thank you?” He turns and helps Caitlin up. “You okay?”

“Fine, thanks.”

“Barry? What happened out there?” Dr. Wells’ voice asks over the comms.

“Are you guys okay?” That time it’s Cisco.
Barry presses the comm on the chest of his suit on. “Yeah, Caitlin and I are fine, thanks to Shawna.”

“Shawna?!” Cisco exclaims. “How is Shawna there?”

Barry hears footsteps running into the cortex. “Kiddo, you okay?”

“I’m fine, Dad. Were you the one that let Shawna out?”

Barry sees Shawna mouth the question ‘Dad?’ and then Caitlin shake her head. ‘Later.’ She mouths back.

“It was that or have you be irradiated to a crisp. Her powers make her the only one faster than a speedster.”

Before Barry could argue about how dangerous it is out here for her, Cisco cuts in. “About that, the Geiger counter in the suit, it’s reading less than one millirad.”

Barry furrows his brow. “But that’s normal.

“There is no radiation.” Dr. Wells says.

Barry tells Shawna and Caitlin as much. “That means Ronnie and Professor Stein might still be alive.” Caitlin says. “We need to go check.”

Barry turns to Shawna. “Our friends might be hurt. I can’t carry three people back to the lab at once.”

Shawna crosses her arms and bites her lip. “And you’re sure it’s safe over there? That looks like a real nuclear blast.”

“It’s totally safe.” Barry assures her.
Shawna huffs. “Fine. But after I’m done playing taxi I’m outta here. Snart promised if I help you I could leave.”

Barry nods without hesitation. “I’ll walk you out myself if I have to.”

Shawna makes a sweeping motion with her arm. “Lead the way, Red.”

Barry picks up Caitlin and runs her to the edge of the crater. Shawna pops in next to them. “What did this anyway?” Shawna asks as they walk down the steep incline, Caitlin leading the way.

“Not a what, who. Two people. They got merged together when the accelerator blew.” Barry explains.

The three reach the bottom and they find a figure laying on his back. As they get closer, Barry realizes it’s Ronnie, or at least his body. Barry’s still not sure if Stein is still in there. Caitlin runs forward and collapses on her knees.

“Ronnie?” Ronnie starts moving and looks up at her, groaning. “Tell me your name.”

He reaches for her with a smile. “Ronnie Raymond.”

Barry looks away with a smile, giving the two some privacy. “So he’s the one that caused this giant blast? Just one guy?” Shawna asks Barry in shock.

Barry shrugs. “I can run faster than the speed of sound and you can teleport as far as the eye can see, is it too hard to believe that someone could cause a nuclear explosion?”

“Pardon me, I obviously need a change of clothes.” An older voice comes out of nowhere.

Barry’s comms crackle to life and his dad’s voice comes through. “Did I just hear Professor Stein? Tell him I’m going to kick his ass for running off like that!” Barry laughs and relays the message.
Stein looks slightly embarrassed. “I have to admit, that wasn’t my most thought out plan.”

Barry turns to Shawna. “I got Caitlin, if you want to take Ronnie and Professor Stein.”

“It’s a race, Flash.”

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Len waits anxiously outside the elevator for Barry and everyone to arrive. The doors finally ding open and the first thing to greet Len was the sound of arguing.

“-Just admit it, I beat you fair and square, Speedy.”

“In your dreams, you were eating my dust the whole time!”

Caitlin and Ronnie are in the front of the group, and get out of the elevator as fast as they can to get away from the bickering. They go over to Cisco and have reunion hug. Shawna and Barry stay in the elevator, too invested in their arguing.

Stein is trapped in the back with torn clothes. “Excuse me, but could you two pursue your insistent squabbling somewhere else. I would like to leave this elevator some time in the next century.”

The two argue over him. “You want a rematch, Red? Name a time and place.”

“Fine! How about a dark road at midnight.”

“Enough!” He yells over the both of them. They stop arguing and turn to him.

“Who won?” They both ask at the same time.

“This is me, not caring. Now let Professor Stein out before he starts lecturing at the two of you.”
Shawna and Barry grumble as they cross their arms and exit the elevator. He offers a small smile to Stein. “You got old in the past twenty years.”

“You don’t exactly look like a spry chicken yourself.” He says right back without missing a beat. He holds out his hand. “It’s good seeing you again, Leonard.”

Len shakes his hand. “Same to you.”

Stein looks behind Len to the reunion with Ronnie and the other S.T.A.R. Labs employees. “Excuse me, are we all planning to sing *Kumbaya* next? Because I would like a shower and fresh change of clothes first.”

“Professor Stein I presume.”

Stein nods in greeting. “Harrison Wells.”

Cisco gestures for Stein to follow him. “Right this way, Professor.”

Len, Barry, and Shawna hang back as the rest of the group leaves. Len turns to Shawna. “Well then, Miss Baez. Thank you for the help. Like I said before, you’re free to go.”

“You’re really just letting me go? Just like that?”

Before Len gets a chance to reply, Barry beats him to the punch. “I did say I’d walk you out personally if I had to. We meant it, thank you for saving my life, and Caitlin’s. If you need anything,” Barry flashes off in a gust of wind and is back a moment later with a piece of paper. “This is my number. Call or text me anytime and I’ll be there in a flash.”

Shawna snorts at the pun, but takes the piece of paper anyway. “You still owe me that rematch, Red.”

Barry laughs and nods his head. “Sure. Goodbye, Shawna.”
Shawna heads into the elevator and presses the ground floor button. “And Shawna,” Len says. “Don’t forget what I told you a couple days ago.”

Shawna salutes as the doors shut closed. Barry turns to Len as they start walking down the hall. “What did you tell her?”

Len wraps an arm around his shoulders and pulls him close. “A better question is, are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I told you that already. Now can I go and get changed now? I’m covered in ash and this suit is not that comfortable.” Barry pauses. “Don’t tell Cisco I said that, I just got him to at least call it our suit. I say it’s just a short time before I get him to cave and call it my suit.”

Len snorts. “At least you got him to agree to a shared custody. He still calls the cold gun his.”

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Barry, now changed, and Len stand back in the cortex stifling their laughter as they listen to Stein and Ronnie argue back and forth.

Barry leans into Len so they aren’t overheard. “Now I see why you and Professor Stein get along so well.”

Len doesn’t know if he should be offended by that or not. “I don’t fight that much.” He finally says.

Barry barks out a laugh. “That is the biggest lie you’ve ever told. Just the other day, you and Hartley got into a forty-five minute screaming match over which Star Wars movie is the best.”

“That’s because that little heathen thinks Return of the Jedi was the best when clearly it’s A New Hope.”

Cisco pokes his head out of the medical room. “The best Star Wars was Empire Strikes Back, right Barry?”
Barry shrugs with a guilty look. “Sorry dude. I gotta side with my dad on this. *A New Hope* was pretty awesome.”

Cisco shakes his head while looking completely betrayed.

“If Mr. Allen is done comparing *Star Wars* movies, I believe he can take you home.” Wells says.

Barry groans. “But I just got changed. I don’t want to burn through another shirt.”

Len rolls his eyes. “If Caitlin would be kind enough to let me borrow her car, I’ll take Professor Stein home.” Len volunteers.

Caitlin tosses him her keys. She points at him. “If I see one *scratch* on my car-”

Len holds up his hands. “They’ll never find my body. Don’t worry, I’ll keep your car safe.” He nudges Barry. “C’mon Kid, you’re coming too.”

Stein catches up to them as the three head out of the cortex. “Don’t tell me you still drive that horrible bike of yours, Leonard.”

“Okay, I won’t tell you.”

Stein huffs. “Honestly, you’re going to get yourself killed on that thing one of these days. Do you know how often fatalities occur in accidents involving a motorcycle?”

“Nope, but I’m sure you’re going to tell me. Again.”

Stein continues to spout out facts and statistics to Len the whole walk to the parking lot, Barry snickering the whole time.

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Barry sits in the back, letting Professor Stein take the passenger seat. “So Mr. Allen, how was your attempt to win back your girlfriend?” Professor Stein asks.

“You and Linda broke up? I thought you two were doing great.” His dad glances in the mirror at him.

Barry rubs the back of his neck. “Linda wasn’t too happy about me having to leave in the middle of our date. She found out I lied about where I went, I couldn’t tell her I had to leave for Flash things, and she wasn’t too happy about it.” Barry leans forward so he’s between the two front seats. “Thanks for the advise Professor Stein. She decided to give me another shot.”

Len squints at him in the mirror. “What did you do?”

Well he’s going to find out one way or another, it’s better if it comes from him instead of Iris. Barry really regrets introducing those two, they love bonding over his misery. At least Iris hasn’t pulled out their high school yearbook yet. “I took a bite of a ghost pepper and threw up in the middle of her work place, making a complete fool of myself.”

“And they say romance is dead.” Len says.

“Actually Leonard, I seem to recall you doing similar shenanigans to gain the attention of a young man in one of my classes.”

Barry beams. This is like winning the lottery for him. “Ooo, please tell. I never get to hear stories of my dad when he was younger.”

Professor Stein grins as well. Barry really is understanding why these two get along. They may seem polar opposites on the surface, but deep down they both love to cause drama. “Your father just adored him. He followed him around like a lovestruck teenager. Then when he built up the courage to talk to him, he would start acting like a third grader with a crush. He would tease him constantly.”

“I did not adore him or have a crush on him. He was just easy to tease, it was good entertainment.” Len interjects.

“Denial is not just a river in Egypt, Leonard.”
Barry is loving this, he’s getting so much fodder for teasing later. “What’s his name?”

Professor Stein takes a moment to think about it. “I don’t seem to remember. I’ve had so many students, I can’t possibly remember every single one.”

“Seriously?” Len asks. If Barry didn’t know any better, it almost sounds like he’s offended. “He practically worshipped the ground you walked on. He had your entire career memorized by heart, I know because he would recite it to me constantly. You really don’t remember his name?”

“I’m sorry, but no. Leonard, you know how many students I get a semester, let alone a year. All I remember about him was that he was completely average. He blended into the background, and his work never stood out to me.”

Len gets that blank look on his face he gets when he’s really annoyed with something. “His name was Raymond Palmer, and he was anything but average.” Barry leans back in his seat and gets his phone out to start googling. “He’s smart, way smarter than me, and he was hot, and he had a great sense of humor.”

“Honestly, if you’re trying to prove you didn’t have a crush on him, you are failing tremendously.”

“Oh, my God.” Barry mutters. He skims the page one more time to make sure he’s right. He pulls up a picture. “Hey Dad, is this him?”

Barry leans forward with his phone. Len’s at a stop light so he glances at the phone. “Yup, that’s him. I could never forget that face. And he only got hotter.”

“This is the guy that took over Oliver’s company. He turned it into Palmer Tech. He’s like, a billionaire now.”

“Wow, small world. You think he’s single?”

Barry would hit him if he wasn’t driving. “You are not getting with him for his money. Plus I think Oliver mentioned he’s dating Felicity.”
Len pouts with a sigh, but Barry thinks part of it might be genuine. “Shame.”

The rest of the ride to Stein’s house is pretty uneventful. Len stays silent the rest of the way, while Barry fills Stein in on any major events he missed out on in the past year. When they get there, they all walk up to the front door with Stein. He’s visibly nervous now, but Barry is able to calm him down. Barry and Len watch as Stein and his wife hug and kiss.

Stein turns around to the two. “Mister, uh, Barry. Barry, I know I can be difficult,”

Len snorts. “You got that right.” He teases good naturally.

Stein gives him a look to stop talking. “As I was saying, I know I can be difficult, but thank you for bringing me home.”

Barry nods. “I’ll see you soon, Professor.”

Len mock glares. “Now you better stay out of trouble. No more going near fires.”

Stein shakes his head with a laugh. “Get out of here, you hooligan.”

“I’ll see you later, Professor Stein.” Len holds out his hand.

Stein shakes it. “Goodbye, Leonard.”

Back in the car Barry pulls out his phone. “Hey, you mind dropping me off at the station? Joe left me like, three messages.”
“No problem.”

After dropping off Barry, he headed back to S.T.A.R. Labs to return Caitlin’s car and get his bike. On his way out to the garage after leaving Caitlin her keys (and a reassurance that her car is scratch free) he decides to pull his phone out to check it too.

There’s a message from Iris reminding him she’s making dinner at Joe’s on Tuesday, and that, meta crisis or not, him and Barry better be there.

Next is a text from Hartley saying they’re out of milk. Len texts back that if he wants milk so bad he can go out and buy it himself. Hartley replies back with a middle finger emoji. Barry’s been a horrible influence on that kid. He used to be extremely polite around him until Barry encouraged Hartley to talk back. At least it shows Hartley’s more comfortable around him now.

One’s from Mick saying he’s going to be out of town for a couple days and that ‘If he finds out they’ve only been eating crap in the time he’s gone, he’s gonna make them eat kale.’ Ew, Mick made him eat that once and he swears it should be a form of torture.

The last message is from Joe telling him to meet him and Barry at Henry’s old house. Cisco got back to him about the blood analysis, and that he wanted to tell him and Barry together.

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Barry notices some boxes in Joe’s back seat. He asks Joe about them and Joe shifts a little. “They were your mother’s photo albums. Len got a hold of them the other day and I haven’t had the chance to drop them off at your guys’ place yet. I thing he said one of them had your baby book in it if you want to have a look.”

Barry reaches back and grabs the closest box. He didn’t even know he had a baby book. He opens to the first page to find him sleeping on Len’s chest. “I wonder why my mom never told me about this.”

“That’s a question to ask your fathers about.” Joe pulls over and turns the car off. “Here’s a shock, Len’s actually later than you.” Joe comments.
“He had to drop off Caitlin’s car and go pick up his motorcycle at S.T.A.R. Labs.” Barry says distractedly. He turns another page in the book. “Whoa, Joe look. My original birth certificate is in here.” He angles the book up so Joe can see.

“He had to drop off Caitlin’s car and go pick up his motorcycle at S.T.A.R. Labs.” Barry says distractedly. He turns another page in the book. “Whoa, Joe look. My original birth certificate is in here.” He angles the book up so Joe can see.

“Bartholomew Henry Snart.” Joe reads aloud.

Barry looks at the bottom. He sees Len’s name on the father’s portion, but when he looks at the mother’s portion it’s blank. He doesn’t know if he feels relieved by that or not. On the one hand, he’s been dying to know who his mother is. Len’s been stubbornly quiet on that subject. Every time Barry asks, Len will change the subject or will just flat out ask Barry not to bring it up. If the name was written there he could have looked her up, but Barry’s not sure if he would have, if he’s being honest with himself. If his dad didn’t want him to know her, then he must have his reasons.

Barry’s brought out of his thoughts by Joe laughing. “Len’s middle name is Wentworth? Poor guy never had a chance with a name like Leonard Wentworth Snart.”

They both look up at the sound of a motorcycle showing up in front of them. Joe gives him a wave as Barry sets the book back down in one of the boxes.

As Barry gets out of the car, he realizes where they are for the first time. “My old house? Why are we here?”

Len and Joe share a look as they walk up the driveway. Joe ends up taking the lead. “Len and I have been working on your mother’s murder.” He unlocks the door and lets them in. “We had Cisco helping us out on the science side of things and well, you’re just going to have to look for yourself.”

They go through the living room and straight to the dining room where a table is pulled to the side. Barry looks around as Joe sets up a machine in the center of the room. This is the first time he’s been back in this house since he was eleven years old. “It’s smaller than I remember.” Barry comments.

“That was my first thought too. We were both in this house as kids is why.” His dad agrees from the corner of the room.

“Hey, Barr?” Joe asks. “Do you remember this mirror?”

Barry goes closer to the machine Joe has set up. “Yeah, it was my Grandmother’s. How is it still
here?”

Joe shakes his head. “I don’t know, just be glad it is. Look, I’m not sure how Cisco did it, but—”

“Did what? Joe, why did you have us all come here? Do you know?” Barry looks to his dad. All he does is nod slowly. Len motions for Barry to come over next to him.

Barry does, and Joe flicks on the machine. In the room appears a hologram of his mom. From that night. “Mom.”

“You can definitely see two very fast people fighting around your mother.”

“Two speedsters.” Barry fills in the blank. But that would mean there wasn’t just the Man in Yellow there that night, but another mystery speedster. Whoever this other speedster is though, wanted to help save him and his mom that night, it’s the only explanation as to why he would be fighting the Man in Yellow.

Joe walks to the other side of Barry. “You see that?” He points over by the curtains.

“The blood?”

“We got Cisco to run the DNA.”

“Did he tell you the results?” Len asks.

Joe nods. “It’s Barry’s.”

Barry shakes his head. He’s had the timeline of events memorized for years now. “No, I can’t be. I wasn’t even downstairs yet.”

“No Barry, not that you.” He points at the hologram of himself from that night. “This you.” He points at him now. Cisco had the sample analysed and the proteins in the blood were from that of an adult, not a child.”
“But that would mean that other speedster there-” Len starts.

“Is the Flash. That’s me.” Barry finishes.

Barry’s in a bit of a daze after the revelation that he’s the other speedster in that house that night. He seems to be lost in his own head, so Len and Joe lead him outside after turning off the machine and Joe locks up. Barry gets extra clingy to Len as they cross the street and head to their parked vehicles.

Len turns to Joe. “Where to? S.T.A.R. Labs to fill in the others? As much as it pains me to say it, this is something we shouldn’t keep quiet about.”

“I have no idea where to start with time travel, so talking to the rest of the brain squad is probably our best bet. Barr, you comin’ with me or Len?”

Barry shrugs. “I kinda want to go with my dad if that’s alright.”

Len digs through the side compartment for the spare helmet while Joe tells Barry this is a one time thing. Turns out Joe’s not a big fan of motorcycles either. “Joe, I run six hundred miles an hour on a daily basis, and yet you’re worried about me being on a bike at sixty? That’s like a snail’s pace for me.”

Len tosses Barry the helmet as he gets on the bike. Barry gets on behind him after putting on the helmet as Len puts on his own. Joe puts his hands up in surrender. “I worry, that’s my job.”

Len turns the engine over. “Get used to the nagging, Kid. He’s already given me hell about this bike. Now hold on tight.”

Len waits until he feels Barry wrap his arms around his waist before he takes off. He feels more than hears Barry laugh as they pick up speed.
They come to a stop outside S.T.A.R. Labs. Len pulls out his phone real quick and snaps a picture of Barry grinning behind him.

“Did you just take a picture of me?” Barry asks as he takes his helmet off.

“So what if I did? I want to see if I can get literal steam to come out of Queen’s ears when he sees you on a motorcycle.”

They get off the bike and put their helmets in the side compartments. Barry shakes his head as they walk into S.T.A.R. Labs. “One of these days, you’re going to push him too far and he’s going to put an arrow in you. I’ll let him too.”

“That’s rude…” Len mutters as he messes with his phone. And… send.

“You just snapped him the picture anyway, didn’t you.” At least Barry’s learning to not form it as a question anymore. “I thought it was suppose to be us millennials that are glued to our phones.”

“Guess I just enjoy doing the opposite of what’s expected of me.”

They make it to the lab and Joe shows up ten minutes later. Len stays quiet as they talk through all the possibilities of time travel, a sentence he never expected to be thinking of. He does appreciate Cisco’s analogies to the different movies to help explain things to him and Joe.

Len has a feeling that Wells is holding back on some information, but at least they have another expert they can go talk to.

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Len gets a real kick out of Barry having to play delivery boy for Stein. When Stein opens the pizza box, Len’s stomach chooses that time to remind him he hasn’t had dinner yet. He reaches for a slice too, but is stopped by having his hand slapped. He cradles the slapped hand and pouts. Who knew Stein would be so protective over his pizza.
“We were wondering if you could tell us about time travel.” Barry says as Stein’s about to take a bite.

While Stein is frozen in shock, Len snatches a slice. Barry glares at him. Len swallows a bite with a shrug. “I’m hungry. Mick hasn’t let us get pizza in months. It has pineapple on it, that’s a fruit.”

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After Barry runs out of Stein’s house to go help Ronnie at Jitters, Stein grabs his keys.

“Where are you going?”

Stein leans against the counter, still out of breath. “To S.T.A.R. Labs obviously. I don’t think I have to tell you that having a, uh, telepathic connection with someone is not normal. I don’t think Mr. Raymond and I are as distinctive as we had hoped.”

Len takes in Stein’s state. It takes him less than a second to come to a decision and snatches the keys out of his hand. He ignores his protests and starts walking out. “Coming, Professor?” He calls over his shoulder.

Len breaks a number of laws to get them there quickly, and it really shows how out of it Stein is that he doesn’t comment once on the state of his driving.

They walk into the cortex to find Barry laying on a bed covered in needles. Stein is talking to the group, but Len ignores him as he runs to Barry’s side. Cisco steps out of the way without being told.

“What happened?”

Len takes his son’s hand and Barry squeezes it, his face tensing up in pain. “Oh, you know, decided to give acupuncture a try. I don’t really see what all the hype is about, to be honest.”

Len looks to the others in the room as Caitlin pulls another needle out of Barry and puts it into the
pan that Cisco’s holding. “What did you guys get yourselves into?”

“General Eiling believes that Firestorm is the key to a living weapon that will help strengthen the United States army.” Wells filled him in.

“The same General that Barry told me about from before?” Caitlin nods as she continues to work.

Len release Barry’s hand so he can take the pan from Cisco so he can go help Wells run some test on Stein and Ronnie, just leaving Len with Barry and Caitlin in the cortex. Barry squirms as another needle is pulled out. “Barry I know this hurts, but you need to hold still.” Caitlin tells him gently.

Len runs a hand through Barry’s hair. “Gotta listen, Kiddo. I can’t imagine how much this hurts, but you have to do as she says.” Barry makes a pained whine, but does as he’s told and lays still. “Good job. This will be over before you know it.” Len continues to run a hand through Barry’s hair since it seems to help keep him calm. “Your impression of a porcupine could use a little work.” Len jokes, trying to keep Barry distracted.

Barry chuckles, then groans. “Don’t make me laugh, it hurts.”

They spend the rest of the time making small talk as Caitlin pulls every needle out one by one. After she’s done, she goes to help the others as Len helps Barry change out of his Flash suit. Barry draws the line at getting help changing his boxers though.

Len rolls his eyes. “Why? It’s nothing I haven’t seen before. I used to change your diapers, Kid.” He reminds him.

Barry blushes as he pulls a pair of jeans up. “Still, it’s weird. That was when I was a baby. I’m going to be twenty-six next month, I don’t need help putting my clothes on.” Len watches as Barry struggles to put on a white shirt/sweater combo thing. Len will never get why Barry dresses like a kindergarden teacher. He finally sighs in defeat with the shirt half on. “A little help?”

Len continues standing where he is. “I thought you didn’t need help getting clothes on, being almost twenty-six and all.”

“I was wrong.” Barry’s muffled voice comes from under the shirt. “It hurts to lift my arms. Please?” Len uncrosses his arms and goes to help him. “Ow, ow, ow.”
Len shushes him as he gets his second arm through its hole. “There, you’re free from the evil top.” Len says when he’s done.

“Thanks.” Barry says as he sits in a chair to put his socks and shoes on.

“You know, Mick used to change you too.” Len mentions.

Barry makes a face at that. “He did?”

“Yup. I had to teach him. Don’t tell him I told you this, but he almost fainted the first time.”

Barry sits up slowly. “We’re still talking about the same Mick, right? Big, tough guy, Mick.”

Len nods. “The very same. He called you a poop factory for a week before I yelled at him to stop.”

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They get Stein to stay at S.T.A.R. Labs, while Ronnie and Caitlin go with Barry and Len to let them stay at Joe’s, hopefully Eiling won’t think to look for them there. Barry unlocks the door to let them in.

“All right, here we are. Uh, You can stay in Iris’ or my old room, take your pick. They’re both kinda small, but- Hey.” Barry runs into Joe, who looks startled at all the guests.

“We have guests.”

Len goes straight to the couch and plops down, making himself at home. Barry glares at him, but doesn’t say anything. “Yeah, I hope that’s okay. It’s kind of a long story.”

“Mi casa. I see Len didn’t need to be told twice. Shoes off the furniture.” Len shucks his shoes off and puts his feet back up on the coffee table. Len ignores the introduction of Ronnie in favor of
“Can I get a beer?” Len asks after Ronnie gets offered one.

“Get your own beer, you know where the fridge is.”

Len rolls his eyes as he goes to the kitchen. He hears the door open and Iris come in.

“Iris, what are you doing here?” Joe asks.

“It’s tuesday. I was going to make dinner, remember.” Len gives up on his beer and heads out to help, help who though, he hasn’t decided. “Who’s this?” She asks, referencing Ronnie.

“It’s a long story.” Barry says as he takes the bag of groceries from her.

“That’s Caitlin’s not-so-dead fiance. He’s one half of the burning man you had written about and Barry thought they should stay here since the military is looking for him.” Len fills her in.

Barry glares at him again. “I guess it’s not that long.”

“Well, I have enough to feed everyone. I’m Iris.” She holds out her hand.

“Ronnie Raymond. Like he said, I’m Caitlin’s fiance.” Ronnie shakes her hand.

“Well, we might have a bigger problem than the military.” Iris says as she let’s go of Ronnie’s hand. “The media. My boss wants me to look into S.T.A.R. Labs, he thinks there is something going on in there.”

“Yeah, it’s team Flash H.Q. This boss of yours is pretty good.” Len comments.

“He tried to bribe me with a danish.” Iris says deadpan.
Len snorts. “I never said he was great. Did you take the danish? Free food, is free food.”

“Is that why you keep comin’ back here?” Joe jokes.

“You got me. Sorry Kid, I’m not really here for you, it’s the free food.”

Barry chuckles and shakes his head. “Seriously though, what if this guy finds out about S.T.A.R. Labs being where I do all my Flash stuff.”

“I said I’d help him. I’ll keep an eye on him and make sure he doesn’t get too close to the truth. And yes, I ate the danish. It was cherry and very delicious.”

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Len is helping Iris in the kitchen with dinner. Caitlin and Ronnie went upstairs to get unpacked and Barry got shooed out of the kitchen, Iris just mentioning an incident from 2006. They stopped working as they listened to Joe and Barry talking out in the living room.

“You and my dad really think Dr. Wells had something to do with Barry’s mother’s murder?” Iris asks after they hear the tv turn on.

Len sighs as puts down the potato he was peeling. “We did. But his blood didn’t match the sample that was there.”

“So? You guys said there were two speedsters there that night, right? Maybe this Man in Yellow just didn’t leave any evidence behind.”

Len continues peeling the potato. “Why are you all of a sudden having doubts about Wells.”

“At work, my boss didn’t just want me looking into S.T.A.R. Labs, he wants to look into Dr. Wells specifically. He thinks that Dr. Wells wanted the particle accelerator to explode on purpose. I didn’t believe him then, hell I defended Dr. Wells, but now that you’re saying you and my dad were
looking into him too… I just have this feeling in my gut that Dr. Wells is hiding something.”

Len really looks at Iris. “You’d be a very good detective, Miss West. Let me know if that boss of yours finds anything on Wells.”

Iris nods with a proud smile. “I will.”

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Iris gets a call and rushes to work. The rest head back to S.T.A.R. Labs when Ronnie senses (and when has it become Len’s life that he can say someone senses another person and keep a straight face) that something is wrong with Stein. Turns out Ronnie’s right and they find Wells without Stein. A group of soldiers got word that Professor Stein was staying at S.T.A.R. Labs and kidnapped him.

“Dr. Wells, are you sure he didn’t hurt you?” Barry asks.

“Barry, I told you, only my pride is hurt. Unfortunately, I’m not in the position to take on armed soldiers.”

Len fights so hard to keep himself from rolling his eyes. Ever the martyr, is poor wheelchair-bound Wells. “How did these armed soldiers know where to find Professor Stein anyway?” Joe got called to the station so that just leaves him to be the sceptic.

Wells almost looks like he wants to glare at Len before he remembers that they have an audience. Wells shakes his head. “General Eiling has the resources of the United States government backing him. The possibilities of how he found Professor Stein are endless.”

“We can worry about this later. Our priority is where General Eiling took Professor Stein.” Caitlin cuts in.

Barry grabs Len by the elbow. “Just drop it for now, Dad. We have enough on our plates as it is.”

Len studies Wells one last time before nodding. “Something like this, abducting U.S. citizens, he would want to keep quiet. My bet’s he took Stein to some type of off-the-books military research
“We have to get him back.” Barry says.

“Cool your jets, Kid. I don’t want you turning into another pin cushion.”

“I agree with Mr. Snart here. Eiling has already demonstrated he has the weaponry to disable the Flash. I’m also sure after your guys’ very public fight with Hayward, he has some contingency for the cold gun as well.” Len nods, hating that he’s in agreement with something Wells says.

“Well, we can’t let him turn Stein into a weapon.” Caitlin says.

“How do we find him?” Ronnie asks. Everyone turns to him, all thinking the same thing. He looks around in confusion. “What?”

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Caitlin gets Ronnie hooked up to a machine that monitors his brain waves. He starts to feel cold, then moments later starts seizing, like someone is tazing him. Wells says something about the connection getting stronger. Len stays back with Barry, not able to do anything to help. Ronnie asks for water, then smashes the glass and starts to carve into his arm. Len runs out of the room, figuring out what Ronnie is doing. He’s going to be ready to go out with Barry soon.

“Dude, where are you going? Why does he always run out without telling anyone his plan?” Len hears Cisco complain. It sounds like Caitlin’s trying to get Ronnie to stop, but Barry tells her to let him. Smart kid, he figured it out too.

Len grabs his cold gun and gets changed in record time. He’s runs back into the room to Caitlin and Ronnie arguing about Ronnie going to get Stein. Caitlin agrees and Cisco gives Ronnie that splicer thing, thinking it might help them since it was used to separate them the first time.

Caitlin pulls Ronnie into a kiss. “Come back to me. All four of you.”

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Barry races them to the army base. They stop and take in the black helicopter flying over the building.

“This place definitely doesn’t look too shady.” Barry jokes.

“I’ve been to criminal meet ups less creepy than this place. And criminals really like their creepy settings.” Len comments.

“Stein’s inside.” Ronnie says.

“Of course. Because it would be asking too much if they were keeping him outside and in plain view.”

Wells gives a great pep talk about how if Stein and Ronnie merge again, they might not be able to be separated again.

“Wait. They just put a gun to Stein’s head.” Ronnie senses. “They’re about to pull the trigger!”

Barry flashes off in a gust of wind and returns a second later with Stein. “Well, there goes our element of surprise.” Len sighs.

Stein glares at Len. “I apologize for almost getting shot. Next time let me get shot in the head so that you can sneak in without being seen. Oh wait, that would defeat the whole purpose-”

Barry gets between them. “Can you two please do this some other time? Like maybe when we’re not trying to get away from the secret military base?”

They hear a truck approach before they can leave. A guy pops out the top with a large missile launcher. Barry runs forward after the guy fires. Len tries to stop Barry, but it’s too late. The second Barry grabs the missile, it explodes, leaving an ice like substance all over him. It’s hissing like acid. “Go, run!” Barry yells out. Len wants to go to Barry, but is stopped by a hand pulling on his arm.
“Now, Leonard. Your son will be fine, but we need to go!” Stein yells.

Len nods and follows the other two, looking back periodically. Len pulls the other two to a ditch when he sees soldiers showing up with guns and firing at them.

“Despite my current career path, I’ve never been interested in going out in a hail of gunfire like Butch and Sundance!” Len yells over the gunfire. Len peaks over the bushes and fires wide of the soldiers, hoping to buy some time. He listens over the comms as Wells tells them to ‘accept each other’ and other hippie shit like that. “If you’re gonna do it, do it now! I don’t know how much longer I can keep them back!”

Ronnie puts the splicer on his chest and they both reach forward until Stein merges with Ronnie. It looks like Ronnie is listening to someone. “Professor?” Okay, looks like Ronnie gets to go with Stein as his co-pilot. That doesn’t sound fun, fire powers or not. Ronnie marches up the ditch to the road, Len trails behind him with his cold gun at the ready. Ronnie spins around and sets a whole jeep on fire.

“Damn…” Len mutters. Ronnie then fires at the ground and flies into the air. Maybe when you add flying to the mix… Nope. Len still would rather not have Stein in his head. Ronnie dive bombs and takes out the soldiers around Eiling, leaving the general by himself.

“Eiling, this ends now.” Ronnie says.

“Yes, it does.” Eiling throws some type of grenade into the air. Len’s goggles protect him from most of the glare and he sees Ronnie be knocked to the ground, all his fire going out in the process.

Before Eiling gets a chance to do anything more, Len runs up with his cold gun ready to fire. “I wouldn’t move if I were you.”

“Captain Cold I presume. Or do you prefer Leonard Snart?” Len holds the gun steady. “Do you really want to be helping these two when your son is out there, burning from that acid as we speak?” Eiling stays perfectly calm. Len really wishes this guy would give him an excuse to ice him.

“My kid can take care of himself. From where I’m standing, you seem to be the one in the pickle here.” Barry shows up and punches Eiling in the face, knocking him to the ground. “Have fun?” Len asks, keeping his gun on Eiling, who surprisingly is still conscious.
The front of Barry’s suit looks like it’s been in a fight with Mick’s heat gun and lost. The whole mask is completely melted off and Barry’s breathing heavy. “That… was a lot of running.”

Len crouches next of Eiling. “I told you, my kid can take care of himself.” Len pats Eiling on the cheek for good measure and gets back up.

Ronnie got up with the help of Barry and immediately flames on and stalks toward Eiling.


Ronnie’s face softens. “Yeah.”

Ronnie flies into the air, leaving first. Len goes back over to Eiling with his gun pointed at him. “Dad. Dad!”

Len ignores him as he points the gun at him. “Go ahead, do it. You pull that trigger, and you’ll have the entire brunt of the U.S. military after you.” Eiling taunts. Len tightens the grip on his gun.

“Dad, please.”

Len turns to look at Barry over his shoulder. “He hurt you. He tried to have your friends killed. He’s the one that killed your friend, Bette. Why should he get to live, just to cause more pain and suffering in the future?”

“I can’t answer that. I just know that this isn’t right. Killing for the sake of killing will never be right. Now please, let’s just go home.”

Len looks at Barry’s pleading face, then down to Eiling. “Looks like you get a pass.” Len says before knocking him out with the butt of the gun.

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Len changes quickly and goes upstairs before anyone can stop him. Barry tries, but Caitlin pulls him
aside to look at his wounds. When Len first arrived at S.T.A.R. Labs, he made sure to have the whole building memorized, including the rooftop exit. He’s sitting against the wall taking apart and putting his gun back together over and over again. A flash of lightning appears and Barry is standing in front of him. It only took him five minutes and forty-nine seconds to find him.

“Wow, I didn’t even know there was roof access here.”

Len puts the last piece of his gun together and sets it aside. “What do you want, Kid?”

Barry fidgets and Len can tell he’s about to lie. He really needs to teach the kid not to have such obvious tells. “I was just wondering where you ran off to in such a hurry. Stein and Ronnie aren’t merged together anymore, in case you were curious.”

“Good for them, now what do you really want?”

Barry comes over and slides down the wall next to him, stretching his legs out like him. “I’m scared.”

Len rolls his eyes. “If you’re looking for an apology or some sign of remorse, you came to the wrong place. I meant it when I wanted to kill him.”

“I know. That’s not what has me scared. You came into this honest about who you are, and I realize that.”

Now Barry really has Len’s attention. “Then what are you scared of?”

Barry stares at his hands as he fidgets. “That, some part of me, really wanted you to pull that trigger. You were right, he killed my friend, and was about to kill Ronnie and Professor Stein. I wanted him to die.”

Barry sniffs and Len wraps an arm around him. Barry rests his head on his shoulder. He lays his on top of Barry’s. “That’s the difference between you and I, you’re so much better than me. You didn’t give into that darkness and instead turned away from it. With everything you went through as a kid, it would be so easy for you to turn out like me; bitter, angry, ready to kill someone at a moment’s notice, but you didn’t. You’re bright, and happy, and so optimistic. You see the good in everyone, while I only see the bad and how they can screw me over.” Len gives a wry chuckle. “God, I wish I
had your optimism, and a group of people I can trust and relax around.”

Barry pulls back. “But you do.”

Len shakes his head. “I have you and Henry, maybe Hartley. Mick if he ever stays in one place long enough.”

“What about Joe, and Iris, and Caitlin and Cisco? Even the couple dinners we’ve had with Eddie there haven’t been as strained as they were a couple months ago.”

Len notices that Barry left Wells out, but he figures even a blind man can tell how he feels about him. “They’re, alright.” Len chooses his words carefully. “Still don’t trust Thawne though.”

“Still, that’s a pretty big group of people. And I don’t believe you, I can see the good in you. It was your choice to put on that parka, which is ridiculous by the way, and go fight metas with only a cold gun at your side.”

Len shrugs. “You need some type of adult supervision out there, you would have been killed ages ago without me.”

Barry shakes his head with a grin. “You are impossible. You can make all the excuses you want, I still think there is good in you, Leonard Wentworth Snart.”

Len groans. “How in the world did you find out my middle name? I thought I got rid of everything that said my full name.”

“On my birth certificate, my real one. Mom had put it in my baby book. Does that mean the one on file for me is a fake?”

Len picks up his gun to fiddle with his gun. “It’s a good one, no one’s spotted that it’s a fake so far, right?”

Barry’s eyes widen and he shoves Len. “That is on file for my job. At a police department. What if someone notices it’s a fake? Oh, God, how would I even explain that to Captain Singh?”
“Don’t worry, the only part that’s different from your original is whose signature is under the mother and father part, and your last name. Everything else was left the same.”

Barry looks like he’s going to argue some more, but then he gives up. He wraps both arms around Len’s arm that’s closest to him and leans his head against Len’s shoulder again. “I love you, Dad.” Barry says softly.

Len closes his eyes, taking in the moment. He’ll never get used to this. He kisses the top of Barry’s head, then rests his head on top of his again. “Love you too, Kiddo.”

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The next day, the group gathers at Stein’s house as everyone says goodbye. Stein and Ronnie are going to Pittsburg to learn more about their abilities as Firestorm. Len stays back with Barry and Cisco as Ronnie and Stein say goodbye to their significant others.

Stein breaks away from his wife and comes over to their group. “Godspeed, Mr. Allen.”

“You too.” Barry says as they shake hands.

“As per our previous conversation, I believe in second chances. You’ll get yours. Give it time.” Barry nods. “Now you two watch out for one another, it’s a much different world we live in now, more dangerous than ever.”

“We will.” Barry says after Len and him look at one another.

Everyone heads to the front door. “Ready, Ronald?”

“Please stop calling me that.”

“Save your breath.” Len tells him. “I still can’t get him to stop calling me Leonard, and I’ve known him for about twenty years now.”
Stein and Ronnie go outside and merge together. “We love you.” He says to Caitlin and Stein’s wife before flying into the air.

“Mick’s gonna be pissed he missed all this.” Len comments.

“I vote we don’t tell him.” Barry says.

Len nods. “Good plan.”

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Len and Barry are hanging at Joe’s with all the photo albums spread out on the dining table. Joe peaks over their shoulders as he walks past. “I’ll get my table back at some point, right?”

“We’ll see.” Barry says. “Whoa, nice afro.” Barry points to one of the pictures.

Len covers the photo before Joe can look at it. “This is why I cut my hair. Out of all the things to get from my mom, I had to get her hair. She was black.” Len confesses.

“All right?” Barry asks. Len nods as the front door opens.

“He, Baby Girl.” They hear Joe say. Iris comes right over to the table.

“We have a problem.” She says.

Len sighs. “That should be our catch phrase.”

She pulls a picture out of her bag and puts it over the photo albums. “My boss figured out Ronnie is Firestorm and that he’s connected to S.T.A.R. Labs.” Len and Barry look at the picture of Ronnie as the burning man that was on Iris’s blog. “He saw this on my blog, and Ronnie with Caitlin at Jitters when the military tried to grab him.”
“Luckily, Ronnie and Professor Stein are in Pittsburg now.” Barry says as he hands Iris the photo back.

“But it does show that that boss of yours is pretty good. Guess he did earn those Pulitzers.” Len crosses his arms.

Iris notices the photos for the first time. “Hey, are these pictures of you and Barry?” She pulls up a chair and sits down.

Len turns one of the books toward her. “Yup.”

Iris pulls out her phone with a grin. “I’m so sending some of these to Linda.”

“I already sent some to Oliver. He thought they were cute.”

Barry looks back and forth between the two as Joe laughs. “You guys are the worst!” Barry knew they never should have met, everyone’s going to see these photos now. He might as well give up now and become a hermit.

Iris gets up suddenly. “I have our old high school yearbook upstairs. You need to see the pictures of Barry in anime club.” Barry hides his face. Yup, definitely time to become a hermit.
Out of Time

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is late. This two parter episode is my favorite and I really wanted to make sure it was good. I know that’s no excuse, but I really am sorry.

Thanks for all the kudos and comments, and if I haven't answered you're comment, I'm about to go check right now.

Barry drags his tired body through the front door after unlocking it.

“What happened to you? Get into a fight with a coffee and lose?” Hartley asks from the couch.

Barry groans as he takes off his stained jacket. “You should see Captain Singh’s jacket. I think he would have actually murdered me this time if we weren’t surrounded by cops.” Barry watches as Hartley takes a bite of his birthday cake, the last slice that was left. He groans again. “Seriously dude, that’s my cake. I was gonna have that tonight.”

Hartley swallows. “Guess you were too slow, Flash.”

Before Barry could argue back, his dad cuts in. “Why did you see your boss anyway? I thought you went bowling with Linda.”

Barry collapses on the couch between the two. “I was, until I got called to a crime scene. Mark Mardon is looking for the cop that killed his brother, who just so happens to be Joe. He also has powers now thanks to the particle accelerator.”

“Isn’t that just the gift that keeps on giving. You look like crap, by the way.” Hartley holds out his fork. “You want a bite?”

Barry barks a laugh. “Wow, thanks.” He says sarcastically, but takes a bite anyway. It’s his cake, damn it! He deserves it.

Len nudges his leg. “If Mardon has powers now, I want you to be careful. He’s always been a hot
head, hell he’s more impulsive than Mick.”

Mick looks up from where he’s been reclined in a chair. “Wha’?”

Len waves him off. “Nothing, go back to sleep.”

Mick grunts and closes his eyes again.

“I’ll be fine, when am I not careful?”

Len eyes Barry’s jacket hanging by the door. “Really. Then why don’t you explain how you ruined not one, but two jackets this evening.”

Barry hands Hartley his fork back, checks his watch, and gets up from the couch. “Would you look at the time, I should go to bed. I have to stop by S.T.A.R. Labs before heading to work tomorrow.” Barry heads to his room before Len could stop him.

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Barry’s glad he got to have lunch with Joe, it’s been forever since just the two of them ate together. That’s why Barry thought it was fitting to go get the best philly cheese steak sandwiches in Central City, the only down side is the circumstances for which they got to go out and eat together. Speaking of which, “So, you wanna talk about what’s been going on with you?”

“What do you think is going on with me?”

Ever since he was eleven, it’s been like pulling teeth to get a straight answer from Joe when he wants to avoid talking about something. Before Barry could clarify, he heard a noise from the backseat and a head pops up. “I was wondering the same thing.”

Joe jumps and nearly drives the car off the road. “Shit! Len?! What the hell’s the matter with you?! You want me to get in an accident? Because that’s how someone gets in an accident!”
Barry spins around to find Len sitting in the middle of the backseat grinning. “How long have you been laying back there?”

“Since that restaurant. Great sandwiches, by the way. And Detective West, really, you should know better than to leave your vehicle unlocked, the crime rate in Central is higher than you think.”

“Hey, I do not need the criminal in my backseat that broke into my car to lecture me about crime rates. What’re you doin’ here anyway?”

Len shrugs. “Was in the neighborhood, thought I’d pop in for a visit. Now Joe, you never answered the kid’s question, why have you been so chill while Monsoono is out for your blood?”

Joe rolls his eyes. “You’re too late, Cisco already named him Weather Wizard.” Barry corrects his dad.

Len scoffs. “Weather Wizard, seriously? Cisco can do better than that.”

“Says the guy who goes by Captain Cold and wears a parka of all things.” Barry defends Cisco. Honestly, he doesn’t care for the name Weather Wizard much either, but Cisco’s one of his best friends so it’s the principle of the thing.

“Alright, enough.” Joe cuts in. It starts raining so Joe turns the wipers on. “I will pull over right now and make you two walk back in this downpour.”

Barry looks out the window, really noticing the rain and how it’s steadily getting worse by the second. He turns on the radio to check the forecast.

“And it’s another beautiful day here in Central City. Not a cloud.”

Joe hits the breaks as they all realize at the same time what’s happening. “Mardon.” Joe says.

Barry nods in agreement and the three look behind them to find Mardon sitting in a truck behind them, holding his hand up to control the weather. They hear thunder boom above them and time dilates for Barry as he looks up through the sunroof to see a bolt of lightning slowly arcing down
toward them, crashing through the sunroof. Joe and his dad look to be frozen from how fast he’s going, unbuckling himself first, then getting Joe and Len out of the car.

Time speeds up again as Barry finds himself on a patch of grass by the road with Len and Joe on either side of him. They all cover their faces as the car they were just in bursts into flames from the lightning.

“I still had half a sandwich in there.” Len says mournfully as he watches the car burn.

“I’ll buy you a new one.” Joe mutters as he gets his phone out.

Before he can even turn the screen on, a car screeches to a halt in front of them.

“Wow, Central City’s finest has a much faster response time than I remember.” Len says.

The blood from Barry’s face drains as Captain Singh jumps out of the car and runs towards them. Them being Barry, Joe, and Barry’s very criminal father. This isn’t going to end well, he might as well kiss his job goodbye now.

“Joe, are you alright?! I saw the bolt of lightning and-” Barry sees the moment Singh recognizes Len, and he pulls out his sidearm. “Freeze! Show me your hands! Allen, get away from him! Do you have any idea who he is and what he’s capable of?”

Barry scrambles to get between the two, holding his hands up in peace. “Whoa, hey! It’s fine. Let’s just put the gun away, and I’ll try to explain everything.”

Singh continues holding his gun up, but a glance at Joe has him falter. Joe motions for him to put the gun away, and slowly he finally holsters his gun, eyes still flickering behind Barry. “Start talking, now.”

Barry was not expecting on having to explain at this very second. “Um, it’s sorta a long story,”

Len brushes off his pants, having just got up. “I had unprotected sex in 1988. Nine months later, the kid pops out and I find myself a teenaged single parent. I couldn’t raise him and my sister, so I left
him with a nice, upper middle class family in 1990. The rest is history.”

Barry throws his hands up. “Again, I guess it’s not that long.”

Singh pinches the bridge of his nose and takes a deep breath. “Damn it, Allen. Why can’t anything be easy with you?” He turns to Joe, who just got up himself. “I’m going to assume you knew about this?”

Joe shrugs with a ‘what can you do’ face. “It wasn’t my secret to tell.”

Singh sighs. “One problem at a time.” He says to himself, then he looks up at the three. “First, we are going to head back to the station. You included, Mr. Snart, I want you staying where I can keep an eye on you. After we have this whole thing with Mardon wrapped up, then we are all going to sit down and have some words. Are we clear on that, Mr. Allen?”

Barry nods, eyes wide as he gulps. “Yes, sir.”

“Good, now get in.” Singh makes a sweeping motion at his car, and they all head over there. Even Len, who would normally be making a sarcastic remark by now, is uncharacteristically quiet and following instructions.

Barry shuffles into the back with Len, while Joe gets in the passenger seat. Barry feels like he’s in school again what with the way that Singh keeps glancing at the backseat in the rearview mirror every couple seconds; only instead of being sent to the principle’s office, he’s going to his boss’s office, which is a thousand times worse. This has to be one of the top five most painful car rides for him, easily.

“You having flashbacks to being sent to the principle’s office too?” Len leans in and whispers to him.

“Yup.” Barry simply says. Him not being in the mood to talk would be putting it mildly.

Len is obviously not picking up on that vibe because he continues talking. “Bet what I did to get sent to the principle’s is worse than what you did.”
“You’d lose that bet then.” Barry can’t help but say back.

The two in the front seat are listening more closely now, Joe probably wanting to know Len’s reaction since he was there that day, and Singh looks genuinely curious at what ‘Goody-two-shoes-Allen’ could possibly do that would get him seriously in trouble at school.

“I got caught breaking into lockers and stealing money. I got suspended for a week, there is no way you can top that.” Len brags. Of course he would find pride in that.

“I burnt down the high school gym and caused over a thousand dollars in damages.”

“That was you?!!” Both Singh and Len yell that. Barry’s not surprised they knew about it, it was all over the news. He was just lucky that since he was a minor at the time, the press couldn’t mention his name.

“It wasn’t my fault.” Barry defends himself right away.

“It never is.” Singh mutters, which, considering all the excuses for why he’s late that he’s given over the years that start with ‘it wasn’t my fault’ that reaction’s fair.

“This time he’s not lyin’. ” Joe comes to his rescue. “He still got suspended for a month, but it would have been an expulsion if it wasn’t for all the witnesses.”

“The suspension was for fighting, not the fire. Tony pushed me into my science fair project. I had a lit bunsen burner on my table and it knocked over and caught the neighboring paper mache volcano on fire.” Barry explains.

“You got suspended for a month even though he shoved you. There is something wrong with the school system.” Len grumbles.

Barry squirms at this next part. “I may have, lightly, shoved him back.”

Joe snorts, knowing Barry is lying through his teeth. “I wouldn’t call giving him a black eye a ‘light shove’.”
“I was tired and mad he ruined my project, okay. I was up all night working on it the night before. Even you thought I was justified and let me use the tv that whole month.” Normally when Barry got suspended for fighting or skipping class for his hunt in the impossible, Joe would take away everything that required power (excluding things like lights, heat, and anything used to cook food. Joe was strict, but he wasn’t downright mean). That meant no tv, computer, phone, everything.

“Guess the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” Len comments, and just like that, the tension in the car came back full force. Singh really didn’t need a reminder for why Len was in the car in the first place.

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The rest of the ride was stiff with awkward silence. Singh marches the three of them to his office in silence, and Barry gets the feeling that he’s more than a little annoyed that not one person seemed to have recognized Leonard Snart as he walks through the whole precinct. Barry flinches as Singh not so gently slams his office door shut after they all enter his office.

He points at Barry and Len. “You two, sit. I want to talk to you.” He turns to Joe. “And Joe, you’re confined to the precinct until Mardon’s caught.” Singh sits down behind his desk.

Joe storms up to his desk. “David, you said it, that son of a bitch killed my partner.”

Barry and Len glance at each other as they sit on the couch in Singh’s office. “And I’m not gonna lose you the way I lost Fred Chyre. Look, I can’t stop you from being pissed, but I can keep you safe.”

“But.”

“Enough, Joe.” Singh interrupts him. “We’re done having this conversation. If you want to be helpful, maybe try and get the Flash to help us. You’ve worked with him before, I’m sure he could be persuaded to help again.”

“I’m sure he already knows.” Joe grumbles as he leaves the office, the door clicking shut behind him.
Singh’s glare returns full force to Barry and Len again. Barry glances over at Len, and is shocked to find him completely relaxed. He has an arm resting on the back of the couch and he has almost a bored expression on his face.

It’s becoming obvious that Singh is waiting for one of them to speak first.

“Am I still going to have a job after the whole Mardon thing?” Barry asks meekly.

Len’s bored facade cracks a little, and he takes the hand that’s resting on the back of the couch and massages the back of Barry’s neck.

Barry’s question throws Singh for a loop and he drops his glare. “Wha- Why would I fire you? I just want to know why you didn’t think to inform me of this when you first found out. Speaking of which, how long have you known.”

Barry feels like a giant weight’s been lifted off his chest. “Since October.” Barry answers faintly. “I’m seriously not going to lose my job?” Barry asks again. “Sir.” He tacks on.

Singh shakes his head, looking put out that Barry doesn’t believe him. “No, you are not going to lose your job over this.” He reassures him. “If you could lose your job here for being related to a felon, my precinct would be half empty, this is Central after all.”

Barry just blinks. “Oh.” Is all he manages to say.

“I’m assuming that’s why you never told me?” Barry can only nod. Singh straightens out some papers on his desk. “Well, now that that’s all cleared up, Allen, why don’t you go and keep an eye on Joe, make sure he doesn’t go anywhere.”

“Sure.” Barry says as he gets up and Len gets up to follow him.

“Not you, Mr. Snart. I was serious about keeping an eye on you. You are not moving from that spot until this is all over.”

Barry watches as his dad flops back down. “I didn’t think you meant that literally. I can’t even go out
and sit with Joe at his desk?”

Singh doesn’t look up from the paper he’s signing. “Nope.”

Len lays down where Barry was sitting with a groan. “Might as well make myself comfortable.” He grumbles.

Barry sighs. He can’t deal with both Joe and Len being in a pissy mood right now. “Dad, please just listen for once or I’ll tell Mick you ate that pizza. You and I both know that having pineapple on it doesn’t make it a serving of fruit.”

Len squints at him. “You wouldn’t dare.”

“Try me.”

Len looks away first. “Fine.” He puts his booted feet up on the armrest and pulls out his phone.

Barry rolls his eyes, figuring this is the best he’s going to get out of him. He has another adult to go talk some sense into.

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Len’s been laying on this couch for a grand total of two minutes when he already starts to feel cagey. Nobody’s answering their phones so he has no one to talk to. Turns out most people actually work in the middle of the day. Even Queen, who he knows lost his company and ergo doesn’t have any work to go to, texted him to leave him alone for the time being. Something about dealing with a group of evil assassins; it was hero junk so he couldn’t care less.

He rests his phone on his chest and starts clunking his boots together. He sees Singh’s eyebrow twitch, but the captain doesn’t say anything to him.

**Interesting**. Len seems to have found a new game to occupy himself with for the time being, *How Long Until Mount Singh Erupts.*
Len starts small, he bites his nails and makes sure to be extra loud about it. An eyebrow twitches again, but he still holds his tongue. Okay, a lot of people bite their nails, that’s an easy enough thing to ignore.

Next, he tries being a little more obnoxious, he starts clicking his tongue. That gets more of a reaction. Singh bites his lip and the grip on his pen becomes tighter, but still no eruption. Now it’s time to pull out the big guns, something that has gotten stuff thrown at him on multiple occasions from Mick and Lisa.

He starts humming *It’s A Small World*. He only gets to world before Singh tosses his pen down.

“Would you quit it! You’re worse than a five year old.”

Wow, it took him two minutes and forty-five seconds before he yelled at him, that’s longer than Joe’s ever lasted. “You know, I’d be out of your hair if you let me go sit with Joe.”

“I am not letting you roam free around my precinct, so drop it.” Len sighs and starts banging his head back against the couch cushion. It doesn’t make as much noise as he’d like, but it’s something to occupy his mind with. “Now I see where Allen inherited his ADHD from.” Singh mutters under his breath.

Singh picks something up off his desk and tosses it at him, which he catches on reflex. “A rubix cube? Seriously?”

“See if you solve it by the end of the day.”

Len figures he has nothing better to do and starts studying all around the cube, trying to find the best place to start.

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Fifteen minutes into Len’s rubix cube, he gets a call. He checks to see who it is and is shocked to see Iris’ name on his screen. He sits up, cube forgotten, and answers the call.
“Hey, you alright?” He asks. Singh glances up, curious as to who he’s talking to.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Remember when I said my boss is looking into Harrison Wells?”

“Yeah. He find anything?”

“Do you remember Simon Stagg and how he went missing a handful of months ago?”

“Yeah, what does that have to do with Wells?” Singh’s fully paying attention now, the work on his desk forgotten.

“Turns out, Wells might have been the last person to see Stagg. My boss thinks Wells has something to do with his disappearance.”

“That makes sense, except for the part where the guy’s in a wheelchair and can’t move his entire lower body.”

“That’s what I was thinking too. That’s why I called, I thought you could ask Hartley if he can hack into the Stagg Industry cameras and see if there is any footage of them together. All I have is a picture of Wells leaving the building that night.”

“Yeah, I’ll talk to him tonight. Can you send me that picture?”

“Sure.” Len’s phone pings with a message. “I need to get going now, I’m meeting Barry for coffee.”

They hang up and Len opens the picture on his phone, studying Wells exiting into the building.

“What was that about?” Singh asks.

Len ignores him as he gets up. “Move.” He simply says, practically pushing Singh to the floor and
stealing his seat.

“Hey, this is still my office. Now tell me what is going on right now.” Singh demands.

Len continues to ignore him as he zooms in on the time stamp on the photo Iris sent him, then he turns to the computer and searches Simon Stagg in the police database. He pulls up Stagg’s missing person report and it was filed the morning after this photo was taken. He reads further into the report and it says that everything in his home and office are untouched, and that his bank accounts haven’t been touched since he went missing, it’s like he just vanished off the face of the earth.

“Why were you talking about Harrison Wells and then look up Simon Stagg? Do you think he has something to do with him missing?” Len looks up to find Singh peering at the computer. Honestly, Len forgot he was even here.

“I have a bad feeling about him. Someone I trust sent me this photo of Wells leaving Stagg Industries the night before Stagg went missing, and I don’t think that’s a coincidence. Did you boys in blue get any security footage from that night?” Maybe if they did then he won’t have to wait until tonight to ask Hartley, and then wait the couple more days it would take for him to hack in and comb through all the footage himself.

Singh shrugs. “We got it, but it was all clean. It was quiet the whole night.”

Len furrows his brow. “That can’t be right, this photo here shows Wells leaving the building that night, he would have been on some camera.” He zooms in on a sign in the background. “See, there’s the security notice.”

“That can’t be right…” Singh mutters to himself. Len gets up and lets Singh sit back at his desk. He pulls up the security footage on his computer and fast forwards to the time on the photo. No one is on the screen. “How did we miss this?”

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Len’s been working with Singh in his office when they hear a commotion outside in the bullpen. They both get up and run out to see what’s going on. They find glass everywhere and Joe laying on the ground. Mardon is standing a couple paces away.
“I’m not gonna be so easy to put down.” Mardon says as he takes a few steps forward.

“Take him down!” Thawne calls out. Len is shocked when Singh steps in front of him and bodily shields him from Mardon.

“No, run!” Joe yells before anyone can shoot.

Mardon creates a gust of wind, shattering the remaining glass. Everyone covers their eyes and face. Mardon raises his hand and Len hears a clap of thunder outside. Len looks around and sees everyone hiding under desks.

Len doesn’t think as he pushes Singh out of the way and runs over to Joe. He hears the crack of lightning when he shoves Joe and then he just feels pain and then nothing.

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Barry’s walking back from his coffee with Iris when he gets the text from Cisco.

**From: Cisco He’s here. CCPD.**

Barry’s heart sinks as he runs to CCPD, both his dad and Joe are there.

Barry finds the weather wand that Cisco made sitting on the steps in the precinct. He scoops it up and gets between Mardon and Joe. The wand seems to be working as the gust of wind Mardon is making starts dying down.

When Mardon realizes his powers aren’t working, he turns and hightails it out of the precinct. Barry’s about to go after him when he hears Joe yell behind him. “Len!”

Barry drops the wand and turns around, finding his dad laying motionless on the floor against some filing cabinets, Joe kneeling down next to him checking his pulse. “Dad?” Barry feels the panic swell in his chest as his dad doesn’t move. “Dad!” Barry tears his cowl off and runs at his full speed over to Len. Joe moves over to let Barry kneel by Len. “Dad, this isn’t funny. Wake up. Please wake up, wake up right now! Stop joking around. Just- please.”
Barry hears a quiet “Allen?” and “Barry’s the Flash?” behind him from Captain Singh and Eddie respectively, but he couldn’t care less who knows his secret right now. All he’s worried about is that his dad won’t open his eyes.

Joe puts a hand on his shoulder. “It’s alright, he’s still breathing and has a pulse. You just need to get him to a hospital right now. Can you do that?”

Barry sniffs and wipes his eyes dry. He nods as he puts his cowl back on and picks up his dad, then speeding out.

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Barry is resting his head on Joe’s arm, just staring straight ahead with unfocused eyes as the two of them sit in the waiting room. Joe’s pretty sure Barry’s in shock right now, since he hasn’t moved or said anything for the past two hours that they’ve been sitting here. Joe’s called Iris and Mick, filling them in on what happened. He also called Caitlin and Cisco, but neither of them were answering their phones so he left a message. Iris showed up in ten minutes, and Mick grunted he was on his way, but that he’d be a while. Iris, along with Eddie, went to go get Barry some food since he hadn’t eaten since lunch, she’s never been good at sitting and waiting. She always feels she needs to do something.

Joe feels the same way, he’s been bouncing his leg up and down, full of anxiety. He might not have liked Len in the beginning, but he’s slowly been becoming a part of the family and Joe’s not sure what will happen if he doesn’t make it.

David walks up with two coffees and hands one to Joe. “Thanks.” Joe says as he takes a small sip.

“I’m not sure how you like it, but I figured lots of sugar was a safe bet.” He says softly and holds to cup out to Barry.

Joe sighs as Barry doesn’t make any indication to grab the cup or that he even heard David. He takes the cup from David and puts it in front of Barry. “He’s gonna be okay, son. Why don’t you have some of this before Iris gets here with some food?”

“Not hungry, or thirsty.” Barry mutters.
Joe puts the two cups down on the floor and wraps an arm around Barry. “I promise, he’s gonna get through this. He’s tough, a fighter like you. Lightning didn’t keep you down, and it’s not gonna keep him down either.”

“When’s Uncle Mick gonna get here? I wanna see him.” Joe’s not sure when Mick became Uncle Mick, but he figures this isn’t the best time to ask.

“Pretty soon. He said he was a couple hours out, and I’m sure he’s breaking every road law known to man to get here.”

Joe’s relieved when that gets a small chuckle out of Barry. “He’d be doing that anyway, even if you didn’t call. Now he just has an excuse to.”

“I’m gonna pretend I didn’t hear that.” Joe unravels from Barry and pats his leg. “I’m gonna run to the restroom, I’ll be right back.”

Barry nods, looking a little better now.

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David takes Joe’s empty seat next to Barry. “We have every cop out there looking for Mardon. Word spread fast to the others, they’re all calling your dad a hero for how he saved Joe.”

David is surprised when Barry lets out a wry chuckle and shakes his head. “He hates being called a hero, even though he helps me fight metas like Mardon.”

If Barry’s the Flash, then that means Snart’s, “He’s Captain Cold, isn’t he.”

Barry nods. “He thinks I need ‘adult supervision’ out there, so he put on that stupid parka and only has a cold gun to defend himself with.” Barry sobered up. “This is all my fault, I couldn’t keep him safe. I can’t keep anyone close to me safe. First, I wasn’t able to keep the Reverse Flash from killing my mom and my dad from going to jail, and now I wasn’t able to stop Mardon from hurting my other dad. God, I don’t even remember the last thing I said to him was, all I know was that I was annoyed with him.”
David could tell that Barry’s starting to spiral, and fast. “Hey, no more of that. You did only what you were capable of doing. You may have these amazing powers, but you’re not a god. You’re still human. And if you hadn’t shown up when you did, then me and Joe and Eddie, and everyone else that was there would be dead right now. You’re a hero, too.”

Barry shrugs. “Whatever you say.”

Before David could argue his point more, Barry jumps out of his seat and runs down the hall to a large man. “Uncle Mick!”

“Hey, Cub.” The large man says as he’s pulled into a hug by Barry.

They pull apart after a couple moments and Barry turns to the woman that came in with his uncle. “Are you Lisa?” Barry asks.

The woman looks to have been crying earlier and has long, curly, brown hair. She nods with a weak smile. “You can call me Aunt Lisa. I wish I was meeting my little nephew under better circumstances.”

Barry says something back, but David can’t hear what it is. He thinks for a moment and remembers something in Snart’s file about him having a younger sister. That must be her. He also remembers that Snart almost always ran with a partner named Mick Rory, the arsonist. That must make Barry’s ‘Uncle Mick’ Rory. Right now, while he’s holding Barry in a hug, he seems more like a teddy bear than Central City’s worst arsonist.

Someone about Barry’s age starts coming down the hall too. He’s wearing glasses, and now that they all start making their way over here, David recognizes him as Hartley Rathaway. David remembers reading in the papers how he was disowned from his parents when he came out. Why is he here though?

Mick has a hand on both Barry and Hartley’s shoulders. “This one didn’t think he’d be welcome, since he’s not related to Len by blood. Told him he’s bein’ an idiot, and that if Len paid taxes, he’d be marked as a dependable too.” He tells Barry.

He gets up, feeling out of place, and meets Joe halfway down the hallway. “You alright, David? You have a bit of a deer-in-the-headlights look goin’ on there.”

David shakes his head. “Yeah, I’m just taken aback.”

“Yeah, they’re all a lot to take in at first.”

“You got that right.”

A doctor comes out of the room where Snart’s been for the past couple hours, and everyone goes to her to get an update. David hangs back a little, still not feeling like he really belongs with everyone.

“How is he, doctor?” Joe is the one to ask for everyone.

“He’s experiencing some paralysis in his lower extremities. The hardest thing to gauge right now is the extent of his neurocognitive deficits. He may not be the same person you remember.” She clarifies.

“Can we see him?” Barry asks.

“I’m sorry, but family only.”

“These two,” Joe points to Barry and Hartley. “Are his kids. And these two,” He points to Lisa and Rory now. “Are his siblings.”

She nods. “Only you four can come with me.” She lets them enter first, then turns to Joe. “When we have him more stabilized, then you can see him. Again, I’m sorry, it’s hospital policy.”

Joe nods. “I understand.”

She closes the door behind her. David gets worried when Joe gets a look on his face and he starts
marching down the hall. “Joe, where are you going?”

Joe doesn’t turn around and David starts to follow him “I need to end this.”

“Not by yourself.”

He stops and spins around. “Yes, by myself. I know him. I can find him. I’m not letting anyone else get hurt because of him, especially Barry and Iris. I need you to stay here and make sure Barry doesn’t go anywhere. Ever since he got these powers, he’s thought he’s invincible, but he’s not. And now that his dad is hurt he’s not gonna be thinking clearly.”

“Joe, you’re not-”

Joe interrupts him. “Don’t you dare say I’m not thinking clearly, David. This is the clearest I’ve thought since this whole thing started. Now promise me you’ll keep Barry and Iris safe.”

David sighs as he realizes there’s no way to get through to Joe when he gets like this. “I promise.”

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Eddie had come and gone some time later, probably going after Joe. Iris stayed, bag of food left forgotten on the floor. She had long since curled up on one of the uncomfortable hospital chairs and fell asleep. David had lost his tie and vest some time ago, but he never was able to fall asleep. It’s becoming dawn outside when the door clicks open. Barry comes wandering out with red eyes, like he’s been crying the whole night, which he probably has.

He sees Iris fast asleep, then when he eyes land on David he looks shocked. “Captain, wha- Why are you still here?”

Wow, does Barry really think so little of him? He knows he’s hard on the kid, but it comes from a place of caring, not malice. Barry’s one of the most talented CSIs he’s ever seen, he’s wants to see him succeed. That’s why he pushes so hard. “Of course I’m still here. Are you hungry? Iris brought some food a couple hours ago, it’s probably cold by now, but it’s better than nothing. Or I can go get something-”
Barry shakes his head. “I’m fine.” Barry scoops up the bag of burgers and sits down next to David. He pulls something out of his pocket that looks like one of those energy bars. “A hypermetabolism is one of the side effects of my speed. I need to eat about ten thousand calories a day or I get hypoglycemia, I learned that the hard way. Cisco made these brick things that are chock full of calories, but they are completely disgusting, even after Uncle Mick helped improve the taste.” Barry scarfs down the bar to get it over with and his face wrinkles up in disgust after he finishes.

“Those remind me of that elven bread in Lord of the Rings. Where one bite is suppose to fill a man for a day.” David comments.

Barry unwraps one of the cold burgers. “Are you calling me a hobbit? Because I don’t know if I should be insulted or not.”

David puts his hands up. “Just making an observation.” David watches for a while as Barry finishes his first burger, then a second. When he starts on his third, he can’t help but comment again, he’s not the best in these awkward situations. “I bet all-you-can-eat buffets hate you.”

Barry snorts a laugh. “My dad always wants me to enter that big hot dog eating contest in New York, but I’m pretty sure my powers would be cheating.”

David laughs at that. “After spending the day with him, that doesn’t surprise me. I never thought I’d meet someone with ADHD that’s worse than yours.”

“You let him get bored, didn’t you. If there’s one thing I’ve learned, is that if he gets bored he becomes that asshole cat that pushes a glass off the table while staring at you the whole time.”

“He started humming It’s a Small World.” David says in a deadpan voice.

Barry laughs again. “He does that with everyone. He starts out with small things and then builds his way up until the person yells or throws something at him. He likes to time how long the person lasts in his head. How long did you last?”

David thinks about it. “About two minutes, I think. Not very long.”

Barry looks impressed. “Joe always breaks at thirty seconds. Uncle Mick’s the best, and even he can only last for about five minutes before he throws the closest thing within reach.” Barry smiles at a
memory. “He once threw a raw fish at him. Dad *hates* the smell of fish and he almost threw up. He was adamant that the smell of fish was on him for a week straight.” The smile drops off Barry’s face. “He still hasn’t woken up. Even if he does, he might not be my dad anymore. He might be all serious and love the smell of fish.”

“Barry,” Barry looks up at the use of his first name. “I can assure you, *no one* likes the smell of raw fish. And there’s no point in worrying about all the what-ifs, you’ll just dig yourself deeper and deeper into a hole. Like Joe said, Snart’s strong, he’ll get through this.”

Barry nods and starts nibbling on his burger again. They sat in silence, and Iris got up and went to Barry’s side when she woke up. The two leaned on each other, clinging to each other like a lifeline. Snart really wormed his way into all of the Wests’ families hearts.

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Barry manages to take a small nap laying against Iris. He wakes up to the sound of a phone ringing. He cracks his eyes open and watches Captain Singh walk off to answer it, talking quietly to not disturb Barry and Iris. It was jarring talking to Captain Singh and having him be so nice to him. Guess Joe was right when he told Barry that Captain Singh didn’t hate him.

He thanks the person on the other line and hangs up, then goes to gather his vest and tie.

“What’s going on?” Barry croaks, rubbing the last of the sleep from his eyes. Iris sits up, wondering what’s going on too.

Captain Singh bites his lip and looks to be mentally debating whether or not to tell them. “I need to head to the station, Thawne just called saying that Mardon took Joe.”

First his dad, now Joe. This has to be the worst day of Barry’s life, right up there when the Reverse Flash killed his mom. Barry and Iris jump up. “We’re going, too.” Barry decides.

“No, you two need to stay here where it’s safe. Mardon might come after you two as well.”

“What place is safer than a police station full of cops? This is my dad, I need to be there.” Iris argues.
“Captain, please. I am going crazy just sitting around and waiting for my dad to wake up. I’m the Flash, I’m the only one that stands a chance against Mardon.” Barry adds.

Captain Singh sighs. “Fine, let’s go. I don’t have time to argue right now.”

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Eddie glares at Barry when he walks in with Iris close to his side, but doesn’t comment. Captain Singh joins Eddie in front of the other cops, and Barry and Iris go off to stand behind a desk. The cops keep glancing at Barry, and some of them have patted him on the back. Word really did spread about Len.

“I can’t believe this is happening.” Iris says as she watches Eddie and Captain Singh give a speech to the other cops.

“Hey, look at me.” Barry holds her face in his hands. “I promise, I will bring him back to you.”

She nods. “Okay.”

Eddie finishes his speech and heads off somewhere with Captain Singh. Iris’ phone starts ringing and she answers it. “Hello?” She pauses as she listens to the person on the other line. She turns to Barry after. “He has my dad. He says if I tell anyone, he’ll kill him. He wants me to meet him at the waterfront.”

Barry grabs the dufflebag with his suit inside. “Alright, I’m coming with you.”

Barry sees Captain Singh watching him in the corner of his eye. When Barry looks at him fully, he nods for Barry to go. Barry nods back and runs with Iris to the elevator. The elevator opens and Linda walks out.

“Barry, can I talk to you for a second?”

Barry glances at Iris. “No, Linda, I’m sorry, I really can’t right now.”
She scoffs. “Of course not.”

If only Barry had more time. “Look, it’s not like that.” He starts backing into the elevator. “It’s an emergency, I have to go right now.”

Barry speeds his suit on in the elevator, and when the doors open he takes Iris to the waterfront. They look around frantically for Mardon and don’t spot him or Joe anywhere. They stop as they hear lightning out in the distances, and what looks like a monsoon is forming on the horizon.

Barry turns to Iris. “You need to get out of here. Get as far away from here as possible.”

“I’m not leaving you.” She argues.

“Iris, please-”

“Listen. Since the night you told me how you felt I have not been able to stop thinking about you. At first, I was really mad. Then I realized that the reason I couldn’t stop thinking about you was because I didn’t want to.”

“I never stop thinking about you either.” Iris pulls him into a kiss, and this is all Barry’s ever wished for in his life. They pull back and see a tidal wave starting to form.

“Go, be a hero.” Iris says.

Barry nods and checks his comm. Please, please, let someone be on the other end. “Caitlin, Cisco? Anyone there?”

“Barry, I need to talk to you. It’s Doctor Wells, he’s-” Caitlin answers.
“No time for that right now,” Barry cuts her off. “There is a tsunami heading for the city. How do I stop it?”

Caitlin stutters as she thinks. “Uh, theoretically, if you can create a vortex barrier along the coastline, a wall of wind, that would sap the tidal wave of its energy before it hits the city-”

“By running back and forth.” Barry finishes. “How fast?”

“I don’t know if you can run that fast.”

Barry turns off the comm and turns to Iris. “You need to leave, right now.”

Barry starts running along the coastline before he can even see if Iris listened or not. He knows that if he fails, it doesn’t matter how far she makes it, she can’t outrun a tsunami. Barry pushes himself as hard as he can, for Iris, for his dad, for Joe, for everyone in Central City right now. He looks to the side and it looks like it’s starting to work, but not fast enough. He needs to go faster, faster than ever. He screams as he pushes harder and it feels like his body’s about to give out….

And then it’s dark out all of a sudden. He looks over and sees the image of himself, same as the other night.

He screeches to a halt as he’s panting, hearing dogs barking in the distance. He looks over and sees the same dogs trying to fight each other as the owners hold them back on their leashes. He skims his eyes down the street and sees the same person, flipping the same sign. He shakes his head, thinking this can’t be happening. Right on cue, he hears the same woman yelling for a taxi. Barry watches as the taxi drives by and she starts yelling she’s going to be late, again.

“Oh, boy.” Barry mutters.
I'm so sorry! Before you get out the pitchforks and torches, let me explain. At 11 PST this morning I had this almost completely done (like 22 out of 25 pages done) when a friend called and I had to help him move something. He lives in Seattle, which if anyone lives near or in Seattle, you will know how BAD our traffic is. I only live about 40 miles outside Seattle and the round trip (my house, to his, and then back to mine) took hours. Leaving at 11, I didn't get home until around 3:30. Then I got time to write only about 2 pages before I had to go make dinner, then eat said dinner.

Long story short, I had a long day. Hope everyone likes this chapter and again, I'm so sorry it's really late.

That crime scene in the morgue had to be the most surreal experience in Barry’s life. Everything was the same, word for word. Now Barry knows how those characters felt in the movie *Groundhog Day*. At least this time Barry managed to dodge running into Captain Singh with the coffee. Speaking of Singh, he’s back to his grumpy, not knowing Barry’s the Flash, self. Barry can’t help but be relieved at that. It was nice having him in the loop, but after years of him being grumpy around him, seeing him constantly being nice to him was just too weird. Although the niceties only started after his dad got hurt. That reminds him, the only reason he was pissed before was because Barry never told him about Len, maybe he should think about- Wait, if Barry’s in the past, then his dad...

Barry heads straight home. He spots his dad on the couch, his awake, breathing, not hurt by lightning, dad. Barry drops his bag, coat, and shoes at the door and collapses into the side of his dad, barely giving Hartley a glance as he passes him. Barry feels his dad tense in surprise, but he doesn’t care as he closes his eyes and buries his face into his shoulder.

After a moment’s hesitation, Len wraps his arms around Barry. “What’s wrong? Your date with Linda go that bad?” He jokes.

Barry had completely forgotten about his date with Linda. It feels like it was forever ago now, but in this timeline it was only a couple hours ago. Barry shakes his head, snuggling in even deeper. “It was fine, I just really missed you.” Barry says with his voice muffled.

Barry feels his dad chuckle. “I just saw you this morning, Kiddo. Did something happen?”

Barry thinks about telling the truth, but ultimately decides against it. “No, I just wanna sit with you
for awhile, if that’s okay.”

There’s a pause, his dad no doubt seeing right through Barry’s lie, but he doesn’t push it. “Of course.”

Barry shifts, turning so he can see the tv, but keeps his head on his dad’s chest. He falls asleep to the sound of a steady heartbeat.

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When Barry’s breathing evens out Len glances down and sees Barry fast asleep.

“What was that about?” Hartley whispers from the other side of Barry.

Len shrugs with one shoulder, careful not to wake Barry. “No idea. I’m sure he’ll talk when he’s ready. For now, I think it’s time to take him to bed.” Len looks over at Mick, who’s passed out still on the recliner. He lifts Barry up gently and Barry clings to him in his sleep. “You can take Barry’s room and I’ll just take the kid with me, he doesn’t seem like he’s going to let me go anytime soon. Just leave Mick there, he’s slept in worse places.” Hartley nods and Len hears the tv click off as he walks down the hall to his room.

He closes his door with his feet, and after a moment of thinking about it, decides against waking up Barry to have him change. Len sets Barry on top of the bed to have his hands free to take his contact lens out, then he gets them both under the covers and Barry goes right back to clinging to his left side. Len tucks Barry’s head under his chin and just holds him, slowly falling asleep himself.

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Len wakes up to the sound of whimpering, and the bed shifting to his left. He sits up, grabs his glasses sitting on his nightstand, and is instantly wide awake when he sees Barry tossing and turning in his sleep from a nightmare. At some point in the night Barry shifted away from him, and now it looks like he’s reaching out and trying to find something in his sleep.

“No. Wake up, Kid, it’s just a dream.” Len puts his hand on Barry’s arm. “C’mon, Kid. Everything’s fine, you need to wake up.”
Barry, soaking in sweat, shoots up with a strangled cry. “Dad!”

Len puts his hands on both of Barry’s shoulders and turns the kid so he can see him. Barry’s breathing heavy, but visibly calms down when he sees Len. “I’m right here, Kiddo.”

“You’re okay.” Barry tackles him in a hug and Len runs a hand through Barry’s hair.

“You’re okay, I got you. Everyone is okay.” Len holds Barry and slowly rocks him back and forth. Len knows he told Hartley that he would wait for Barry to open up on his own, but after this he really needs to know what happened. “You wanna tell me what this is all about now? And why you’ve been glued to my side since you got home?”

“I- I think I- somehow traveled through time. One minute I was running to stop a tsunami from destroying Central City, and the next I was a day and a half in the past.”

Len knows they’ve been talking about time travel, but to do it by accident? “Are you sure that’s not just your nightmare? You’ve had time travel on your mind recently, maybe-”

“No.” Barry pushes back and looks him in the eye. “It wasn’t a dream. I’ve been to the same crime scene twice now. Mark Mardon wants revenge for his brother’s murder and wants to get Joe. He’s a meta now too.” Len opens his mouth to speak, but Barry cuts him off. “I know what you’re gonna say, Mardon’s dangerous and I need to be careful. You said he’s more impulsive than Uncle Mick.”

Len closes his mouth. That is what he was going to say, and when did Barry start calling Mick Uncle Mick? “What happened then, from start to finish? Don’t leave anything out.”

Barry looks shocked that Len believed him so quickly (probably from years of everyone never believing him about the night that his mother was killed), then Barry settles in to tell Len everything that happened on the day that never was. Barry stutters through talking about Len getting hit by the lightning from Mardon, and how he was in the hospital and not waking up. Len pulls Barry into another hug as a wave of fresh tears start.

“It was so scary. The doctor kept saying how even if you do wake up, you might not have the same personality, and that you were paralysed from the waist down.” Barry mumbles into his shoulder, getting snot on his shoulder, but Len couldn’t care less as he just held Barry tighter against him.
“I’m fine now though, you want me to get up and do a little jig for you to prove it?”

Barry gives a wet chuckle and shakes his head as he sits up again. “I know you’re fine now.” Barry sniffs and wipes the tears from his eyes. He starts fiddling with his fingers in his lap. “I know none of that was real—”

“Hey, look at me.” Barry looks up from his hands. “It might not have happened to me, but it happened to you. From your perspective, it was real. You have every right to feel the way you do, you got me?”

Barry nods. “Yeah, I got you.”

“Good, what happened next?”

“I met your sister, she was nice.”

Len snorts. “Lisa, nice? That couldn’t have been her.” Len’s happy when that gets a smile on Barry’s face. “I guess you should meet her some time when I’m not in a hospital bed, then you can see the real trainwreck.”

Barry goes on with his story, and Len got a real laugh when he found out Captain Singh of all people called him a hero. It becomes less funny when he finds out Mardon kidnapped Joe, and used him to get Iris alone to hurt her as well. Barry shrugs when he finishes. “...and yeah, I went to the crime scene, then came home to find you sitting on the sofa, safe and sound.”

“I’m going with you to S.T.A.R. Labs tomorrow.” Len decides.

“What? No, you don’t need to do that. I’m fine.”

“Nope, too bad. I’m the parent, and last I checked the parent makes the rules, and the kid – that’s you - has to follow what I say. Night.” Len hates pulling the ‘I’m-the-dad-so-you-need-to-listen-to-what-I-say’ card, but he’s tired and will need to get up early tomorrow if he wants to join Barry at S.T.A.R. Labs. He takes his glasses off, lays back down, and ignores Barry’s sputtering.
“But- This isn’t fair, I’m twenty-six, not nine. And you’ve never pulled that card before, why are you starting now?”

Len closes his eyes. “Go to sleep, Barry.”

“But-” Barry starts to fight, but then cuts himself off. He huffs in defeat and Len feels the bed shift as Barry gets comfortable again.

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Once everyone gathers in the cortex at S.T.A.R. Labs, Len pulls up Clyde and Mark Mardon’s mug shots.

“Yo, the computers are my thing.” Cisco complains. “If we need something frozen, then I’ll call you, Elsa.”

Len just reclines in the chair with his hands linked behind his head. “You were late, and I’ve picked up a thing or two watching you.”

Joe laughs at the glare Cisco gives Len. “Looks like you got some competition on your hands there.”

“So Clyde Mardon has a brother?” Caitlin asks, bringing the conversation back around to the task at hand.

Wells rolls into the room. “So both Mardon brothers survive the plane crash and the dark matter released by the particle accelerator explosion affects them both in virtually the same way.”

Barry finishes Wells sentence at the same time as him.

“That’s right.” Wells says as he turns to look at Barry. Len really does need to teach that kid the word subtle.
“Only Mark’s not like Clyde at all. He can do things that you couldn’t even imagine.” Len remembers Barry telling him about the tidal wave that Mark created in that other timeline and suppresses a shiver.

“You mean he’s sorta like a Weather Wizard?” Barry finishes Cisco’s sentence as well, which gets a look from Cisco too.

“Come on,” Len says to get the focus off Barry. “You can do better than that, what about Monsoono?” Len’s shocked that Barry finished his sentence too, he never came here from what Barry said.

Cisco takes a sip of his slurpy, then cringes. “Trigeminal headache?” Both Caitlin and Barry ask.

“Mister Allen,” Wells gets his attention. “A word, please?”

Barry glances back at Len, and then to Wells again with a nod. “Sure.”

Barry heads off to the treadmill room with Wells. “Well, I need to head out. I’ll see all of you later.” Joe says as he heads out.

The three wave goodbye. Len steals a sip of Cisco’s slurpy while he’s still distracted by the brain freeze.

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Len has been working with the other geeks on where Mardon might be hiding. Barry never told Len where he was the first time around, so he’s just as clueless as the others. Len really wants to go follow Barry, but being in Joe’s car is what got him hit by the lightning by Mardon, so Barry privately told him to stay here with the brain trust.

Len has it narrowed down to just a couple places when a gust of wind came through the cortex, and then Barry’s suit is gone from the mannequin.

“Hey Barr, what’s goin’ on?” Cisco asks into the microphone for Barry’s suit.
“Found him.” Is all Barry says before he turns the comm off.

Everyone heads down to the pipeline, Len making sure to put on his parka with the hood up and his goggles on to hide his face, where Barry just put Mardon in a cell.

“I’m gonna break out of here, and I’m gonna create a tidal wave that destroys your entire city!” Mardon yells as he pounds on the glass.

Cisco closes the door, and Len glares at Barry for already starting to peel his cowl off before the door closes all the way.

(He tells him as much later, but Barry argues his back was turned anyway so Mardon couldn’t see his face.)

“So, I still don’t understand. How did you find him?” Cisco asks.

“I, um, just remembered Dad saying that they used to squat there from time to time. It was years ago, but I figured it wouldn’t hurt to check it out.” Barry lies very badly. From the look on Wells’ face, he wasn’t buying it either.

“That’s gotta be some kind of record.” Caitlin says, believing Barry.

Cisco chuckles, also believing Barry. “Heh, yeah. Well, there goes my excuse for bailing on my brother’s birthday.”

Cisco and Caitlin walk out, Len following them when he hears Wells stop Barry. “Do you have any idea what you’ve just done?”

“Yeah, I do.” Barry says without hesitation. “I just saved a lot of lives.” Mine included. Len thinks from his spot around the corner.

“I warned you not to mess with the timeline.” Wells says in a dark tone that he’s only used with Len.
That sends up a lot of red flags for him.

“Doctor Wells, if you would just let me tell you what was going to happen, you’d understand why I did this.”

“Whatever tragedy you think you’ve just averted, time will find a way to replace it and trust me, Barry, the next one could be much worse.”

“You’re wrong.” Barry says.

Barry rounds the corner Len was hiding behind and nearly runs him down. Before Barry could say anything, Len motions for Barry to flash them away. Barry nods, and the next thing Len knows, he’s on the roof.

“He’s wrong.” Barry repeats as he starts pacing. “Nothing could be worse than what I had to go through. I’m not losing you, not if I have the chance to stop it.” Len only takes his goggles and hood off, giving Barry a chance to continue ranting since it looks like he’s not close to slowing down. “If he would just let me explain, he would know where I’m coming from and why I had to change events.”

“You done?” Len asks.

Barry stops pacing and takes a deep breath. “Yeah, I’m good. I’m just shocked at how Doctor Wells was talking to me back there, I’ve never heard him that mad at me before.”

“Welcome to my world.”

Barry crinkles his brow. “What? I’ve never heard him talk to you like that.”

“That’s because he never talks to me like that whenever you’re around. When you’re gone, it’s a whole other story. That’s why, even if you did tell him what happened, he’ll still tell you to let time happen as it should. I’m expendable in his eyes. Hell, he’d probably be happy to be rid of me.”

Barry shakes his head. “Don’t say that, you’re not expendable. And he doesn’t think that.”
Len scoffs. “You really need to be more distrusting of people. How can you be defending him right after complaining about how he acted?”

Barry throws his hands up. “I don’t know! Because he helped me after I got struck by lightning?”

“Which he caused.” Len pointed out.

“And he’s been helping me get faster?”

“More like he’s been studying you and your speed. Kid, we can do this all day. Just think about what I said, okay?” Len’s getting real tired of this back and forth, some days he wishes Barry didn’t inherit his stubbornness.

Barry nods. “Fine, okay. I’ll put my bias aside and think about what you said.”

Len nods too. “Thank you. Think you can give me a lift down to the garage? I don’t wanna run into Wells.”

“I’ll do you one better, want to head back to the apartment and watch a movie? I don’t really want to be here either, and I can’t go back to work because I told my boss I had a stomach bug.”

“You know he probably knows you’re lying anyway.”

Barry shrugs. “Most likely, but I’d rather at least keep up appearances.”

Len has a feeling that’s not the only reason Barry wants to spend time with him, but he’s not going to push it. He nods and one second they’re on the roof, and the next they’re back at the apartment.

Len holds out his arms to balance himself and get his bearings. “Sorry.”

The brat doesn’t sound the least bit sorry as he comes into the living room out of his suit and in
regular clothes again. Len rolls his eyes when he sees Barry zip up his hockey jacket, he’s never going to see that thing again. “I texted Lisa this morning.” Len changes the subject. He tosses his parka on the back of a chair. “Asked her if she wanted to come meet her nephew for the first time. She’ll be here this evening since she’s driving down from Chicago. Figured you might want to meet her in a less dire situation this time around.”

Barry starts digging through the kitchen cabinets, looking for something to eat. “Sounds good.” Barry turns around to face him. “She knows I’m a full grown adult, right? She’s not coming down expecting to see a newborn baby? And also how Hartley’s basically your kid too now?”

Len pretends to think about it. “I think it slipped my mind to mention that. Oh, well, she’s just in for another surprise.”

Barry rolls his eyes, but doesn’t look too mad. More like he’s annoyed at himself for expecting otherwise.

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Barry and Len are in the middle of binge watching *Orange is the New Black* when there’s a knock on the door. Barry’s been getting a kick out of his dad cheering for all the women in the prison, nearly spitting out his drink when his dad yelled, “Yeah, stick it to the man!”.

(Barry’s not sure why he’s surprised, of course his dad’s going to love a show where the protagonists are in prison. Maybe he should introduce him to *Prison Break*.)

The sex scenes are a little awkward to watch when your father is sitting on the couch only a foot away, but Barry powers through it.

Len pauses the show. “Not it.”

Barry gets up to answer the door without complaint. It would be pretty hypocritical of him to get mad since he calls out not-it on doing the dishes on almost a daily bases. “Joe? What are you doing here?”

Joe comes in and spots Len on the couch, and snacks covering the coffee table. “Catching you play hooky it seems. When were you planning on telling me that you took down Mardon?”
“I- I just haven’t had the chance yet.”

By the look on Joe’s face, he’s not buying a word he just said. Wow, he really needs to learn to lie if he wants to keep his identity secret. “You haven’t had the chance to tell me you got Mardon, but you had time to come home and watch,” He leans to get a view of the tv. “Orange is the New Black and pig out on junk food?”

Barry sees Len facepalm behind Joe’s back, and Barry shrugs helplessly. “It must have slipped my mind? Look, Joe, you can’t be mad.”

“I’m not mad. But I am curious. I mean, you were acting so weird at the crime scene last night.”

Before Barry can come up with another horrible lie about how he’s always weird, Len speaks up. “He’s just nervous because he’s going to meet my sister for the first time tonight. Give the kid a break if he forgets a thing or two.” Damn, Barry needs him to teach him how to lie like that, Joe looks pretty convinced.

Barry’s phone buzzes in his pocket and he sees it’s Linda. Oh crap, he forgot they had a lunch date planned. He answers the phone with a wince. “Hey, Linda. Yeah, I know, I’m so sorry, I lost track. I’m gonna head that way now.”

Barry sees Len give Joe a ‘I told you so’ look.

“All right, bye.” Barry hangs up and shrugs. “I have a lunch date with Linda. I gotta run.” Barry gets out of there before he fumbles on more of his words.

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Barry never thought he would have a mutual breakup with someone and still feel like friends with them, but that’s how it turned out with Linda. She even said they should make plans to meet up sometime so she could teach him about hockey. Barry wasn’t sure where that came from, but she pointed out that if he’s going to wear the Central City Columbines’ jacket, he should know a thing or two about hockey. He had completely forgotten that he was still wearing his dad’s jacket, it was just really comfy.
When he overheard Bridge talking to Iris about Harrison Wells, he couldn’t help but interrupt, and then later defend Wells. He knows he promised his dad he would stop putting Wells on a pedestal, but he can’t help it. He’s looked up to the guy for years, he can’t just turn it off at a moments notice without any proof. (Even if Bridge has the proof, Barry recognizes he’s being too proud to listen to a word he has to say about his mentor)

At least he got a coffee date with Iris out of all of this. (Even if she doesn’t know it’s a date. Barry is just focusing on the fact that Iris kissed him in that other timeline. He’s in the unique position of knowing what’s going to happen, it’s like he has ESP or something)

Barry heads back to the apartment in better spirits to find his dad hasn’t moved and that Hartley is back home from work. Barry’s not even mad that they started watching without him, that’s how much on cloud nine he is.

“And how is everyone this fine day?” Barry says as he sits between them and drapes his arms around both of them.

Len and Hartley stare at him strangely. “What is wrong with you? First you were like an octopus last night, now you’re acting like you just won the lottery. Are you sick?” Hartley goes to feel his forehead.

Barry smacks his hand away and steals some of Hartley’s popcorn. “I’m just in a good mood, is that a crime?” He goes to take more, but Hartley slaps his hand away. Barry pouts and Len sighs as he offers some of his.

Len starts saying something, but Barry is distracted by his phone buzzing in his pocket. He pulls it out and sees it’s a text from Cisco asking to meet him at a bar. Guess his brother’s birthday turned out as bad as Cisco thought it would. “Sorry, I gotta go meet Cisco at a bar.” Barry gets up and shrugs a coat on. “I’d reschedule, but he was pretty worried about his brother’s birthday. They don’t get along too well.”

“Was that today?” Hartley asks. If Barry didn’t know any better, it sounds like Hartley’s actually concerned about Cisco. “I’ll head out with you. This was the one day a year we called a truce and would get together and complain about crappy families. Excluding present company of course.”

Len tips an imaginary hat. “Make sure you two keep your phones on. Lisa should be here in a couple hours.”
“Yes, Mom.” Hartley says sarcastically as he puts his coat and shoes on.

“No going home with strangers, and always watch your drink, don’t let anyone slip you anything. Remember the buddy system and stay together.” Len’s smirking as he says all of this. “And if you drink too much, you can always call me for a ride.”

Barry flings his hands in the air. “I literally can’t get drunk.”

“It’s also illegal to drive without a licence.” Len pauses a beat. “Which reminds me, I need to teach you to drive and get you a licence. Don’t make plans this weekend.”

Hartley opens the door and let’s Barry out first. “You can’t drive? How did you get places before you got,” Hartley makes sure no one’s around. “Your speed?”

The door clicks shut behind them and Barry shrugs. “I took the bus.”

“Oh, you poor soul.” Barry laughs and shoves Hartley.

Barry and Hartley find the bar that Cisco texted about, and walk in to find it’s like any other bar in the world, down to the peanut shells on the counter. Barry slides into the seat next to Cisco, while Hartley sits across from them. Cisco looks like someone kicked his puppy.

“Hey, man.” Barry greets him with a pat on the shoulder.

“Hello, Cisco.” Hartley says, trying not to touch the sticky counter.

Barry realizes he probably should have warned Cisco that Hartley was coming too. “I hope it’s okay Hartley came as well.”

Cisco shrugs, not looking up from his drink. “It doesn’t matter. Thanks for coming here, even though you can’t get drunk.”
Barry shakes his head. “No worries.”

“Dante must have been extra dickish this year, if you wanted to drink at a place like this.” Hartley comments as he eyes the place.

“I don’t really want to talk about it. How was everyone else’s day?” Cisco deflects.

“Yeah, Barry. Want to share why you’ve been in such a chipper mood the past couple hours?” Hartley asks.

“Well, my day’s been great. But Linda and I did break up.”

Cisco and Hartley look shocked. Yeah, he could have worded that better. “Great? I’ve never heard anyone describe a breakup as ‘great’.” Cisco says.

“I just have a feeling I’m about to move forward with someone really special.”


Barry goes to the bar to get them drinks, already knowing about all the stress Hartley is under since Mercury Labs is hosting a symposium this week, and that some of the people he’s working with are “complete idiots who can’t tell the difference between a hydrogen molecule and a helium molecule if it hit them in the face”. Hartley’s words, not his.

Barry comes back to the table with two drinks and a water for himself, to Hartley telling Cisco about how Barry’s going to be learning to drive this weekend.

“Dude, you can’t drive? How did you get to work before?” Cisco asks, looking better now.

“Why do you people keep asking me that? Have none of you heard of public transport?”
“Yeah, when you’re fourteen and your parents can’t drive you to the mall. Not when you’re in your twenties and can afford a car. Didn’t Joe say that he would have bought you a car like he did with Iris?”

Barry shrugs as he sips his water. “Well, yeah, I just never needed to drive anywhere. Iris drove us to high school, and then in college I just lived on campus the whole time. When I got a job at CCPD, it was easier to just take the bus, since parking at the station is always a nightmare.”

The three continue talking for a couple hours. It was weird, Hartley was nice to Cisco the whole time, just like he said he would. The fun came to an end though when Barry got a text from Len saying Lisa’s there.

“Hey, Hartley, I just got a text from Dad, Aunt Lisa’s made it.” Barry turns to Cisco. “You want to come meet our aunt with us? Dad won’t mind.”

Cisco shakes his head. “Nah, man, I’m good. I’m just going to finish this drink and then head home, I’m beat.”

Barry nods and Hartley gets up after taking the last sip of his drink. “Alright, if you’re sure. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Night, you two. Have fun with your aunt.” Cisco waves.

“Goodnight, Cisquito.” Hartley couldn’t go one night without saying something, could he? Cisco throws peanut shells at Hartley, but he has a smile on his face, so at least Barry’s happy he’s feeling better.

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Even though Hartley only had two drinks, he refused to travel by superspeed so they ended up walking. Barry offered to show him the bus, but he refused. Now he’s complaining about his feet hurting as they walk up the stairs to the third floor.

(The building has an elevator, but it’s old and makes an ominous creaking noise, and Barry’s pretty sure it hasn’t been inspected since the seventies. The only person Barry’s seen use it was Uncle Mick, and that was only once. He looked green afterwards and swore to never use it again after
Barry unlocks the door and finds Aunt Lisa inside with Len. She looks completely different from when Barry saw her in the other timeline. This time her makeup is flawless and her long brown hair is curled perfectly.

She looks excited, then her face drops when she just sees Barry and Hartley. “Lenny, when am I meeting my baby nephew?” Yup, Dad’s being a jerk. Him and his stupid, smug face.

“Now, is that any way to meet your nephews? That was pretty cold of you.”

Lisa looks confused, then realization strikes her. She hits Len hard on the arm. Barry’s sure that’s going to leave a bruise. “What the hell, Lenny? I don’t even know where to start with you, the fact that I have two nephews, or that they are almost my age. And are they twins? How old were you? Wait, was that when you stopped stealing for a year?”

Barry and Hartley look at each other. Now that Barry thinks about it, without the glasses they might be able to pass as twins.

“Slow down, Lise. No, they are not twins. Hartley, the one with the glasses, isn’t biologically mine, he just recently joined our little Rogue family, as Barry once called us. I had Barry when I was nineteen, so yes, that’s why I stopped stealing for a year. You remember the Allens?” Barry forgot he had jokingly called their family a little group of rogues that one time in passing, but apparently his dad didn’t forget.

Lisa nods. “Vaguely.”

“They took Barry in a year after he was born.”

“Barry. Is that short for Bartholomew? Like Grandpa?” Len nods. Lisa goes over to the two and holds out her arms. “Well, I’m glad Lenny finally got his head out of his ass and called me. I’m happy to meet my two nephews.”

Barry hugs her right away, but Hartley hangs back. Lisa waves him over. “Get over here, I did say two nephews.”
Cisco stands up stretching after finishing off his beer. He blinks after getting up too fast, not used to drinking so much and really feeling the three beers he had. He makes his way out of the bar and to the cool night air. He makes it down a couple blocks until he’s in a more secluded part of town. He always hates walking down this way at night, no one’s ever around and half of the streetlights are out, making him feel like one of those people in the first five minutes of a *Supernatural* episode. Maybe he should have went with Barry and Hartley, at least then he wouldn’t be walking all alone.

He hears a bottle smash behind him and he spins around quickly, but nothing’s there. He peeks down an alleyway and sees a stray cat digging through the garbage.

“Stupid cat,” He mutters. “C’mon Cisco, there’s nothing to be scared of. Everything is fine.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, Cisco.” Cisco hears behind him. He goes to turn around, but feels a sharp pain in the back of his head, and then everything goes dark.

Cisco wakes up to a pounding in his head and he groans.

“Ah, I see Sleeping Beauty has awoken from his nap. How’re you doing, Cisco? I can call you Cisco, right?”

After the pounding headache, Cisco realizes he’s bound to a chair. He struggles to get free, but fails. The voice makes a ticking sound. “You might as well save your strength, Cisco. There’s no way you’re getting yourself free.”

Cisco looks around the old warehouse he’s in. By the window across the room, he can see it’s still night out. There’s a bed under the window and lights are on, so this place has power. There’s furniture like couches, tables, and chairs; and appliances like a mini fridge and microwave. It all looks pretty homey, as far as warehouses go.
On the couch, Hayward is laying across it, his legs resting up along the back. Cisco glares at him. “What do you want with me, Hayward?”

Hayward sits up, setting a comic book to the side, and stretches. “I have a little job for you. Now, don’t bother denying it, I know you’re the one that built that cold gun for Captain Cold. I have to say, you did a great job having it reach absolute cold, I’m not too proud to say I’m a little jealous, in fact. So, I decided that you’re gonna be nice and share the fun with me. After you build me a cold gun like his, and why not throw in a heat gun like his friend’s, then I’ll let you go, completely unharmed. Except for that little bump on your head, but that’s in the past now.”

“No way, I’m never going to make weapons for you.”

Hayward hangs his head and sighs. “I was afraid you were gonna say that.” He lets out a sharp whistle, and one of the doors behind him opens and Dante comes tumbling out with his hands tied together and a gag in his mouth. He has a couple bruises on his face and hands, like he put up a fight. A bald, muscular guy, like you would see in the movies, pushes Dante forward with a grunt.

“Now, you seem like a loyal brother. You make those guns, he’s free to go too. You wanna reconsider my offer now?”

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Lisa spends a couple hours at the apartment catching up with everyone. Barry and Len make sure to leave out the part about them being the Flash and Captain Cold, which Hartley picked up on and followed their lead. Mick showed up at one point, and just nodded in greeting with a grunt. Everyone starts heading to bed after that, first Hartley goes off to sleep in Barry’s room, then Barry himself falls asleep on the couch. Mick ends up passing out on the recliner, leaving Len and his sister being the only ones still awake. Around one in the morning Lisa yawns and starts getting ready to head out.

“I’ll see you tomorrow, Lenny. A girl needs her beauty sleep.” She says at the door.

Len gets up from the couch slowly, careful not to wake Barry. He puts a blanket over him and meets Lisa at the door. “You got a place to stay?”

She rolls her eyes. “Yes, Lenny. I still have my place on Burrows street.”
“I’m only asking, Trainwreck. Now go sleep.”


“Night.” Len closes the door behind her and sighs. He loves his sister, but sometimes she just becomes too much.

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Barry woke up on the couch to the smell of food cooking. He wanders into the kitchen to find Uncle Mick is the only one there. “Where’s everyone else?” He asks as he sits at the island and rubs the last of the sleep from his eyes.

Mick turns around to face him. “Hart left for work already, an’ yer old man is still sleepin’. Bacon?” Mick holds out a plate.

Barry’s stomach reminds him now that he didn’t eat dinner last night. “Yes, please!”

Before Barry could grab a piece, a hand sneaks up from behind him and grabs the bacon he was going for. Barry glares behind him and finds his dad smirking. He must have hurried in here because he still hasn’t even put his contacts in yet.

“Really?” Barry asks, put out.

Len takes a bite. “There’s a plate full right in front of you, you’ll live. So, what are your plans for today?”

Barry’s mood brightens at the reminder. “I’m getting coffee with Iris. I have a good feeling about it.”

Len looks over Barry’s shoulder and must be sharing a look with Mick. He looks back to Barry. “Kid, whatever you’re planning, I think you should forget it.”
Barry scoffs. “Planning? I’m not planning anything. Can’t two friends just go and get coffee and talk about life and things?”

“Do you know what Einstein’s definition of insanity is?”

The question throws Barry for a loop. “Doing the same thing over again and expecting a different result. What does this have to do with me going to have coffee with Iris?”

Len sits down and motions for Mick to give them a minute. Mick nods, turning off the burner, and going to the other room. “Are you going to tell Iris how you feel again? Because the last time you did that, things didn’t turn out too well for you.”

“But this time is different!”

“How?”

Did his dad miss the whole kissing part in the other timeline? “This time I know she has feelings for me, too. She said so.”

Len sighs and shakes his head. “Yes she did, in the other version of today that only you remember. A timeline that you’ve changed now by finding and stopping Mardon before he hurts me and Joe. Nothing will have changed for her, all you’ll do is cause a rift between the two of you again. I’m sorry, but I’m asking you, for both of your sakes, not say anything to her.”

Barry’s shoulders drop. Logically, he knows his dad is right, but it still hurts to admit it. “Fine… I won’t say anything. Can I still go have coffee with her?”

“Of course, she’s still your best friend, just make sure you just stay on the best friend level.”

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It’s morning by the time Cisco finishes the two guns for Hayward. After he agreed to help, he was cut loose and led to the table. Hayward had already built his guns, he just needed Cisco to upgrade them to reach absolute hot and cold. Dante had been tied to the chair next to him, silently watching
him work the whole night. Dante starts squirming again, trying to get the rope binding his hands to give way.

Cisco checks to make sure Hayward is still distracted in the other room before getting his brother’s attention. “Dante, Dante. Just keep cool, okay? Let me do my thing.”

“Oh, really? And you’re going to save us with your ‘mechanical engineering’ skills?”

“Right now my skills are the only thing keeping us alive, so shut up.” Cisco hisses.

“You shut up.” Dante always has to have the last word, doesn’t he. Before Cisco could say something back to him, Hayward comes back out to the main area of the warehouse clapping.

“Wow, would you look at that! My babies are up to fighting form now!” He starts studying the guns more closely. “Now, let’s see what all you did.”

Cisco shifts from foot to foot as Hayward seems satisfied with his heat gun. Next, he picks up the cold gun and Cisco starts to sweat. “They’re both done. Can we go now?”

“You know, I may not look it, but I have a couple PHDs in mechanical engineering, physics, things like that. That’s how I was able to figure out to build a weapon that can slow the Flash and his buddy down.” He motions his head at the cold gun, having seen what’s wrong. Cisco takes a piece out and hands it to him.

Hayward snatches the piece out of his hand. “I have to commend you Cisco, anyone else wouldn’t have noticed that you tampered with the firing pin.” Hayward fixes the firing pin and places it back where it belongs, starting up his gun with a smirk. “Good thing I’m not just anyone.”

“You said you would let us go if I built these. Are you breaking our deal?”

“Don’t worry your pretty little head, I’ll keep up my end of the bargain. Right after I take these babies out for a test run.”

~~~~~~~~
Barry has a pretty uneventful coffee with Iris at Jitters. He ended up listening to his dad and didn’t confess his feelings to her again, so they just sat and talked about the current events in their lives. Iris mentioned Mason Bridge again, complaining how he made fun of the title of an article she’s writing, and Barry told her all about meeting Lisa for the first time last night. Barry is positive if those two set their minds to it, they could take over the world.

When Iris has to get back to work, Barry ends up feeling better than before, but still decides to walk over to S.T.A.R. Labs to check on things there.

Barry whooshes into the cortex, Caitlin and Dr. Wells are the only ones there behind the console.
“What’s up?”

“Not much,” Caitlin says, biting her lip. “Except, have you talked to Cisco? I’ve been trying to call him on his cell, but he’s not answering. I’m worried about him, he had a rough night.”

Barry shakes his head. “Last I saw him was at a bar last night with Hartley. He did have a couple more beers than usual, maybe he’s just sleeping it off and put his phone on silent.” Barry’s phone starts ringing and he answers it after seeing it’s Joe. “Hey, Joe. What’s up?”

“Yeah, Hayward’s back.”

“Wait, Hailstorm’s back?” Caitlin and Dr. Wells look up.

“Yeah, he was spotted at the Santini crime family casino. If he’s hitting the Santini’s, this could be the start of a mob war.”

Joe hangs up before Barry could say anything else. Barry turns to the other two in the room.

“Well, this day just keeps getting better, doesn’t it?” Dr. Wells almost looks smug as he says that, like he’s rubbing it in Barry’s face that something bad happened, just like he warned him would happen.
Barry heads to the casino alone, knowing there wouldn’t be enough time to go get his dad. He speeds into the room to find chaos. Most of the guests have already ran out or are cowering under tables, leaving the guards shooting at an overturned blackjack table, probably where Hayward is hiding. A couple of the guards are frozen in place with their guns drawn. Barry gets one of the guards out of the way of an ice beam.

“Hope you liked your first stay at Iron Heights, Hayward, because you’re about to spend a lot more time there.” Barry calls out.

Hayward pops out from behind the blackjack table. He’s wearing his black trenchcoat again and has his cold gun pointed right at Barry. “Room service was terrible, I ended up checking out early and only gave it one star on yelp.”

During Hayward’s little speech, Barry runs forward and grabs the cold gun right out of his hands, then grabs the heat gun from its holster. “We’re done here.”

“Are we though, Flash?” Hayward steps around the table and towards Barry. “You see, Cisco was very busy last night, and very generous too for upgrading my toys. Now, unless I check in with my friend here,” He pulls out a phone from his pocket and turns the screen on, showing Cisco and another man tied to some chairs at a table, along with a large muscular man with a gun. “In person, in the next thirty minutes, he’s ordered to shoot both Cisco and his brother.” He holds his hands out. “Now, give me back my things.”

Barry reluctantly hands over the two guns. “Let them go, Hayward.”

Hayward taps a hand on his chin after holstering the heat gun, but leaves the cold gun in hand in case Barry tries to go after him again. “Hm, let’s see. I’ll think about it.” Hayward turns around and strolls out of the casino, waving behind him. “It was nice seeing you again, Flash. Hopefully your icy friend can play too next time.”

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Later, Barry heads to the scene in regular clothes.

“Barr.” Joe says in a low voice when he spots him. He looks to make sure no one’s listening. “Witnesses report seeing the Flash. They said you had Hayward dead to rights, but you let him go. Why?”
Barry shakes his head. “Cisco. Hayward has him and his brother.”


Barry nods. “Alright.”

Cisco just finished talking with Dante when the door to the warehouse swings open.

“Kids, I’m home!” Hayward yells. He pulls a wad of cash out of his pocket and tosses it to the skyscraper of a man. “Thanks for the help, buddy. I can take things from here. This should cover everything.”

The guy takes the rubber band off and quickly counts the money. He must be satisfied because he nods with a grunt and leaves the warehouse. “Real chatty guy, isn’t he.” Cisco can’t help but say aloud.

Hayward shrugs. “He got the job done. I wasn’t about to carry both of your asses here myself if I could get someone else to do it for me. Plus, I needed someone to watch you two while I went out and ran a couple errands.”

“When the hell are you letting us go?”

“You answer one question for me, and I’ll let you and your brother walk right out that door. Scouts honor.”

Cisco glances at Dante, then to cold gun in his hand. “What’s the question?”

“The Flash and Captain Cold, who are they?”
Cisco panics internally, trying to think of something to say. “I- I don’t know, they always wear a mask. I’ve never seen their faces.”

Hayward lifts the cold gun and shoots at Dante’s hands that are resting on the table. He screams and when the beam stops the tips of his hands are black with frostbite. “No! No, stop!” Cisco yells.

“I’ve taken some first aid, and that right there is first degree frostbite. Hurts like a bitch, but if he gets it treated soon enough he should make a full recovery. Now quit lying to me and tell me, who are they?”

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Barry, Caitlin, Dr. Wells, and Len are all working hard at finding Cisco. Len made some quick excuse to his sister and headed straight to the labs as soon as Barry called him with the news. They checked the CCTV in the area, and all it showed was Hayward with the same guy Barry saw on the phone drag Cisco into a van with the license plates covered. Right now Caitlin’s doing something with satellites, but it’s also coming up empty.

“You’re right, this is all my fault.” Barry mutters into his hand.

“What? How is this your fault?” Caitlin asks.

Len glares at Wells as he stands behind Barry, a hand resting on each shoulder. “I don’t care what anyone says, this isn’t your fault. We’ll get Cisco back.”

“I’m back.” Cisco’s voice comes from the entrance of the cortex.

Barry and Caitlin jump up and run over to him, while Wells and Len hang back. “My God, are you okay?” Caitlin asks first. She pulls him into a hug. “We were so worried.”

“What happened?” Barry asks.

“How did you escape?” Wells asks. Somehow his question is almost layered in something like suspicion and disbelief.
Caitlin pulls back to let him explain. Cisco looks at everyone and bites his lip. “I didn’t.” He finally says.


“He, um, tortured my brother. And he said he was gonna kill him if I didn’t… If I didn’t tell him…” Cisco’s voice cracks.

“Tell him what?” Caitlin asks.

“Who the Flash and Captain Cold really are.” Everyone is silent as they try and process what was just said. “I- honestly, man, he could’ve killed me, but he was gonna kill my brother.” Cisco starts crying. “I couldn’t let him do that.”

Barry slowly walks over to Cisco. “Hey.” He says softly.

“I’m sorry, Barry, Len. I’m so sorry.” Cisco sniffs.

Barry puts a hand on Cisco’s shoulder. “No. I put you in that position.”

Len goes over to them. “We both did.”

Barry pulls Cisco into a hug. “We’re the ones that are sorry.”

Cisco pulls back after a moment and goes to the console. “Where do you think you’re going?” Len asks.

Cisco pulls out those puppy eyes he used earlier. “I don’t deserve to be here. I won’t be the one to put you guys in jeopardy, not again.” Cisco shakes his head. “Never again.”

Len wants to point out that if anyone is putting this team in jeopardy, it’s him. If word ever got out
that he’s really Leonard Snart, the whole team’s reputation would be ruined. But he doesn’t get the chance since Cisco turns and leaves the room.

Wells goes to talk to Cisco alone, so Len, Barry, and Caitlin get to work on what Hayward might be planning.

“My question is,” Barry says. “Why did he spend so long at that casino, then not even take anything in the end? He had the time to.”

“What about you, Len? Have you robbed any casinos?” Caitlin asks.

Len wrinkles his nose and shakes his head. “They’re pretty poor targets. Even with the amount of money kept on hand, the amount of guards makes it not really worth the trouble. Unless…” Len’s eyes widen.

“What?” Barry and Caitlin ask.

Len snaps a finger and sits up. “Unless he attacked to trigger a move. If casinos are attacked, the protocol is to relocate the money outside the casino. All the money will be in one place, and moving targets are always easier to hit.”

“Like with the Kahndaq Dynasty Diamond?” Damn, Len thought Barry had gotten over that by now, but by the look Barry’s giving him, that would be a no.

“Exactly like that.”

Cisco and Wells return, and they repeat the theory to them.

“So that was Hayward’s plan all along, he wanted to trigger the move.” Wells recaps.

“Okay, where is it now?” Cisco asks, down to business now. At least Wells was able to do
something right and get Cisco to stay. As much as Len would deny it out loud, he likes having the kid around.

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Len’s waiting in the same forest that Barry brought him to all those months ago. Barry went to go grab Hayward and they are going to hash it out right here. Speak of the devil, the area starts lighting up in flashes of light from Barry’s lightning. Barry skids to a stop next to him, and Hayward is dropped off right in front of them.

Hayward sticks his hands out to balance himself, before he quickly gets his bearings. He tosses his helmet to the side. “Wow, that was a trip and a half. People would pay money for a ride like that, Barry. I’m glad you were able to join us this time, Leonard. Were your parents Star Trek fans or something?”

Barry and Len take their hoods off, and Len pulls his goggles down to hang around his neck. “We have to talk, Hayward.” Barry says. They agreed earlier that Barry would take the lead. “We know Cisco told you who we are.”

Hayward straightens out his coat. “Can’t really blame him, can you? You two or his brother? Of course he’s gonna pick family. Now, down to the tough choice you two need to make, what are you going to do now? You stop me, and I’ll tell everyone who you are.” Hayward smirks at Len. “I bet the criminal world would be very interested in knowing that Leonard Snart is playing for the other team now.”

“I could speed you to my private prison where you would never see the light of day again.” Barry counters.

Hayward shrugs. “You could, but the thing is, technology is an amazing thing now. If I’m not around, then I won’t be able to stop my own private uplink that’ll tell the whole world who you two are. So again, looks like we’re at an impasse.”

Barry bites his lip and looks away. Looks like it’s time for him to step in before Barry says the wrong thing. “There are much better, and easier, cities to rob than Central, why don’t you run along to one of those?”

Hayward pouts. “And miss all the fun we have in our little fights? No thanks.”
Barry looks like he’s about to put up a fight, so Len puts his hand out to stop him and steps forward himself. “How about this, we keep playing your little game with you, only we make a couple rules.”

Hayward smirks. “I’m listening.”

“No more killing. You want to be a great thief? Make sure you don’t have any casualties. It’s not worth all the heat it gets you. Next, no more going after the kid’s friends and family, I don’t care who knows who I am, you’re going to wish he just sped you off to that private prison of his. Got it?”

This is the first time Len’s seen Hayward be serious as he thinks over the conditions. “I guess we got ourselves a deal, Captain Cold.” Barry and Len put their hoods back up. “Hey Flash, think you could give me a ride back to town?”

Barry lets out a dry laugh and shakes his head, taking Len with him and leaving Hayward by himself in the forest.

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Barry drops his dad off at the apartment, then heads to S.T.A.R. Labs to talk with Dr. Wells. They’re the only two in the building, and Dr. Wells just reassured Barry that it was the right thing to let Hayward go. Barry can’t help but think about what Mason Bridge was saying, how Doctor Wells might have had something to do with Simon Stagg’s disappearance. Now that Hayward is taken care of and they have some down time, Barry figures now is a good a time as any to ask Doctor Wells about it.

“Hey, I keep forgetting, I’ve been meaning to ask you. It’s about Simon-” The monitor to Barry’s right catches his attention and he sees it’s a story about Mason Bridge being declared missing. That cannot be a coincidence.

“You were saying, Mr. Allen?” Dr. Wells’ voice rings out in the quiet lab.

“Uh,” Barry scrambles to turn the monitor off. “Nothing. Sorry, I’m just really tired after everything. I’m, uh, gonna head home now.” Barry gets up and grabs his coat. “Night, Dr. Wells.”
Luckily Dr. Wells is occupied with whatever is on the computer and not looking at Barry. If he was, he’d know in a heartbeat that something was off about Barry. “Goodnight, Barry.”

Barry really needs to meet with Joe and his dad, right now.

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Barry had sent a text out to Joe and Len to meet him at his lab at CCPD. It’s late enough that there’s only a skeleton crew downstairs, and Barry knows his dad could easily get past them without being noticed. He paces in front of the window, his murder board on display.

Finally, ten minutes later, Joe and his dad come in at the same time, shaking the rain off their jackets.

“Barr, what’s up?” Joe asks.

“Yeah, Kid. What’s so important that you needed me to sneak in here?” His dad peeks at the board, and looks more closely when he sees it’s all about the murder of Nora Allen and the arrest of Henry Allen.

Barry can’t even turn to look at them, so he watches the rain fall outside. “I think that maybe you guys were right about, Doctor Wells.”

Barry hears someone sit at his desk chair, and in the reflection of the window he can see it’s his dad. “Which part?” He asks.

Barry turns to face them. “All of it.”

Chapter End Notes

Yay! Lisa is finally in it!! It's about damn time!

I promise next week won't be this late, I swear.
Happy Monday!

And yay! This is on time!! Told you it would happen.

Enjoy this new chapter and thank you for all the comments and kudos so far, they really mean a lot!

Len sits on the kitchen counter, watching Hartley pack a duffel bag. “Now, are you sure you got everything?”

Hartley sighs and rolls his eyes. “Yes, Dad.” Hartley stands up. “Plus, even on the off chance I did, I’m only five minutes away. As much fun as it’s been living here with you, Barry, and Mick, sleeping on a sofa bed in the middle of the living room has not been. Now that I’ve saved up some money and have a steady income, I can afford my own place.”

Len hops down from the counter. “I know, when I got this place, I wasn’t expecting to have three others living here full-time. Still, if you need anything, call me. Or Barry if you can’t reach me. Do you have Mick’s number.”

Hartley shrugs his duffel on. “Yes. I also have Aunt Lisa’s, Joe’s, everyone at S.T.A.R. Labs, I even have Iris’s number. I’ll be fine, I have lived on my own before. And if anything happens I’m more than capable of taking care of myself, I am the Pied Piper after all.”

Len knows he’s being overbearing, but he can’t help it. Hartley’s quickly become part of his little family and he’s always been protective of his family, Lisa can attest to that. Now Len knows how Joe felt when Iris moved out. “You know Cisco’s pissed you named yourself, right?”

Hartley shrugs with a grin. “He gave me a pass, said the name was pretty good.”

“And you know who your landlord is by name and face, right? I’ve seen plenty of people run scams where they pose as a landlord, take your rent, then take off with your money when the real landlord starts coming around, leaving you high and dry.”
Hartley throws his head back. “Yes. I know you know the landlord checks out, don’t think Barry kept that little secret from me. You had Mick tail that poor guy for a week.”

“I worry, it’s my job. Get used to it. Now get your butt over here and give me a hug.”

Hartley groans, but does it anyway. Len holds him in tight. “Call or text me at least once a day to let me know you’re alive. Make sure you eat everyday too, I know how you forget when you get absorbed in some project.”

“I will, promise.”

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Len watches as this maniac monologues right after trying to blow up some kids in a park. Luckily Barry made sure no one was hurt. Len may be a criminal, but even he has lines he doesn’t cross, and trying to blow up innocent people, adults and kids alike, is way over the line.

“What is with bad guys and black trenchcoats. First Hayward, now this kid. Was there a sale at Villains-R-Us that I didn’t know about?” Len mutters as video starts to wrap up.

“The Trickster proudly welcomes you all, to a new world order.” Len and Joe glance at each other at the name, thinking the same thing.

“Talking in the third person, that’s never a good sign.” Cisco says.

“You’re just mad because he named himself.” Caitlin teases.

“No, he didn’t.” Joe and Len say at the same time. Len notices that even Wells looks shocked at the news. That’s weird, he should be old enough to remember. Even if he wasn’t living in Central at the time, the story still made national news. Len motions for Joe to take the lead. “Twenty years ago, Central City was hit by a series of terrorist attacks. One man killed at least ten civilians, two cops. That guy called himself the Trickster.” Joe summarizes.
Cisco looks him up and snickers. “Whoa. Someone was rocking the unitard.”

“James Jesse.” Caitlin reads off the screen.

“Like Jesse James, only more twisted.” Joe says.

“I remember watching the trial on tv in Professor Stein’s office.” Len didn’t have a tv at the time, and the professor had canceled classes that day, figuring most people wouldn’t be able to focus anyway. Raymond had shown up, not having a tv in his dorm, and all three of them watched together.

“Where is this Mr. Jesse now?” Wells asks.

“He got several life sentences at Iron Heights.” Len says, looking at him oddly. That’s even weirder that he doesn’t know that, you couldn’t go ten feet without seeing that headline.

“He was probably the most dangerous thing Central City has ever seen.” Joe comments.

“You mean, until the particle accelerator blew up.” Barry doesn’t turn around from the monitors on the walls.

Wells looks taken aback by that. “Um,”

“Barry and I, will go see this James Jesse at Iron Heights.” Joe cuts in, trying to save face. “See if he can give us something that can help catch his groupie.”

Cisco says something, but Len ignores that as he gets up and grabs Barry by the arm, practically dragging him out of the room before he can say anything else stupid.

“Ow, ow! Would you let go, you’re gonna leave a bruise.” Barry tries to pull himself free in the hallway.

Joe’s not with them yet, probably trying to cover with Wells. “Would it kill you to try and be more subtle.” Len hisses after he stops and lets go of Barry’s arm. “Why not just wear a neon sign that
“‘Hey, I’m suspicious of you!’”

“You’re never nice with him, why do I have to be?” Barry counters, shoving Len back, giving the two more space.

“Use your head, dummy.” Len taps Barry on the side of the head. “Me not liking him is normal. You, on the other hand, are always nice to him. Of course he’s gonna be suspicious if you start acting like a dick to him!”

Barry slaps his hand away, and the two begin a slap war. “Don’t call me dumb.”

“Then don’t act like it.”

Joe comes jogging down the hall and breaks them up. “Hey, quit it. What has gotten into you two?” Joe has a hand on a shoulder each and continues to hold them back.

“He started it!” They both whisper-yell and point to the other.

Joe pushes them forward. “Well, I’m endin’ it. Outside, now.”

They cross their arms and make it a point of not looking at each other. Once they get outside and away from the labs, Joe stops and pinches the bridge of his nose.

“Listen, I get it. We are all feeling the stress of this, but you two can’t be picking fights with each other. Len, go with Mick and see if you two can find out anything useful about this copycat. Barry, you’re coming with me to see Jesse, alright?”

The two glare once more at each other before nodding. Len walks away first, striding over to his bike. He takes great satisfaction in skidding out of the lot.

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Len slams the front door shut when he gets home, still having not calmed down yet. He stomps over
to Mick in the kitchen and swipes the beer in his hand. He chugs half before slamming it on the counter.

Mick just blinks at him. “Who pissed in yer cheerios?” He asks as he pulls a new beer out of the fridge.

Len slumps onto the bar stool. “That brat is an idiot who wears his heart and emotions on his sleeve. He needs to learn to keep his temper in check or it’s going to get him killed.” Len buries his face in his hands.

Mick snorts. “An’ yer just the picture of emotional stability. You jus’ slammed that door ‘cause it owes you money?”

Len glares at him through the slits between his fingers. “Shut up, Mick.” Len muffles into his hands. He drags his hands down his face and closes his eyes, taking a couple deep breathes. After he feels he’s calmed down some he starts again. “Do you remember James Jesse?”

Mick looks confused by the different conversation change, but nods regardless. “Course. He was that psycho that killed all those people, targeted kids especially. I’d like ta burn him alive for that alone. Why you askin’ ‘bout somethin’ from twenty years ago?”

Len sighs. “He’s got a copycat, some kid who dropped bombs on a playground. He made a video and called himself the Trickster. Weird thing though, Wells had no idea who he was. Barry and the others I understand, they were only four or five at the time, but Wells is old enough to remember.”

Mick’s about to say something when there is a knock at the door. It’s unlocked so Len just yells for the person to come in, thinking it’s Hartley that forgot something, and is shocked that Iris walks in.

“Can I talk to you?” She asks in greeting, marching over to the kitchen.

Len shrugs. “Shoot.”

“I’m worried. Mason Bridge has been missing for the past week. I’ve tried calling and e-mailing him, but he hasn’t answered.”
Len sits up. “Wait, the same guy that was looking into S.T.A.R. Labs?”

Iris sets her purse on the counter and nods. “The very same.”

Len gets a text from Joe asking to meet him and Barry somewhere, and he groans. “Listen, I need to go. I want you to stay here with Mick.” Len gets up and shrugs his leather jacket on. “Have you talked to anyone else about this?”

Iris shakes her head. “I was going to talk to Eddie next, see if he can find out anything.”

“Don’t. This is getting too dangerous. We’ll figure something out after this Trickster Jr. taken care of.” With that, Len leaves Iris with Mick, and heads to the address that Joe included in his text.

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Barry and Joe are leaning against the hood of Joe’s car as they wait for his dad to show up.

“So, since we’re just waitin’ here, want to tell me what’s goin’ on in that head of yours?”

Barry glances at Joe from the corner of his eye. He uncrosses his arms and runs his hand down the back of his neck. A little voice in the back of his head that sounds a lot like Len is yelling at him that that’s an obvious tell, and he drops his hands down to his side. “I’m just so frustrated. Dad gets to talk back to Wells all the time, but I’m not allowed to even once. It’s not fair.”

Barry feels a spark of irritation when Joe just laughs and pats Barry on the back. “Life’s never fair, otherwise I’d be a famous jazz singer and not snoopin’ around freaky clown warehouses.” Joe squeezes Barry’s shoulder. “Son, you’ll have your chance to confront him, you just need to be patient.”

Barry knows Joe has a point, but it’s still really annoying. “Yeah, alright. I’ll try and hold back on the biting remarks.”

“That’s all I ask.”
They stand around for a couple more minutes before they hear the familiar sound of Len’s motorcycle engine. He slows to a stop next to Joe’s car and takes off his helmet, eyeing the garbage everywhere and the creepy clown on the warehouse door. Barry’s never been one to be scared of clowns, but even he thinks he might be having nightmares about that clown tonight.

Len puts the kickstand down and gets up. “Good thing Mick didn’t come along, he’s terrified of clowns.”

Joe and Barry push off the car. “Mick Rory is scared of clowns? We are talking about the same Mick, right?” Joe asks.

“When he was a kid, his family went to some carnival. He never gave me any details, but he’s been scared of them ever since.”

Joe had already got the door open while they were waiting for Len to show up, so all three walk right in. Barry goes over to the clothes rack holding all the - very colorful - unitards, while Len drags a finger on a tabletop, removing a thick layer of dust.

“This looks like nobody’s been here since the nineties.” Joe comments.

Barry laughs as Len grimaces at the dirt and wipes his hand on his jeans. “You can say that again.”

“Yeah, look at this thing.” Barry holds up the orange and purple cape on the mannequin. “Do you guys really think Jesse doesn’t know who this new Trickster is?”

“He seemed pretty ticked off that someone was besmirching his bad name.” Joe says.

Barry spots another door, and surprise, surprise it has another creepy clown on it. “Joe, Dad.” Barry gets their attention. He tries to pull open the door, but it’s locked tight. He puts his palms flat against the tin door, thinking he can vibrate the lock open.

“Hold up, Kid.” Len steps forward.
Barry puts his hands down and frowns. “Why? I can have this open in a second.”

Barry watches as his dad crouches down and studies the door. “Someone like Jesse wouldn’t just leave all his stuff behind one lock.” He stands up and looks around the room. “So answer me this, if this warehouse hasn’t been touched since the nineties, what seems off in here?”

Barry spins around. Not understanding what’s out of place, he shrugs. “I don’t know, the interior design is dodgy.”

Len sighs and looks at Barry like he said two plus two equals five. “Queen would be disappointed. How about you, Joe? Have you figured it out?”

Barry feels better when Joe shakes his head too. “I don’t know, Hotshot. Feel like sharin’ with the class?”

“Central City’s finest really has gone down hill.” He mutters under his breath with an eye roll. “Okay. If this warehouse hasn’t been touched since the nineties, then why does it still have power?” Len gestures to the neon light behind him.

Barry never even noticed the lights are all on in here, he was too distracted by all the weird stuff.

Joe snaps his finger. “Something here needs power. The lights being on are just a side effect of the power being on.”

Len uncrosses his arms and points at Joe. “Bingo. And I’ll bet you anything it’s to power some type of trap. Cut the power, and the trap in moot. Now Barry, if you’d be so kind and speed around until you find the fuse box?”

Barry nods and flashes around until he finds the box. He opens it and uses his whole arm to shut off every switch. Every light shuts off, basking the room into darkness. Barry pulls out his phone to use as a flashlight and joins the others in front of the door. Len is crouching in front of the door again, and looks to be picking the lock. Barry turns the light on him, but he’s already standing up and brushing the dirt off his jeans.

“Please, I could pick a lock like that in my sleep.” He backs up from the door. “Now, just to be on the safe side, you should go first.”
Barry scoffs in disbelief. “How is me going first being on the safe side?”

“No, your right. Hey Joe, let’s go first, even though we don’t have any superspeed and can’t get to the other side of the warehouse in the blink of eye.”

Barry rolls his eyes and goes up to the door. “Okay, I get it. No need to be so sarcastic about it.” He pulls the door open and they all hear a click. They freeze, but nothing happens.

“Are we good?” Joe asks.

Barry slowly pulls the door open the rest of the way. “I think so.”

“Guess there are a few more things you can learn from your old man.” Len remarks.

Barry has officially reached his quota of eye rolling today. “Alright, I get it. I’ll listen to you more often.” Barry shines his flashlight into the room, only to find empty shelves. “The copycat. He took everything.”

The three share a look with each other and march out of the warehouse.

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Len nearly runs into Iris on his way into the apartment. “Oh, where you off to?”

She re-adjusts the straps of her purse on her shoulder. “As much as I’d like to stick around and help on this Trickster case, I wasn’t assigned to it. If I want to keep my job I need to head home and get some research done on our current mayor. I need to go to his re-election fundraiser tomorrow, and I can’t go in blind.”

Len steps out of the way. “Good luck with that. Thanks for the tip about Bridge, I’ll look more into when I have the time.”
Iris nods with a smile and closes the door behind her. Len leans against a kitchen counter and rests the back of his head against a cabinet with a sigh. “I get why you hate clowns, they’re creepy as fuck.”

Mick snorts. “And it only took thirty years of me tellin’ you that fer you ta see reason. Where’d you run off to?”

Len massages his temples, feeling a headache coming on. “James Jesse’s warehouse. We work to get this stupid trap undone, and then it turns out Trickster Jr. had taken all of Jesse’s things. Barry and Joe went to go talk to Jesse again, see if he knows anything about his fan.”

“Musta been a crappy trap if both you and this copycat could get past it, Jesse must be gettin’ slow in his old age.” Mick takes a gulp of a beer.

“It’s like this brat knew… the trap… was…” Len pushes off the counter. “Shit, they really are both tricksters!” Len runs to the door.

“Wha’ are ya blabberin’ ‘bout?”

Len opens the door. “Traps!” Is all Len has time to say before he leaves and slams the door shut. Hopefully he can get to S.T.A.R. Labs before it’s too late.

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Len runs into the cortex, his lungs burning and out of breath.

“Have Barry… get to Iron Heights.” Len takes another deep breath. “They’re working together, Trickster and Jesse.”

Caitlin, Cisco, and Wells all turn around to face him with grim expressions. Barry’s voice comes out of the speakers as he talks to Joe. “Joe, There’s no bomb in the city. It was a diversion so the Trickster could help James Jesse escape.”

“Damn it.” Len hisses under his breath. He leans against the console next to where Cisco is sitting,
still a little out of breath.

“I know, we just got surveillance footage from Iron Heights. Jesse got away.” Joe pauses. “Barry, look, they took a hostage.”

Barry stutters. “Well, who’d he take? A guard? The warden?”

“No, your dad.”

Len feels his stomach jump to his throat. Cisco and Caitlin turn to him, looks of pity on their faces, but he ignores them. He vaguely hears Cisco asking him something, but he can’t make any of it out. All he can think about is what if Jesse and the Trickster hurt, or worse kill, Henry. Logically, he knows Henry’s a hostage, and anyone with half a brain knows that you don’t kill your hostage. Henry’s their leverage right now, and he would be useless to them dead, but another part of him keeps thinking about how unhinged the two Tricksters are.

Len is jarred out of those thoughts by a hand resting on his shoulder. He looks down at the hand, up the arm until his eyes rest on Cisco.

“We’ll find him, man. I promise.”

Len nods, not trusting himself to speak.

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Barry spends all night speeding in and around Central City, everyone else working the whole night as well in S.T.A.R. Labs. Len’s gone from anxious and terrified for Henry’s safety, to just numb. He hasn’t spoken a word since finding out Henry’s gone. Mick showed up around one, wondering where Len and Barry were, and the second he saw Len’s face he was worried. Cisco explained what happened, and Mick left without a word, only to return ten minutes later with a couple bags of Big Belly Burger.

At some point, Cisco had led Len over to a chair on the other side of the console and he hasn’t moved since.
Mick tosses one of the bags of food in his lap, startling Len. His stomach churns at the smell of food. “Not hungry.” He manages to get out while wrinkling his nose.

“I don’t remember askin’, now eat.” Mick says over his shoulder in a tone that leaves no room for argument as he places the rest of the bags on the console for the others.

Len gives up easily and nibbles on the fries long after they grow cold, not tasting them. Around dawn, Barry flashes into the lab, nearly collapsing in exhaustion. Len lets the bag of food drop down from his lap and rushes to the other side of the lab to grab Barry before he reaches the ground.

Cisco tosses Len a protein bar without being told, and Len unwraps it.

“Eat it, you won’t be helping anyone if you faint from hypoglycemia.”

Barry nods and speeds through eating it. Afterwards, he starts swaying, almost falling asleep where he’s standing. Len bends down, looping one arm behind Barry’s knees and the other behind his shoulders, grunting as he picks Barry up bridal style.

That seems to shock Barry awake and he tightens a grip around Len’s neck. “Whoa, little warning next time. Where are you taking me?”

Len walks Barry over to the medical area and sets him down on the bed. “You need to sleep, you’ve been running around all night.”

Barry tries to sit up, but Len holds him down by the shoulder. Barry must be really tired if Len’s able to hold him back with only one hand. “But I’m not-” Barry interrupts himself with a yawn. “Tired.”

Len runs a hand through Barry’s hair after taking off his cowl for him. “Right, Kid. Just take a nap for an hour, and I promise I’ll wake you up.”

Barry grabs his hand before he can walk away. “Can you stay? At least until I fall asleep?” Barry pulls out his puppy dog eyes, which are doubly as effective with the bags under his eyes.

Len sighs. “Of course.” Barry shuffles to the edge of the bed to make room and Len sits down. The
small cot really wasn’t made to fit two fully grown adults, but they make it work. Len has one leg hanging down, and Barry curls up almost fully on top of him. Len just holds him as he runs one of his hands through Barry’s hair again.

“He, Jude, don’t make it bad
Take a sad song, and make it better
Remember to let her into your heart
Then you can start to make it better”

Barry stiffens, then just as quickly relaxes as Len sings. This used to be the only song that made Barry sleep as a baby, and when Len and Mick found this out by accident one night, the very next morning they went and scoured thrift stores for the tape, since their old car only had a tape deck.

“He, Jude, don’t be afraid
You were made to go out and get her
The minute you let her under your skin
Then you begin to make it better

Barry’s eyes finally begin to droop, his head nodding as he still tries to fight sleep.

“And anytime you feel the pain,
Hey, Jude, refrain
Don’t carry the world on your shoulders
For well you know that it’s a fool
Who plays it cool
By making his world a little colder”

Barry’s completely asleep now, but Len continues until he finishes the song, staring at Barry the whole time. He never thought he would get the chance to do this again. Hell, if someone would have told him a year ago that this would be his life now, he would have punched them in the face and called them insane. But now he wouldn’t trade anything in the world for this, not even the video Cisco has been filming of him not-so-stealthily from the entryway.
“I know you’re not gonna post that anywhere, since it shows Barry in the Flash suit with his hood down.” Len whispers, careful not to wake Barry.

Cisco jumps and it takes all of Len’s self-control not to laugh out loud and wake Barry up. “Dude, you can sing, man. Like Sinatra level good.” Cisco whispers back. “And not to worry, I only sent it to Felicity. Also, side note, leave it to you to sing a song that has cool and colder in the lyrics.”

Len looks up at the ceiling, wishing a lightning bolt would appear and put him out of his misery. “Great, that means Queen will see it too. I can kiss my badass reputation goodbye.” Len looks through the glass walls and sees the cortex empty. “Where’d the others go?”

Cisco’s shoulders slump. “I was just coming to tell you, they all went to go crash. We’re all seriously fried, and Joe said CCPD has everyone working on trying to find Henry, so we were gonna sleep for a couple hours. You should sleep too, it’s not like you’re going anywhere anytime soon.”

“I’ll try. And Cisco?” Cisco turns back to Len. “Thank you, for everything you guys are doing looking for Henry, it means a lot.”

Cisco nods and smiles. “Don’t mention it. We’re all family, even you. We look out for one another.” Len honestly doesn’t know how to respond to that, and Cisco must be able to tell, because he continues on. “Night, we’re all downstairs if you need us.”

Len nods, so Cisco leaves with a yawn, making sure to turn the lights down as he leaves. Even after Barry was born, Len never thought in a million years that he would have this big a family. Somehow, Cisco and Caitlin saw right through his prickly exterior and still seem to care about him.

As all of that weighs on his mind, he takes out his contacts and falls asleep within minutes.

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Len wakes up slowly to voices in the cortex. He blinks a couple times, squinting as his eyes adjust to the bright lights that are on again. He looks down and sees Barry missing, and at some point someone lifted him fully on the bed, removed his boots, and put a blanket on him. He sits up and hoists his legs over the edge of the bed, where he finds his boots sitting.

After lacing them up, he stands with a stretch and heads out to the cortex. His laziness gets the better
of him and he foregoes putting his contacts in. He’ll just deal with squinting for the time being.

Or not, as Mick shoves his glasses case into his hands.

“You’re already gonna be cranky from bein’ tired as fuck. Fer everyone’s sanity wear the stupid things before ya get a migraine on top of it from squintin’ all day.” Mick says in lieu of greeting him.

Len puts them on without a fight, and he has to admit, his eyes already feel better than having them straining to see five feet in front of him. Barry’s slumped in a chair with Mick standing behind him with his arms crossed. Barry still looks like death warmed over, but at least he’s in more comfortable clothes than the Flash suit, so he looks a fraction better than before he slept. Speaking of, “When did you get up?” Len asks him.

Barry jumps a little, startled out of wherever his mind wandered to. He glances at his watch. “It’s one now, so about… eleven.”

Barry had gotten in at about seven that morning after being up all night, meaning he only got about four hours of sleep. No wonder he looks like he’s been hit by a truck. Len turns to Joe. “So, any updates on where Jesse might be?”

Joe shakes his head. “Unfortunately, no. But we were able to identify the other Trickster. His name’s Axel Walker, age twenty-five. Apparently, him and James have been corresponding snail mail for over a decade.”

Barry sighs and hangs his head. “I should’ve been there.”

Caitlin rests a hand on his shoulder. “We’re gonna find your dad, okay?”

Cisco nods in agreement. “Definitely.”

Mick ruffles his hair. “Chin up, Cub. Doc Allen’s one tough cookie, it’ll take more than two glorified clowns to take ‘im down.”

Barry scoffs and looks at Wells. “I guess I should have listened to you.” He says ruefully as he gets
up and marches out of the cortex. Wells just sits there with his stupid, smug face, not saying a word.

Len, along with Joe, head out following Barry to check on him.

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They find him sitting in front of the pipeline, legs hugging his chest. Len sits down to the right of him and Joe stands on the other side of Barry.

“You okay?” Joe asks. Len just sits there, letting Joe do all the talking for the time being.

Barry’s voice is raw, like he’s holding back tears. “Do you think my dad is still alive?”

Joe doesn’t hesitate. “Yes, yes, he is. Of course. Jesse only took your pop to use as leverage. He might be crazy, but he’s not stupid.” Len wants to argue crazy is worse than stupid, it leads to unpredictability, but he doesn’t want to worry Barry more. “And everyone upstairs is looking to find him.”

“So, now I’m just suppose to just leave my dad’s fate in the hands of a man who may have had something to do with my mom’s murder.” Barry shakes his head and scoffs. “I just- I can’t do this.”

Barry hangs his head, and Len wraps an arm around him as Joe sits down. “Yes, you can.”

Barry’s head shoots up and he leans away from Len, angry now. “It just doesn’t make any sense. I mean, if Wells is a murderer, then why does he want to help me?” Barry spits out. “Why has he helped me stop so many criminals, or saved Ronnie?” Barry pauses. “Why didn’t I see this?”

Joe shrugs. “I spent a tenth as much time with him than you did. He almost had me believing in him.”

“Almost.” Barry points out.

“Look. Whatever else he is, he is Harrison Wells. You love science, he is science. It’s like you made
best friends with Einstein.”

“You’re saying I wanted to be tricked.”

“That’s not what he’s saying, Barry.” Len speaks for the first time. “I’ve run a lot of cons in my day, it’s almost scary how easy it is to get people believing in you. Especially since you always want to see the best in people.”

Joe jumps in again. “I’ve been a cop for twenty-five years. All I can see is the flaws, the lies. The dark thoughts that people don’t think I see. I wish I could be you. As fast as you are, that is your real power. Don’t let Wells take that from you. I don’t know why he’s helping us. All that matters is that he is.”

Barry sniffs as he curls into Len’s side and the tears start flowing. “I can’t lose my dad.” Barry’s voice is muffled into Len’s shoulder.

Len holds him tight as Joe rubs Barry’s back. “Oh, Barr. Barr, come on. Come on.”

As Len pulls back, so does Barry. “Dry your tears, Kiddo. This isn’t over. Now let’s go up and help the others while Mick goes out on another food run. He’ll get anything you want, sky’s the limit.”

Barry gives a shaky smile. “Even that cheeseburger pizza with the pickles and everything?”

“Yes, even your disgusting excuse for a pizza.”

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Len could tell by the look on Mick’s face that he wasn’t too thrilled to get Barry his pizza, but he did so without complaint. Everyone has been working all day to find where Henry’s being kept, the nerds on the computers, and Len and Mick have been calling in favors, but everything leads to dead ends on all fronts.

That evening Joe gets a call from Iris, which Len thinks is strange since she should be at the Mayor’s fundraiser that she was complaining about.
“Hey, baby. Iris?” Joe puts the phone on speaker for everyone to hear.

“How many of you feel the trimethylene-32 coursing through your veins?” Jesse’s voice comes out of the speaker.

“That’s him, that’s Jesse.” Barry says.

“Cisco, can you ping her phone?” Joe asks.

“No need.” Len says. “She said yesterday that she was going to be at the Mayor’s re-election fundraiser for a story.”

“That’s at City Hall.” Joe tells Barry.

Barry turns to Wells and Caitlin. “Can you guys make a cure?”

“Yes, we’ll start synthesizing it right now.” Wells says as he’s typing on a computer. “Barry, do not underestimate the Trickster.”

Barry nods as he flashes out of the room, taking Len along with him.

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Barry skids them to a stop at City Hall, in full costume now. Barry leaves Len next to Iris as he pins Jesse against the wall. There are gasps from the crowd as people recognize who they are.

Len puts a hand on Iris’ shoulder. “You okay?” He asks quietly.

Iris nods, visibly shaken. “Yeah, or no, not really. The poison was in the champagne, I drank some.”
“You’ll be fine, the eggheads at S.T.A.R. Labs are working on a cure as we speak.”

Len’s so busy checking with Iris, that he didn’t notice Walker sneaking up on Barry until it was too late and they put the bomb on his wrist. Barry runs out of there, unable to slow down or the bomb goes off.

Jesse grabs one of the hostages and holds the gun to her head, using her as a shield when he pulls out his cold gun.

“Put it down, Cold, or this young lady is gonna have a new hole in her head.”

The hostage whimpers at the manhandling and her mascara is already running from her tears. Len mentally swears as he lowers his gun. Walker Saunders over and snatches the gun from his grasp.

“This will be ours now, thank you very much.”

Len scowls at them as he hears Barry and Wells talking in his comm. Wells wants Barry to phase through a freakin’ wall. Barry’s having issues trusting Wells on this and he doesn’t blame the kid. He’s dying to say something to Barry, but doesn’t want to alert Jesse and Walker to the fact that he has a comm in the first place. Right now that comm is the only link Len has to Barry, the only way he can tell if his son is alive or scrambled eggs on a sidewalk somewhere.

Jesse sets a phone up on the podium and watches the money pours into his account. When Walker peeks over his shoulder to watch too, Iris gets Len attention.

“Is Barry okay?” She whispers.

Len nods minutely. “Still alive, at the very least.” Len jumps at the feedback in his comm from Barry’s end, then he hears an explosion in the background.

Len can hear him breathing heavy, which any type of breathing is great in his book. “How?” Barry asks between breathes.

Cisco and Caitlin start calling out Barry’s name, asking if he’s okay.
“Oh! That felt weird.”

Len releases a breath he hadn’t realized he had been holding. “He’s fine, the bombs off.” He whispers to Iris, who sighs in relief.

“Ooo, I like it.” Walker grins.

“Lobsters on me, Kid.” Jesse says.

Len hears over the comm Barry telling him that he’s on his way with the cure. A second later the room fills with lightning and the cold gun reappears in his hands. Barry stops on the stage. “It’s okay.” He tells everyone. “You’ve all just been given an antidote.”

“That wasn’t very sanitary.” Jesse comments.

Len steps up with Barry, his gun drawn on the two. “Now, where’s Henry Allen?” Barry asks.

“You’re gonna prison either way, so you might as well tell us, Jesse.” Len says.

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Len sticks around with his gun on Jesse and Walker while Barry goes to get Henry. The two criminals are tied up as they wait for the cops to arrive.

Len can’t help but feel a tiny bit of sympathy for Axel, he is only a year younger than Barry and Hartley after all. “So, was it worth it, kid? Throwing away your whole life to play along with this freak?” Len asks as he leans against the podium.

Axel stops squirming and glares at him. “Of course it was, he’s my dad. At least I got to spend time with him.”

“Yes, because a dad in prison for killing people is such a sterling role model.” Police sirens sound outside. “At least now you two will get to spend some real quality time together behind bars while
you guys are serving your consecutive life sentences together.” Len holsters his gun when a group of cops barge in, led by Thawne. Len nods to him. “All yours, detective. Packaged and ready to go just for you.”

Thawne nods, and Barry shows up right on cue to pick him up and speeds him to the lab.

When they stop, Len shrugs his parka off and pulls his goggles down around his neck. He smiles when he sees Henry standing in front of the mannequin for Barry’s Flash suit, where it just reappeared. He’s wearing a beige trench coat over his prison uniform.

Henry grins and walks over to him. “There’s my Leo the Lion.” Henry cups Len’s face. “Where’d the glasses go?”

Len grips Henry’s hands on instinct and he shrugs, feeling like he’s sixteen again. “I prefer my contacts, and the glasses would get in the way of my goggles.”

Cisco snickers from his spot by the console. “Leo?”

Len glares and Caitlin elbows Cisco in the side. Henry pulls Len into a hug and Len relaxes instantly as a hand holds the back of his head. He closes his eyes and buries his face into the crook of Henry’s neck. There’s the smell of prison, but also the underlined smell of safety, home, and just Henry in general. He’s been so scared for the past day Henry’s been missing, he just wants to stay here forever.

Len pulls back reluctantly and Henry pats him on the shoulder. He goes to stand next to Barry over by the mannequin. Henry holds out a hand to Mick. “Mick, it’s been awhile.”

Mick shakes his hand. “You too, Doc.”

“You been taking care of the two numbskulls? Making sure they’re eating right?”

Mick nods with a grin. “Course, someone’s gotta do it while you’re in the slammer.”

Len rolls his eyes, but doesn’t comment. Those two together are an unstoppable force, always have
been and always will be.

Henry looks around, taking in everything S.T.A.R. Labs has to offer. “Wow. Half of this stuff didn’t even exist when I was practicing.”

Cisco walks up to him, hands on his hips like he’s some big shot. “Yeah, well, I’d be happy to give you a crash course on all of it if you get out.” Cisco’s eyes widen. “I’m gonna shut up now.” He points to himself.

Henry just laughs and pats him on the shoulder. “That’s okay.”

“Dr. Allen?” Caitlin asks, meekly walking up to him. “I’m feeling the need to give you a hug.”

Henry holds his arms out in invitation. “Absolutely, I will always accept a hug.” They pull back. “Thank you.” Henry really means it too. He’s always been a hugger, something Len had to get used to pretty quickly when he was a teenager.

Henry makes his way over to Barry and Len. He wraps an arm around Len’s shoulders and Len just melts into his side. He’s normally against touching and cuddling in front of others, but Henry will always be an exception for him, ever since he met him. Len could never say no to him. Not even when he called him Leo. His dad always called him Leo and he hated it, but the way Henry says the name, full of love instead of hate, he never had the heart to correct him.

“You gotta tell me,” Henry says to Barry. “What does it feel like when you’re running down the street like a bat outta hell?” Even though Henry knew about Barry from the beginning, Barry never got to talk about his powers directly with him. They didn’t want to risk the wrong person over hearing, or their conversation being recorded.

Len hides his confusion when Barry glances at Wells before answering. “There’s no feeling like it.”

“I bet.” Henry squeezes Len once more before dropping his arm. He turns to the room as a whole. “Actually, you’re all heroes in my book.” Henry nudges Len at the all part. “Especially you, Dr. Wells.” Henry strides over to Wells with his hand stretched out. “Thank you. For everything that you’ve done for my son, both of them.”

They shake hands. “Well, both of your sons are extraordinaire men, Dr. Allen. And I will do
everything in my power to ensure Barry’s future.” Barry and Len share a glance, both noticing Wells leaving out anything about Len’s future.

Henry turns around and their forced smiles for Wells become real. Henry pulls Barry into a hug, then gestures for Len to join them. Len does and he’s truly happy in this moment, how it should have been in the first place. Henry pulls himself back and pats them on the arms without a word.

He turns to Joe, who’s been standing off to the side, and holds out his hands, ready to be cuffed. “It’s time, Joe.”

Joe just shakes his head. “No.”

“No?” Henry parrots back.

“No.” Joe assures him, patting him on the back.

“Okay.”

Joe leads Henry out and Caitlin pulls Barry into a hug. “It seemed like you could use a hug too.”

Barry starts talking with Wells, but Len can’t hear them over Cisco, who’s holding his arms out to Len. “C’mon, you could use one too.” Cisco pauses and grins. “Leo.”

Len glares at him with his arms crossed. “One, you ever touch me and I’ll break your arm. Two, don’t ever call me Leo, or I’ll break both of your arms. Are we clear?”

Cisco gulps and puts his arms down to his side. “Clear like ice. Damn, Henry’s gone two seconds and you’re already back to your cold self.”

Len smirks, glad he can still scare Cisco into listening to him. Len loops an arm around Barry as they walk out together. “I don’t know about you, but I could sleep for a full twenty-four hours right now.”

“I could eat a farm of cows first, I’m starving.”
Mick shows up behind them. “None of yer disgustin’ ass pizza though, Cub. That was a one time thing.”

Barry pouts to Len. “Don’t look at me, I’m with Mick on this one. Pickles and mayo should never be on pizza.”

“Well, neither does pineapple, but you don’t hear me complaining.”

Len chuckles and shakes his head. When they get far enough away from being overheard from Wells, Len faces Barry. “Tell me what Wells said to you?”

Barry frowns and shakes his head. “Later.”

Len nods. “Later it is.”

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Barry, Len, and Mick sleep the day away. In the evening, Barry and Len force themselves to get up and shower before heading over to Joe’s. They offer if Mick wants to come too, but he just rolls over and falls back asleep. Barry just rides on the back of Len’s bike, too tired from running to do anymore if he doesn’t have to. Len knows the kid loves riding it, but keeps his mouth shut for now.

Joe opens the door for them when they arrive. “Hey, just in time. Come on in.”

They go to sit on the couch next to Iris, where she’s watching the news coverage of the Tricksters’ arrests. She mutes the tv, where the headline reads Flash and Cold Vanquish Trickster.

“You guys get some sleep.” She asks.

“Enough that we feel like functioning humans again.” Barry answers for them.
Joe stands in front of them. “So, the reason I called is that I can’t do this alone, not with investigating Wells and do my job, all on top of helpin’ out with meta cases. And I was thinkin’, since Eddie already knows about Len bein’ Cold, it wouldn’t be that much of a stretch to have him know about Barr, too. It’s all up to you, I’m just throwing it out there-”

“No, I think it’s a good idea.” Barry interrupts him. “This is something I’ve been thinking about, too, and also I hate that I’ve been making you both lie to him.” Barry squeezes Iris’s hand and nods at Joe. “I also think that I should tell Captain Singh as well.” Barry holds up his hands before Joe can argue. “Just hear me out, it would make my life a thousand times easier if he knew, than me making excuse after excuse for why I need to leave in the middle of the day for Flash duties.”

“And what about Len? No offence, but you might not have a job after he finds out about you two.”

Barry turns to Len. “I have a feeling he’d be alright with it, actually.” Len’s pretty sure that Barry’s new found confidence in his boss has something to do with that day Barry lived that no one else remembers, but he holds his tongue.

Joe takes a deep breath as he thinks about it. “Well, it’s all up to you, son. You have a point, it would make things easier if Singh knew.”

Barry nods. “I’m sure.”

“Alright then, I was gonna text Eddie to meet us here tomorrow morning, so I’ll just text Singh as well. I hope you’re right about this feelin’ you have.”

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Last night, David had gotten a text from Joe asking to meet at the man’s house early the next morning before work. He asked what it was about, but Joe was being cryptic about it all and just replied that it’s easier to explain in person.

He was shocked when he pulled up to Joe’s house that morning at the same time Eddie did.

“You get that strange text from Joe last night, too?” Eddie asks him as they both close their car doors.
“Yeah. Did he or his daughter say anything to you?”

The two start walking up the porch steps, and Eddie shakes his head. “Nope. Both Joe and Iris were tight lipped.”

Eddie knocks on the door, and Joe answers right away, leading them inside and to the dining table. He gestures across the table. “Please, sit. Thanks for coming on such short notice. Do either of you want any coffee?”

David shakes his head for the both of them as they sit down. “What is this about, Joe?”

Joe looks down and wrings his hands. “Well, we need help.”

David glances at Eddie, thinking he’s part of the we, but he seems just as confused as David is. He groans. “And who is-” A gust of wind blows through the house, along with flashing of lights, before David finishes his question. His jaw drops at the sight of the Flash and Captain Cold standing right in front of them. “...We?” He trails off.

“Hello Detective, Captain.” The Flash says, but there’s something familiar about his voice. It sounds like Allen, but that can’t be. Right?

The Flash hooks his thumbs under his mask and pulls up, at the same time Cold pushes his hood back and pulls his goggles down to hang around his neck. “Allen?” David looks closer at Cold’s face, recognizing it. “Snart?”

Allen takes a deep breath. “My dad and I need your help.”

Joe leans forward on one of the chairs. “This is why I asked you to meet me here, and why I couldn’t say anything over the phone.”

David leans back in his chair, still visibly shaken. “Something tells me we aren’t gonna make it into work today. And we are not leaving this room until everything is explained.”
David ends up taking Joe up on that offer of coffee five minutes into Snart explaining how he fits into everything. He sheds the parka while Allen excuses himself to go change upstairs. He knew about the abuse the Snart children faced at home second-hand from some of the older detectives that were on the force with Snart senior, but he had no idea it was bad enough that Leonard Snart had hid a kid from the man, even going as far as not getting in contact with Barry long after Lewis went to jail in fear that Lewis might catch word.

David learns that Eddie already knew this, and that Snart is Captain Cold, but he didn’t know that Barry was the Flash. David sips at his second cup of coffee. “How did you get these powers? Have you always had them?” He asks Barry.

Barry shakes his head. “No, me and some others gained them after the particle accelerator explosion.”

“The lightning?” David hazards a guess. Barry did get struck by lightning the same time the accelerator blew, and the first reports of the Flash were around the same week that Barry had woken up from his nine month coma. Wow, David’s suppose to be a detective, why didn’t he figure that out sooner.

“Yeah, that, along with the black matter from the accelerator and the chemicals in my lab, I got superspeed.” Barry vibrates his hand to demonstrate. “We call people like me, the ones with powers, metahumans. Both the Mardon brothers, Bivolo, Woodward, and a lot more that we don’t even know about, were all affected that night.”

Barry goes on to talk more in detail about each fight he’s had as the Flash, up to the most recent with the two Tricksters. Then, both Barry and Snart trade off talking about their suspions with Dr. Wells, and that he might have had something to do with Nora Allen’s murder the night Barry was eleven.

“Well then, what’s our next move? How do we figure out what Wells is up to?” Eddie jumps right in. David shouldn’t be surprised, he had way less to process. The only news to him was that Barry’s the Flash.

“When Wells was talking me through phasing,” Barry says, and what is David’s life that a person phasing through a solid object is a serious talking point? “So I could get the Trickster’s bomb off my wrist, the way that he described my being the Flash, running, feeling the wind, and the power, It’s like he was talking from experience.”
“What are you saying?” Joe asks the question on everyone’s minds.

“I don’t know how, but he’s the Man in Yellow. Harrison Wells is the Reverse-Flash.”

Chapter End Notes

Finally! Singh is in the know. He is low-key one of my favorite characters and I could write a novel about how I wish the show would treat him more like the comics (like maybe actually having a story line)

Next week, Raymond and Felicity join the scene, Singh and Eddie get a Flash crash course, and bees?
Happy Monday!

So I’ve been asked the same question a couple times now, and I just thought I would answer it here in case anyone else was wondering.

Yes, I'm planning on continuing this verse past season 1. The way I'm going to do it is have this story marked as complete when I get to the season finale, then start a new story for next season, and so on and so forth. They are all going to be linked together in a series.

No, Len is not going to die in Legends. Someone still has to stay and blow up the Oculus, but it won't be Len.

I have a one-shot planned that is going to take place between Flash season 1 and 2 where Barry is going to meet his mom. All the drama between her and Len will happen.

I think that's everything for now, if anyone has any more questions, feel free to ask and I'll answer to the best I can. (No, I won't say who Barry's mom is. The only hint is that she is a character from Powerless, RIP that amazing show)

After David clocks off for the evening, he heads straight for S.T.A.R. Labs. The week before, when David’s whole world got flipped on its head, Barry offered for him to come check out S.T.A.R. Labs some time while he’s patrolling so he could see first hand how Barry operates. It also gave David a chance to see Harrison Wells up close while he works with Barry.

Tonight was the best time for him to come in since Rob is out of town visiting his sister, and that way he doesn’t have to lie to his fiance on why he didn’t come straight home after work.

David exits on the floor Barry told him to and doesn’t need the directions to the cortex that Barry left him, he just follows the sound of Ramon’s screaming.

“For the last time, you jerk, get your stupid, muddy boots off my console and away from my computers!”

David rounds the corner to see Snart with his legs reclined up on the desk chuckling and Ramon glaring daggers next to him. Ramon takes his legs, and starts kicking and shoving at Snart, a criminal that has multiple counts of murder under his belt, with absolutely no fear.
“Barry! Your annoying friend keeps kicking me!” Snart yells out.

“Because he won’t put his feet down!”

Barry’s voice comes out of the speakers on the computers. He can hear wind in the background so he must be running. “Guys, I’m a little busy here to be playing referee with you two, again. Figure it out for yourselves.”

A woman leans forward into a mike. “Hey Barry, you got an indecent exposure at Powell Park.”

“Goody, my favorite. Thanks Caitlin, and can you get my dad and Cisco to stop fighting? It’s a little distracting.”

The woman, Caitlin, scoffs. “Like that’s gonna happen. Sorry, Barry.”

David walks over to Caitlin, since she seems the most reasonable. The only one that hasn’t spoken this whole time is Dr. Wells himself, who is sitting between Caitlin and Ramon.

“Is this normally how you guys do things?”

Caitlin jumps in surprise. “You must be Captain Singh. Barry said you might be stopping by,” She extends her hand. “My name is Caitlin Snow, I’m kind of like Barry’s doctor. I patch him up when he gets hurt and also run the comms when those two are being idiots.”

She glares over at Ramon and Snart to knock it off, and Ramon stops his attempts to move Snart and waves at David.

“Yo, Captain Singh, glad you could make it. Quick question, can you arrest someone for being a complete and utter dick?” He side-eyes Snart.

“How about for being a tight-ass nerd who loves his tech too much?” Snart counters.
Ramon swivels his chair to face Snart. “Oh, you don’t get to call me a nerd, I’ve seen your netflix history, dude.” He starts ticking shows off on his fingers. “Let’s see, Doctor Who, Battlestar Galactica, All the Star Trek, and don’t even get me started on all the shark documentaries you’ve watched.”

“You’ve hacked my netflix account?!”

“**No!** Barry and I were hanging out and we clicked your profile by mistake, no hacking involved. Barry was the one to suggest we go through your watched history in the first place, anyway.”

“**Wow, dude. Way to throw me under the bus.**” Barry complains through the comms.

David turns to Caitlin with raised brows. “Yes, they’re always like this.” She answers his unasked question.

“Nice seeing you again, Captain.” Wells smiles at David a smile that he only sees on the slimiest of lawyers.

David smiles back to keep appearances. “You too, Dr. Wells.”

A gust of wind enters the lab and everyone holds down loose pieces of paper before they fly away. Barry appears in front of the desk with his hood down. He’s grinning and does a little spin as he high-fives Ramon. David’s so used to seeing Barry stutter and trip over things, this Barry in the suit is happier and more confident, it’s a nice change. “Nice, man. A flasher, armed robbers, and not one, but two jewelry thefts tonight! That has to be some kind of record.” Ramon summarizes.

Barry leans down against the glass divider on the desk. “And all while you two were squabbling in my ear, too.” Barry turns to Snart. “Why are you here anyway if you weren’t gonna help? Did Uncle Mick kick you out or something.” He jokes. When there’s no reply his eyes widen. “Oh my God, he did, didn’t he.” David still can’t get over the fact that Barry calls Mick Rory, the worst arsonist Central City has ever seen, ‘Uncle Mick’.

Snart crosses his arms and it looks like he’s actually pouting. David has never seen a criminal *pout* before. “I plead the fifth.” He grumbles.

Barry spots David and he can tell that Barry didn’t notice him before because he tenses up. “Captain,
sir. I didn’t know you were here. How long have you been here exactly?”

“Since the beginning of the feet on the counter debate. You have a very… interesting set up here.”

Barry stammers and avoids David’s gaze. He glares at his dad instead and motions for him to put his feet down. Surprisingly, Snart rolls his eyes and does as he’s told without complaint. “I, um, swear it’s not always like this.”

“Dude, what planet are you living on, this is always what it’s like.” Ramon comments.

Barry turns his glare on him and makes a shut up motion. Snart stands up. “Well, I think it’s getting pretty late, why don’t we all call it a night and head home.”

Barry jumps on the escape. “Great idea, Dad. I’m beat. Night everyone.” Barry’s gone in a gust of wind and the Flash suit appears on the mannequin in the alcove on the other side of the room.

Snart collects his coat that was hanging on the back of his chair. “Hey, Dad, would you like a lift home? Oh, no thanks, Barry. I’d rather drive the twenty minutes it takes to get home all by myself instead of instantly being at home in the blink of an eye.” He gripes as he leaves.

Dr. Wells smiles at him. “Welcome to Team Flash.”

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Barry heads to S.T.A.R. Labs for Caitlin to run of the blood sample he got at the scene this morning. She goes to run it right away, when his dad and Captain Singh walk in.

“What are you doing here?” He asks his captain.

“It’s my day off, so I wanted to come check this place out more in the day and maybe see the whole process up close. If that’s okay, of course.”

Barry shakes his head. “No, of course. Stay as long as you like.” Barry is still not used to his boss
looking to him for permission like he’s in charge. He’s probably never going to get used to it if he’s being honest with himself.

Caitlin comes back into the room with a tablet, thankfully breaking the awkward tension. “Death by apitoxin.” She determines.

“Honeybee venom.” Wells translates.

“Bees.” Cisco says ominously. “Why did it have to be bees? Y’all, I don’t do bees. Ain’t nobody got time for bees.”

Barry laughs and turns to his dad, but is shocked to see the same look on his face as Cisco. “Seriously? You, too?”

Len shudders and pointedly avoids eye contact at the enlarged bee on the screen. “Mark your calendars, because today is the rare day in history that I’m agreeing with Cisco. When I was seven, I knocked a giant beehive down by accident and a huge swarm came after me. I’m done with bees now. Hell, I couldn’t even finish watching that Doctor Who episode with Agatha Christie because of that giant wasp in it, and she’s one of my favorite authors.”

“So, Uncle Mick is freaked out by clowns and you’re scared of bees?” Barry asks.

“The CCPD could have caught you two a decade ago if we had known that.” Singh comments.

“Good thing we’re playing for the same team, right captain?” Len remarks with a strained smile. His dad isn’t looking too hot with all this bee talk, same with Cisco for that matter.

“Back on topic, when a honeybee stings, the stingers are literally torn from their body and they die.” Wells informs them. Barry wishes he could take a picture at the twin horrified faces of Len and Cisco. Even Singh is looking a little squeamish at that.

“But there were no stingers in the body and no dead bees in the car.” Barry says.

“A honeybee can only deposit 0.1 milligrams of apitoxin when it releases its stinger.” Caitlin tells
“And yet Miss Kang was found with enough venom in her system to kill a herd of elephants. It appears not only is a metahuman controlling these bees, but also increasing their toxicity.” Wells points out.

“Bees communicate by releasing pheromones. Maybe this meta is controlling them through secretion.” Barry throws out.

“Anyone wanna join me in getting a beekeeper suit?” Cisco asks.

Len raises his hand, and even Captain Singh hesitantly raises his hand too. “You chose the wrong day to come here.” Len whispers to him.

“I’m pretty sure I can outrun a bee.” Barry assures everyone.

“Just don’t run into a lake.” Felicity’s voice comes from the entrance to the cortex. “The bees will wait for you to come up for air, and then they’ll sting you. Discovery Channel. Turns out, there’s a lot to discover.”

“Felicity, what are you doing here?” Barry hopes nothing is wrong with Oliver. Barry remembers that Singh is here now. “By the way, Felicity, this is my boss Captain Singh. Sir, this is Felicity Smoak, she helps the Arrow down in Starling City.”

The two nod, and Felicity points behind her. “Can you guys come outside for a sec?”

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Len takes up the rear as Felicity leads the group outside. After waiting ten minutes he stuffs his hands in his pockets, and sees a couple people from the group start jumping up and down to fight the cold. Caitlin checks her watch, and Wells is even losing his patience.

“What, exactly, are we looking for Miss Smoak?” He asks her.
She squints at the sky, then points at something. “Up there!”

“Is that a bird?” Caitlin asks.

Cisco squints. “It’s a plane.”

Whatever it is it’s getting closer and it looks like a person in some type of red and black suit flailing around before crash landing in front of them all.

“It’s my boyfriend.” Felicity says.

If it’s Felicity’s boyfriend, then that would mean that the person in the suit is, “Hi, I’m Ray.” He takes off his helmet and waves like an idiot.

Len pushes past everyone and marches up to him with a scowl. “What the hell were you thinking, Raymond? What’s with this Iron Man cosplay?” Len crosses his arms.

Ray’s taken aback, and it takes him a second to recognize him. When he does, his eyes widen. “Lenny?”

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Barry stands out in the cortex next to Felicity. Len had bodily dragged Ray into the medical area and made him sit while Caitlin checks on him.

Felicity leans over to Barry and bites her lip. “So, Barry. Want to explain how your father and my boyfriend seem to know each other?”

Barry sticks his hands in his pockets and shrugs. This will be fun to explain. “My dad used to sneak into Professor Stein’s lectures. Ray was in one of those lectures I guess, and they used to hang out or something. I’m not sure on that front. I just, wish you would have called before flying in.”

Felicity shakes her head. “Oh no, he flew. I drove.”
Barry sighs. “I’m serious. All right? Now is not the best time.”

“Why? What’s going on?”

Barry wishes he could tell her, but can’t with Wells in the room with them. Luckily Barry doesn’t have to say anything as Ray walks back into the room popping his ear.

“Ah. My ear popped, so that’s something.” Ray announces, out of his robotic suit and in a red sweater.

Caitlin and Len come trailing out after him. “You’re lucky you didn’t break your neck.” Caitlin scolds.

“I wouldn’t count that out just yet.” Len drawls. He stands in front of Ray with his arms crossed. “Seriously, what were you thinking? What would you have done if you crashed out in the middle of nowhere and no one was around to call 911? Your rotting corpse would be out there, a coyote munching on it. What’s that animal eating? Oh, it’s just Raymond the idiot!”

Ray just smiles at him. “You still make that grumpy cat face when you’re angry. It’s cute.”

This is the first time Barry has seen his dad completely speechless. He opens his mouth a couple times, but ends up just huffing and slouching in a chair off to the side.

Cisco been inspecting the aspects of the suit with a tablet and heads over to Ray. “Have you picked a name yet?”

“How about The Idiot Wonder? Or maybe Roadkill, since that’s almost what he became?” Len says as he leans his head on his propped up arm.

Ray gives him a flat stare before answering Cisco. He smirks. “I’m kind of partial to the Atom.” He makes a shrinking sound as he makes a small O with his hand.
Cisco wrinkles his nose. “Are you married to that, or…”

Wells rolls forward. “Your A.T.O.M. suit is quite the technological achievement, Mr. Palmer. I’m impressed.”

Caitlin turns in her chair. “And he is never impressed.”

“Well, thank you, but I can’t quite seem to keep it up.”

There’s an awkward pause, and Felicity rushes over to do some damage control, but is too slow when Len smirks. “Raymond, I want you to think long and hard about what you just said and how it could be worded better.”

Ray’s face goes red. “I meant the suit!”

Felicity loops her arm through Ray’s, and Barry covers his eyes, not able to watch his train wreck of a conversation. “I can attest that everything works just fine. There’s nothing we need to fix in that area.”

“Oh, the sex is great!” Ray says.

Wells looks at Caitlin and she almost looks amazed. “Oh great, there’s two of them.”

“Raymond, as much as I love hearing about your sex life, how about you get to why you’re here.” Barry is so happy his dad cut that conversation short.

“Well, I know from Felicity that you guys have been very helpful with Barry and his Flash suit, and I was hoping to get another set of eyes on my…” He looks down at Felicity. “Problem.”

Wells nods. “Any friend of the Arrow, is a friend of-”

“Hell, yes.” Cisco agrees readily.
“And I could have my eyes on you all day, Raymond.” Len winks. Ew, Barry doesn’t need to see his dad wink at anyone, ever again.

“Uh, guys, we kind of have a lot going on already. There’s a metahuman killer that can control a whole swarm of bees.”


Barry really doesn’t want everyone to be splitting up when they don’t even know what Wells plan is yet, they don’t need the distraction. “I’m sure Caitlin and I will offer ample support, Barry.” Wells sounds reassuring, but really it just makes Barry feel worse.

Len gets up and goes over near Cisco. “And we will happily sit this one out.”

Ray tilts his head at him. “You’re still scared of bees?”

“Yes, Raymond, phobias don’t just go away overnight.”

Singh steps forward, and Barry honestly forgot he was even still here. “I’ll help out on your end if it’s needed?”

“Sure- I just-” Felicity notices him floundering and looks at him in concern.

She looks up at Ray. “Why don’t you stay here and work on your suit, while Barry and I run to Jitters for some java?”

“Sounds like a plan.”

“Coffee?” She asks him.

Barry scratches his head in defeat. “Sure.”
Len followed Ray and Cisco down to the lab where the failed trap for the Reverse-Flash happened, while Singh stayed upstairs with Caitlin and Wells to work on the Meta bee problem.

“Hey, Lenny, can you hand me that wrench?” Ray asks, pointing to the tool chest next to him.

Len pulls the tool out of reach at the last second. “Can I trust you not to hurt yourself with this?”

Ray rolls his eyes and takes the wrench. “Glad to know you haven’t lost your sarcasm in the last twenty years or so.”

Cisco looks up from where he’s crouched on the floor hooking Ray’s suit to some wires. “Why do you get to call him Lenny? Barry said only Lisa can call him that.”

“He kept calling me Raymond when he knows I don’t like it, so I said I’ll stop calling him Lenny when he stops calling me Raymond, isn’t that right, Lenny?” Ray says.

Len gives Ray a forced smile. “Keep dreaming, Raymond.”

Ray gestures at Len. “See, Lenny it is then.”

Cisco starts messing with his tablet while shaking his head. “Are you guys ex’s or something? Because you two give off major old married couple vibes.”

“I’m straight.” Len rolls his eyes as Ray defends himself right away. Ray always liked to make sure people knew that whenever they asked if they were dating, which they were asked a lot. Ray points at Len. “He just likes to heavily flirt with others to make them uncomfortable.”

“I’m pretty sure to this day that your roommate thought we were dating, Raymond, no matter how many times you denied it to him.” Len points out.
“That might have had something to do with you wandering in constantly like a stray cat, then shoving me over in my twin bed and just sleeping there. With me in the bed as well. Did I mention that it was a twin bed?”

Len laughs at the memory. The first time he did it, he was drunk and Ray’s dorm just happened to be the closest. After that, Len had stolen (Len’s still not sure if Ray knew that it was stolen) a little crappy tv that had a vhs player in it and they would fall asleep watching movies. Now that he thinks about it, he can really see how that roommate thought they were dating. In a way they were, just without all the fun parts.

Cisco gets a hologram of Ray’s suit up on a screen and sets his tablet down. “So you put solid oxide fuel cells into the belt?” He asks Ray.

Ray shrugs. “Yeah, that was the only place to hide the hardware.”

Cisco hums as he thinks. “Well, they should be generating enough energy to power the suit.” Ray walks over to his suit. “It could be the operating temperature. I mean, you’re essentially-”

“Overheating the system. Yeah, I figured.”

Cisco holds up a finger. “But, if we insulate them with a ceramic compound-”

“We may improve the operating efficiency.” Ray finishes. “You really are quite clever, Cisco.”

Ray turns his back to Cisco and starts with messing with something. Cisco gets this blank look on his face, and Len waves a hand in front of him. When he doesn’t react, he snaps his finger. “Hey, Earth to space cadet, you with us?”

Ray turns back around. “Hey, how do you turn this on- Cisco? You okay?”

Cisco nods, looking a little green around the gills. “Yeah, I just haven’t been getting enough sleep, so…” He trails off.

“Cisco, we need you up here.” Caitlin interrupts them over the intercom. Len spares one last look at
Cisco, before the three of them head upstairs.

They make it to the cortex right as Barry gets to the location. “I’m too late.”

“Where are the bees?” Cisco asks. Him, Cisco, and Ray are standing in front of the monitors, while Caitlin, Singh, and Wells sit behind the desk.

Ray’s wringing his hands in the same nervous habit he’s always had. Len sets a hand on his shoulder. “It will be fine, Barry’s taken on a lot worse in the past.” He whispers.

“How can you be so calm? Barry’s your kid. I just met him an hour ago and I’m worried sick for him.”

“Oh, I’m freaking out inside. I always do when Barry puts on that suit and goes out there, but there’s nothing productive worrying can do, so I just have to have faith that he knows what he’s doing and that he’ll be alright.”

“I found them.” Barry says. “Uh, how do I get out of here?”

Cisco gets the schematics up on the screen that highlights a route. “Take the northeast crossways. It’s the quickest way out of the building.” Cisco tells him.

“Guys, they’re everywhere! I’m surrounded!”

After that, they only hear the sound of Barry struggling, and Len feels his heart rate sky rocket. The GPS in the suit is showing Barry standing still, and not moving out of the building. He feels relieved when Barry finally moves and gets out of there, only to feel worse when he stops right outside and his vitals start bottoming out.

“Cisco, what the hell’s going on out there?! Why is it saying that my son is flatlining?!”

“He’s going into cardiac arrest.” Wells says unhelpfully.
“You think I don’t see that?!” Ray grabs his arm before he could go over to Wells.

His arm drops down and grips Len’s hand tightly. “Yelling won’t help any.”

Cisco’s phone rings and Joe’s voice comes out of the speakers. “Cisco! Barry doesn’t have a pulse!”

Cisco runs over to the console. “Step away from him!”

Both Joe and Len yell out why, and Len applies a death grip on Ray’s hand. Ray doesn’t even wince, he just grips Len’s hand back just as tight.

“We need to jump-start his heart. There’s a defibrillator in the suit.”

Caitlin, Wells, and Cisco are all still talking, but he can’t focus after hearing they have to jump-start his heart. That means his heart’s not beating and he is technically dead right now. He feels like he’s going to be sick.

The first try doesn’t work and Len feels his legs give out. Ray must have kept him up, because he never hits the floor. They try again, and this time they hear Barry gasp and his vitals show up again. Len breathes again and is pulled into a hug by Ray. He doesn’t even fight it and rests his forehead against his collarbone. Ray’s chuckling in relieve, and pats Len on the back.

“He’s good, Lenny. He’s good.”

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Cisco pats the chest of the suit as it hangs on the mannequin. “That is it for the defibrillator. It is completely fried.”

As soon as Barry walked in with Joe, having gotten a ride with him, Len marched over and pulled his son into a tight hug. “Don’t ever do that to me again, you hear me?”
Barry hugged him right back. “I won’t, promise.”

He changed out of the suit and into his S.T.A.R. Labs sweats, then by the time he had Caitlin check him out, all of his bee stings had completely healed. Around that time, Joe had to leave and Singh left with him after making sure Barry was alright, and that “You went into cardiac arrest, Allen, so you better not show up for work tomorrow.”

“You’re lucky to be alive, Mr. Allen.” Wells says. Len is really not in the mood to deal with Wells today.

Barry tries to get up from the stretcher in the middle of the room, but Len stops him by putting his hands on each shoulder. “Don’t make me lock you in a room for the rest of your life.”

“I was very specific that you not die.” Felicity glares at Barry.

“Yeah, that’s a pretty big thing for her.” Ray chimes in, still rubbing a hand up and down Len’s back.

“Cisco, what happened out there? I followed your directions exactly.”

“I’m sorry. I led you the wrong way, the schematics that we had, they were, um, weren’t up to date.” Cisco looks genuinely sorry, but Wells on the other hand has access to those files too.

Barry doesn’t seem to have the same trust in Cisco that he has. “They weren’t up to date? What do you mean? That’s never happened before.”

“And what, you think Cisco was trying to get you killed?” Felicity jokes, but it falls flat.

“No. Why would he do that? That doesn’t make any sense.”

“I know, that’s why I was joking.” Felicity looks at Barry strangely, and Len squeezes his shoulders to get him to cool it. Paranoia is not a good look on Barry.
Wells crosses his arms. “Barry, it is our job to protect you, and today we failed. But that will just serve as a warning for all of us to be more vigilant in the future.” Len bites his tongue from talking back.

“Good news, the apitoxin is out of your body, your levels are back to normal.” Caitlin’s not even done talking when Barry flashes out of Len’s grip, leaving his hands poised in the air.

Barry reappears at the entrance to the cortex in a suit. “Ray, Felicity, we’re going to be late for dinner.”

“Are you sure that’s wise, Barry?” Wells asks.

“You just died.” Caitlin points out.

“Maybe we should just go home, Kid. Get take-out and watch some netflix.” Len needs to zone out for a while and not think about the fact that Barry died today.

“Yeah, we could totally cancel.” Ray offers.


Ray shrugs. “Do you wanna come, too, Lenny?”

“Why not? Eating take-out and watching netflix by yourself is just sad, plus you owe me for that tv I got you in your dorm.”

They start heading for the exit too. “I’m calling you on that one, you totally stole it in the first place.”

Ah, so he did know it was stolen. “Still, think of it as a fee for my services rendered. That tv didn’t just steal itself.”

“That was weird.” Len overhears Cisco say back in the cortex.
“Yeah, why weren’t we invited?” Caitlin asks.

Cisco scoffs. “Because we aren’t dating Ray Palmer.”

“We were never together, Cisco!” Ray and Len call over their shoulder at the same time before rounding the corner and being out of hearing range of Cisco and Caitlin.

Felicity catches up to them and gets between them, looping an arm through each of theirs. She smirks at Len. “Keep away from my man, Snart.”

Len smirks back. “Of course, Smoak, I’m the perfect gentleman.”

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Barry and Len run into Ray and Felicity outside the restaurant Ray texted for them to meet at. Everyone split up to go change, and Len chose his blue suit he wore the day he stole the diamond from the museum.

Barry holds the door open for everyone, and Felicity nods with a smile. “Oh, thank you.”

Len brings up the rear with Ray while Barry and Felicity greet Iris and Eddie. Len looks Ray up and down. “Who knew you could clean up?”

Ray shrugs with a sheepish grin. “Turns out when you own a billion dollar company, people expect you to dress formally.”

“Guys, this is Ray Palmer.” Felicity introduces him to the others.

Ray reaches forward to shake their hands. “Hi. Nice to meet you.”

Len tones them out while they greet each other and whisper to Barry. “So, we are the awkward fifth
and sixth wheel?”

Barry raises a brow at him. “More like *I’m* the fifth wheel. You’ve been flirting with Ray so much today, I’m pretty sure the staff will think both you and Felicity are with him. Or that I’m with Felicity and you’re with Ray.”

Len scoffs as they are lead to their table. “I haven’t been flirting, I just like to tease him.”

Barry shakes his head. “Sure, whatever helps you sleep at night.”

Len goes to argue some more when his words get stuck in his throat. Ray had bought out the entire restaurant, and all the staff are standing at attention. Ray hears silence and shifts to Felicity.

“Too much?”

“Just a tad, sweetie.” Felicity tells him.

Each member of the staff pulled out a seat for them at a round table in the middle of the room, and they take off their coats - which get taken to a coat room for them. The order around the table goes Felicity, Ray, Len, Thawne, then Barry back around by Felicity. Things between Thawne and Iris are extremely tense, and everyone, including Ray, can sense it. Barry had mentioned that after Thawne had found out Barry was the Flash, he was mad that Iris had known from the start and not said anything to him, even when that rage meta made Barry attack Thawne.

Apparently, Ray had already planned ahead a large, multi-course meal for everyone including the wine. So after a glass was poured for everyone, Thawne leans forward to talk to Ray and Felicity.

“So, how did you two meet?”

“I was wondering the same myself.” Len sets his glass of wine down, he’s never been a big fan of red wines.

“Work.” Is all Felicity says.
“Well, actually,” Oh, no. Nothing ever good comes out after ‘Well, actually’. “I bought the company where Felicity was employed, and uh, she was forced to come join me at Palmer Tech.”

Felicity jumps in to correct him. “It’s not as creepy as it sounds.”

“So you two work closely together?” Iris asks. Felicity nods in the affirmative. “So you two understand how important need-to-know information is, and how, even if you completely trust the other person, sometimes it’s safer for everyone involved to withhold certain information from each other is.”

“Well, uh, there are non-disclosures on certain patents and tech that you need to sign where legally you can’t talk to anyone about things.” Len is about two seconds away from hitting Ray to get him to shut up, but then he thinks it might be funny to watch how this all plays out. Like dinner and a show.

“But the law also has a lot of wiggle room, I mean, how can we as people decide what is ‘wrong’ and ‘right’. Makes us sound real judgey as a society.” Felicity adds, probably since a lot of documents she’s signed to stay quiet go right back to Queen.

“Amen to that.” Len toasts to Felicity. Thawne glares at him like he thought he would.

“Of course the thief in the room would agree with that.” Thawne mumbles. Len’s shocked at how everyone glares at Thawne on his behalf. Except Barry, who just looks extremely uncomfortable and keeps shooting him looks to shut up. “I just think that, as your boyfriend, I should be at the highest level of confidence.”

“I don’t find that to be true.”

Iris and Thawne are about to get into a huge fight after that, but Barry interrupts. “Oh, thank God. It’s the food, food’s here.”

Waiters place plates of food in front of everyone as the head waiter says what it is. “Our first course of the tasting menu is a quail-egg frittata. Bon appetit.”

“Barry, I gotta admit, I envy you spending so much time at S.T.A.R. Labs. Same with you, Lenny.
Harrison Wells is like a personal hero of mine. I mean, it’s amazing just being in the same room as him.” Damn it, Len was hoping Wells wouldn’t get brought up tonight, but he forgot that Ray has the same admiration of Wells that Barry used to have.

“Kiddo, you alright?”

Barry nods, face pale. “Yeah, um, I’ll be right back. Just, excuse me.”

Barry makes a hasty exit, and before Len has the chance to go after him, Felicity beats him to it. “Well, I… Um, heh… Have to pee.” Felicity runs in the direction Barry went.

Ray pulls out his puppy-dog face. “Did I, uh, say something wrong?”

Len sighs. “Oh, Raymond, you sweet summer child. Just eat your quail-egg.”

The evening dive bombs from there. Iris and Thawne start fighting again, and it leads to Ray getting up and bringing Barry and Felicity back, right when an exasperated Iris says she’s going to be saying with her dad and leaves the restaurant in a huff, Thawne leaves right after her, and to top it all off, Barry gets a call that there’s an emergency at S.T.A.R. Labs. He’s so distracted that he speeds off and leaves Len.

Len’s been sitting in his seat at the table the whole time. “No, it’s fine. I’ll just stay here. I didn’t want to go anyway.”

“And then there were three. Hope you brought your appetite, because we have seventeen more courses to go.” Ray tries to salvage the dinner. Len’s not sure why he’s trying, it was a train wreck from the start.

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The three of them only made it to the third course before Barry showed up to take them to the labs. Len asks for a to-go box.

At the cortex, Len hops up on the counter that Ray’s leaning against and starts munching on his
leftovers. He swallows a bite and points with his fork at the robo-bee in the tube. “So none of the bees are real? They’re all robots?”

“Yup.” Cisco says as he leans back in his chair. “It’s also got a 360-degree vision system. I mean, we’re talking multiple microcameras all coming from various angles at the same time. Which means—”

“It can see all around the room at once.” Ray finishes with a grin. “That is amazing.” Ray and Cisco say at the same time.

Len and Caitlin share a look. “Disturbing.” They both agree on.

As Wells starts talking, Ray goes to grab Len’s fork. Len pulls the fork and box of food out of his reach. He glares at Ray and Ray pouts at him. He sighs and rolls his eyes as he hands him the fork and food.

“Let’s call Joe.” Wells says when they find that the common link between the two victims is that they used to work at Mercury Labs. “I think it’s time we paid a visit to an old friend.”

“Hey, Kid.” Len calls out before Barry leaves. “Make sure you stop in and embarrass your brother a little, he’s working right now.”

Barry shakes his head, but still grins.

“You had two kids?” Ray asks with his mouth full.

Len snatches back his food. “Just Barry. I took Hart in after his parents disowned him and Wells fired him when he tried to blow the whistle that the accelerator could blow.” Len makes sure to raise his voice so Wells can hear him from where he went to the other room with Barry.

Ray nudges him. “I always knew you were a big softy.”

Len becomes very interested in digging through his food and shrugs. “Found him living out of a motel 8. I know first hand how bad that is after my dad kicked me out at eighteen and before Mick
tracked me down, it’s no way to live.” Henry had been pissed that Len was living in that dumb instead of going to him for help. Len’s just too prideful to ask for money. After Barry was born it was a different story, it was the kid’s life on the line, not his. He’d throw his pride away every time if it meant Barry benefited from it.

Len heads out to change, and Cisco and Caitlin went downstairs, which left Ray and Felicity alone in the lab. Felicity comes over to Ray and lays her head on his shoulder. “So, how long did you and Len date?”

Ray wrinkles his brow. “Why does everyone keep asking us that? We never dated.” Seriously, first Cisco and now Felicity? And Ray’s pretty sure he overheard Barry mention something to Len before dinner.

“Are you sure? Because you called him a cute cat earlier and you two have been flirting all day. Not that I’m jealous or anything, you guys just seem like you have a lot of tension. And not the platonic type.”

Felicity leans her head back and Ray looks her right in the eyes. “Lenny and I never dated.” He assures her. “All we ever did was watch movies together and hang out.”

“Like we do.”

Ray pauses. “When you put it that way, sure. But we never slept together. Well, we had shared a bed a couple times, but only to sleep. No sex. We never had sex, no matter what my roommate thought.”

Felicity struggles not to grin. “Your roommate thought you two were together too?”

Ray feels his face heat up. “Yes. But only because Lenny would... well, cuddle, I guess. In the middle of the night. I’d also like to remind you that we were in a twin bed. Those are not made for two fully grown men. There would always be a little bit of touching involved no matter what we did.”

Felicity taps Ray on the chest. “You don’t need to explain anything to me. I think your guys’s man-crush on each other is cute.”
Ray is completely blushing now, he can feel it. “I don’t have a crush on him. I just thought he was really cool when I was younger. He had that badboy image going on, I was shocked he would even talk to me, let alone want to hang out with me. Then I found out he was less of a badboy and more of a nerd, and cared a lot for his family. Did you know he used to keep a picture of Barry as a baby in his wallet? It was sweet.” Damn it, Ray. Stop rambling! Maybe he did have a small, tiny crush on Len.

Felicity’s face shifts to something more serious. “Wait, he told you about Barry?”

Ray shrugs, that feels like a smaller detail. “Yeah, so?”

“Ray, he never told people about Barry, not even his own sister knew about Barry until very recently. He must have really trusted you if he talked about him, and showed you a picture of him to boot.”

“I… didn’t know that.” Len had mentioned to Ray not to tell anyone about Barry, but he figured he said that to everyone so that it wouldn’t get back to his father. This all got Ray thinking back on all of Len’s interactions with him. Was all that flirting really to bother him or was there something deeper to it? Ray pushes off the counter. “I’m gonna go work on my suit.”

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Barry’s walking out of Dr. McGee’s office after she turned them down for protection when a thought hits him and he runs back.

“What is it, Mr. Allen?” She asks, looking up from a paper on her desk.

“Sorry to bother you again, I was just wondering if Hartley’s working tonight, and where I might find him?”

She takes off a pair of reading glasses. “To be frank, why are you asking? Last I heard, Mr. Rathaway had a very public falling out with Harrison and S.T.A.R. Labs.”

Barry is acutely aware that Wells is still right outside her office with Joe, no doubt able to hear their
entire conversation. “I’m actually asking because he’s my brother. I get that Dr. Wells hurt him, but I just wanted to surprise him and maybe embarrass him a little.”

Dr. McGee is surprised by that. “Hartley mentioned he had a brother that worked with the CCPD, but I had no idea it was you.”

Barry scratches behind his head. “Yeah, our different surnames tend to throw people off. You can call and ask him if you want, he’ll collaborate what I said.”

“No, I believe you. He’s right downstairs.” Dr. McGee puts her glasses back on.

“Thank you.” Barry heads out of her office and nods to Joe and Wells. “I’ll meet you two back at S.T.A.R. Labs.”

“Say hello to Hartley for us.” Wells says as Barry heads to the stairs, and Joe and Wells get on the elevator. Barry fakes a smile that drops as soon as he loses sight of Wells.

Once downstairs, Barry follows the signs until he reaches Hartley’s office. He thinks to knock on the door, but then chooses not to and just opens the door instead. Hartley looks up from his computer, ready to yell at whoever just walked in unannounced, but then rolls his eyes when he sees it’s just Barry.

“May I help you?”

“Was in the neighborhood, thought I’d pay a visit to my favorite little bro.” Barry sits down on the other side of Hartley’s desk and peeks at the folder that lays open. “Whatcha workin’ on?”

Hartley flips the folder closed. “None of your beeswax.”

Barry tugs at his ear and winces. “Funny you mention beeswax, because that’s why I’m here. A former employee, Brie Larvan, created these mechanical bees and might be trying to kill your boss for firing her. Two others have already been killed, but Dr. McGee turned down a protective detail from the CCPD.”
Hartley nods in understanding. “And since I’m here, you want me to watch over her in case Larvan tries to make a move.”

“You up for some heroing tonight, Pied Piper?”

Hartley spins around in his chair and grabs a backpack behind him. “Good thing I never leave home without these.” He opens the backpack to show his sonic gauntlets inside. “I like to have them here in case I get free time and get to work on them in the lab.”

“Great.” Barry gets a text from Felicity asking to meet him at Jitters. “Hey, I need to go. Call if anything strange happens, kay?”

“Will you buzz right over?” Hartley jokes.

Barry rolls his eyes at the pun and heads out.

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Barry’s talking with Iris at Joe’s when he gets the call from Caitlin that the bees are heading for Mercury Labs. He quickly hangs up after thanking her and calls Hartley.

“Get to Dr. McGee, right now!” Is all he says as soon as Hartley answers.

He hears a backpack being zipped open and rustling of the gloves being pulled out. “On it.”

He hangs up and gives Iris a strained smile as he gets up. “Go.” She says. He nods and speeds off to S.T.A.R. Labs.

Once he has his suit on, Len, Cisco, and Ray join everyone upstairs. “How do we stop them?” Barry asks.

“She’s got to be remotely piloting those bees from somewhere.” Wells says as he works on the computers with Caitlin and Felicity.
“We need to stop this bug-eyed glasses woman.” Cisco comments about her picture.

“And her mini bandits.” Ray agrees.

Cisco and Ray smirk at each other. “Bug-eyed Bandit.” They both say.

Len elbows Ray. “That was terrible.”

Ray looks offended, but Felicity interrupts before he could reply. “She’s in an abandoned greenhouse.”

Len rolls his eyes. “How original.”

“Barry, you got to take out Brie. It’s the only way to stop these nanotrons.” Wells cautions him.

“What about Dr. McGee?” Barry knows Hartley’s there with her, but he doesn’t want to risk both her life and his brother’s.

“The defibrillator in your suit is broken.” Caitlin argues. “You cannot risk going near Mercury Labs.”

Barry’s about to argue that Hartley’s there too, when Ray cuts in. “The bees can’t penetrate my suit. I’ll go.”

“Whoa, we haven’t tested out the new power system yet.” Cisco warns.

“We’ll do it now.” Ray decides.

“I hear bees aren’t big fans of the cold, I’ll help.” Len volunteers.
“I’m following you.” Cisco runs out with Len.

“I’m driving.” Caitlin gets up.

“And I’m kissing you.” Felicity gives Ray a quick kiss before he leaves.

“Dr. Wells-” Barry starts to argue, not liking this plan.

“Mr. Palmer will protect Tina. Go.” Wells says firmly, leaving no room for arguments. Barry has a bad feeling, but pushes it down and flashes out, no time to waste.

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As soon as Hartley hangs up, he slips his sonic gauntlets on and runs upstairs. He pushes the door to her office open, out of breath. Her head shoots up in shock.

“Mr. Rathaway, what is the meaning of this? And what are you wearing on your hands?”

“No time… to explain. You need to get behind me.”

She tosses her glasses down on her desk. “I will do no such thing until you explain yourself.”

Hartley’s about to bark at her to get behind him if she wants to live, when they both hear buzzing outside the window. She spins around to the floor to ceiling windows behind her as she rises from her chair. Hartley runs forward, palms up and ready to fire. “Stay behind me.” He orders her.

There almost seems like a face forming in the swarm of bees. “Hello, Dr. McGee. Your little friend there won’t beelee able to help you.” A woman’s voice comes from the bees, that must be Brie Larvan that Barry told him about. “Are you going to open a window, or should I buzz myself in?”

“What do you want, Larvan?” Dr. McGee asks from behind Hartley.
“You fired me, destroyed years of my research. You took everything from me.” Wow, Hartley sure can sympathize with her. Hell, he almost did the same thing she’s doing if Len hadn’t stopped him.

“What you were doing was wrong. You wanted to harm people, not save them. I did what I had to do.” Okay, nevermind. There goes all of Hartley’s empathy. Where she got fired for wanting to hurt people, he got fired for wanting to save them.

“You mean ruin my life? Sure. Now I’m doing what I have to do.”

The bees start banging and crashing into the glass, and they watch in horror as it starts to crack. “You might want to cover your ears.” Hartley warns her. The glass shatters and bees start pouring in. Hartley hits them with a sonic blast, but all it’s doing is keeping them back, not falling to the floor like he thought they would.

He winces as his gauntlets start sparking. They were made to fire short bursts, not continuously fire a beam. A blue light flies by the window and the bees start following it, leaving them alone. He stops firing and tosses his gauntlets to the floor in pain, sparks still flying off of them.

“Are you alright?” Dr. McGee asks as she puts a hand on his shoulder.

“Peachy.” He says as he stretches his fingers. “You?”

“I’m fine. Thank you.” Hartley nods. Hopefully Barry’s doing okay on his end, and whoever it was that just flew by and took the bees with him. Or her, he’s seen what Caitlin can do if you steal her hot pocket from the fridge.

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Len is crouched in the back of the van following Ray as Caitlin drives and Cisco sits in the passenger seat with a laptop. “What did Raymond just do? Are the bees following him now?”

“Looks to be that way.” Cisco says as he types on a laptop.

“What do I do now, guys?” Ray asks over the comm.
“Ray, get to the river.” Cisco orders. “If the bots follow you into the water, their electrons will fry.”

“Wait, isn’t Raymond in an robotic suit too? Won’t he fry along with them?” Len asks.

Ray asks the same thing over the comm and Cisco doesn’t reply to either of them, his silence enough of an answer.

They hear static over the line, then Ray’s voice. “Cisco, I’m fried. I’m losing propulsion control.”

Caitlin has them driving parallel to the river now. Cisco cranes his neck to look out the window. “Can you see the van?”

“Yeah.”

“We’ll catch you.” Cisco decides as he unclipped his seatbelt.

“You will?”

“We will?” Caitlin and Len ask too.

Cisco nods his head. “We will.” He climbs to the back with Len and they each open one of the back doors of the van. “Keep it steady!” Cisco calls back to Caitlin.

Ray’s suit is sparking and jerks up and down from the fried electronics, making it harder for him to line up with the back of the van. He goes down, level with the van, then shoots into the van. Cisco dodges to the side, but Len wasn’t so lucky as Ray crashes into him, making him cough from the wind being knocked out of him. That suit is not light, and neither is Ray for that matter.

Ray takes his helmet off. “Whew.” He sighs, leaning back against Len.

“Comfy?” Len weases, pinned between the wall of the van and Ray.
“Extremely. I think that just took ten years off my life.” Ray doesn’t move, exhausted.

“But, hey. The Atom lives.” The two idiots start laughing and high five. While Ray is still wearing the gloves to his suit. He doesn’t feel an ounce of sympathy for Cisco as he cradles his injured hand.

“Let’s work on making some softer gloves next time, okay?” Cisco manages to get out.

Ray grimaces. “Sorry. Oh! And sorry!” Ray finally shifts off Len and he winces as he takes a deep breath. “You okay?”

“Great.” Len hisses out, touching his ribs. “Just some bruised ribs, not broken. Just gives me the excuse to lay on the couch and have Mick serve me food.” He smirks at Ray. “Unless you want to nurse me to health?”

Len’s smirk widens as Ray flushes to the color of Barry’s suit, and he barks out laughing when Caitlin asks if they used to date. He doesn’t regret laughing, even with the pain it causes his ribs. Ray throws his head back. “What is with everyone and asking if we used to date? Do I need to start wearing a shirt that says, ‘I’m straight’ so people will stop assuming?”

Len nudges him with his foot. “It’s almost like the universe is trying to give you a sign, Raymond.”

Ray gives him a flat stare. “Last time I brought up the universe and signs you said, and I quote, “All that universe stuff is bullshit, Raymond, and only con men use it to sell you stuff’.”

Len studies Ray’s face. “Glad you remembered. You passed Go and may collect two hundred dollars.”

Len can’t read the expression on his face, but it passes just as quickly as it appeared. Cisco clears his throat, feeling the tension between the two. “Hey, let’s get this suit off you, man.”

The two help Ray get his suit off and strip down to his under armour. Caitlin pulls over to the side of the road, wanting to check over Ray, and Len’s ribs.
“Some type of team you have here.” Ray gets out of the van first and holds the shoulder he crashed into Len with.

“It helps to have friends in your corner.” Caitlin comes around the side of the van and walks off with Ray, talking about her driving.

Cisco follows them, and Len’s about to too, when he hears a buzzing sound. He sees one of the bees shoot out of Ray’s suit and going straight for him. Without thinking, he runs over and stands between them, feeling the sharp pain of the sting in his neck. He clutches where he was stung and turns around to the group, gasping.

“Lenny, you okay?” Ray asks.

Len’s about to say no when his vision goes black and his legs give out.

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Ray hears a gasp behind him and turns to see Len staring off with a blank look on his face and clutching his neck. “Lenny, you okay?”

Len’s eyes roll back and he collapses to the ground. Ray’s in shock as Caitlin pushes past him and starts doing chest compressions.

“Oh my God, he was stung!” Cisco says, pointing at the bee sting on his neck.

Ray kicks into gear and runs to his suit where his comm still is. “Lenny’s been stung, he’s going into shock.” He says into the comm.

Cisco has his hands behind his head and starts pacing. “C’mon man, wake up. I’ll let you keep your stupid boots on my desk if you just wake up.” He mutters under his breath.

Ray kneels down on the other side of Len from Caitlin. “Let me, please.” Ray takes over on the chest compressions. “C’mon, Lenny. You need to wake up, you got everyone’s attention, now wake up.”
Barry slides to a stop and Caitlin gets out of the way. “Hold on, back up. I wanna try something.”

Ray reluctantly stops the compressions and leans back as Barry vibrates his hands together until they start giving off sparks. He pushes his hands to Len’s chest and it jumps up.

Nothing happens and Barry shakes Len’s shoulder. “Dad!”

Len’s eyes shoot open and he gasps for air. Everyone lets out the breath they were holding in relief. He grips Barry’s hand and gets pulled up to a sitting position, still holding his aching ribs. “Did you all really think I was gonna let some little bee take me down?”

Ray drops a hand on the nape of Len’s neck. “I’ve never had anyone take a bee for me before. Thank you, Lenny.”

Len smirks, lips still a shade of blue from the lack of oxygen. “I can be a lot more firsts for you, if you know what I mean.” Len wiggles his eyebrows.

Ray chuckles and shakes his head. “Yup, back to the flirting. You’re definitely okay.”

“Dad, you were a hero.”

Len rolls his eyes. “Oh, God, not this again. I’d rather get stung by another bee.”

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Barry nods in goodbye as Dr. McGee leaves his lab at the precinct the next day. She had thanked him for talking Hartley into staying to protect her and also gave him a lot to think about with Wells. What could she mean by him being a completely different person after Tess died? He knows better than anyone how grief could cause a person to act differently, but not as much as how she described it.

He pushes it to the back of his mind to think about later when Joe and Captain Singh walk in. “I
thought I told you to stay home today, Allen.”

Barry stuffs his hands in his pockets and shrugs, rocking back and forth on his feet. “I don’t know what you’re talking about, Captain, I’m fine. A little hungry, but that’s it.”

Barry bites the inside of his cheek to keep from laughing out loud at Singh’s annoyed face. He’s glad to see some things go back to normal.

“How’s Len?” Joe asks.

“Annoying the crap out of Uncle Mick by complaining about the pain in his ribs, which means it’s not that bad, and pouting that Ray’s leaving. It was a really brave thing he did, risking his life. Selfless.”

Joe nods. “Yeah, it was.”

“And I heard over the comm Cisco saying that if he lived, he’d let Dad rest his feet up on the console.”

“And he’s completely denying it now, right?”

Barry laughs as he sits down. “Yup. I’m pretty sure Cisco’s gravestone will read ‘Make sure Len keeps his feet away from my computers’.”

“I’m sorry, but I have to ask.” Singh cuts in. “Were Snart and Palmer ever together or was I just reading into things that weren’t there?”

Barry shrugs. “That seems to be the question of the week, and they keep saying no, but… I don’t know. I get that Ray’s only eight years younger than my dad, but on the other hand, that makes him only eight years older than me, so I’m really trying not to think too hard on it.” Barry suppresses a shudder.

Singh takes the hint and drops the subject. “Well, if you aren’t taking today off, at least take a long lunch. Your heart still stopped yesterday, Allen. If that had happened to any of my officers they
would be staying home for at least a week.”

He leaves after Barry nods. “I’m still not used to him being nice to me. Does he only like me now because I’m the Flash?” Barry asks Joe.

Joe shakes his head right away. “No, of course not. He’s always had a soft spot for you, he just has a funny way of showing it. Otherwise he would have fired your ass for being late all the time years ago.”

Barry heads to Jitters for his long lunch (Singh threatened to put him on forced leave for a week if Barry returned a minute early). He walks over to his dad, who’s sipping a coffee at the end of the counter. Ray and Felicity are still ordering their drinks.

“Should you be walking around already? You have bruised ribs and your heart stopped last night.”

“So did yours, and yet here you are, bugging me.”

Barry scoffs. Of course his dad is still shaken by him technically dying yesterday. “How about a truce. No more dying on each other?” Barry holds out his hand.

Len shakes it. “Deal.”

Felicity walks over to them while Ray waits for their drinks. “And another end to another exciting adventure in Central City.” Ray comes over and hands her her drink. “Ah, yes. Thank you.”

“Ray, thank you for all your help. And I hope you figure out the problem with your suit.” Barry genuinely likes Ray. He’s a good guy, as he told Felicity. He can see how his dad gravitated toward him.

Ray beams. “I already have, actually. All this time, I’ve been looking at the power source the wrong way. I kept thinking that we needed to go bigger. But the solution, as always, is to go smaller.” He digs in the inside pocket of his blazer and pulls out a tube with one of B.
“Oh, great.”

Ray nods as he puts the bee away and Felicity frowns at him. “You okay?”

Barry’s smile doesn’t feel forced. “Yeah, I’m gonna be. Thank you for your advice.”

“Oh, I won’t even charge you the five cents.”

Barry laughs. He’s gonna miss having Felicity in town. “Bye, Felicity.”

“Bye, Barry. And bye, Len. Thank you for saving Ray.”

Len shrugs and looks down at his coffee. “No problem. The world would be a little darker without Raymond Palmer in it.”

Barry watches as Ray debates something in his head, then making a ‘what the hell’ face and diving forward, kissing Len on the cheek. “Bye, Lenny.” He whispers before walking out quickly with Felicity and him with their arms looped together.

Barry laughs as they walk out the door, then turns to his dad to find him with his face beet red and a hand resting on his cheek. “Oh my God, you’re blushing! So you do like him.” Barry nudges him. “You got a crush,” He sings.

“Shut up, you little brat.” Len grinds his teeth, face still red.

“Is Ray going to be my new daddy?” Barry jokes. His dad never gets embarrassed, so he’s going to milk this for all it’s worth. Len turns and walks off. “Wait,” Len sighs and turns back to Barry, who grins. “I’m not gonna call him Dad. I already have two dads and that’s confusing enough as it is. Will he settle for Papa?”

Len rolls his eyes and walks out of the shop, this time ignoring Barry as he calls for him to stop.
That night, Barry’s leaning against his desk in his lab next to Len, while Joe and Singh are leaning against the counter by the window. They have his mother’s murder board on display as they wait for Cisco and Caitlin to show up.

“Alright, alright, who’s ready for some karaoke?” Cisco asks as him and Caitlin turn the corner, dressed up and ready for a night out. Barry feels bad that he had to mislead them like this, but he wasn’t sure how else to get both of them alone without tipping off Wells.

They both freeze at the somber faces in the lab. “We are not going to Karaoke, are we?” Caitlin guesses.

Barry shakes his head. “No. Umm…” He gestures to the board. “This is everything we know about my mother’s murder,” He walks over to the side of the board. “And the Reverse-Flash. I’ve been gathering information on him for a long time.” Here comes the hard part. “And this is everything we know about Harrison Wells.” Barry pulls down a board with every news clipping they could find about Wells.

Caitlin shakes her head. “I don’t understand. What do Dr. Wells and the Reverse-Flash have to do with one another?”

“Um,” Barry looks back at Len and Joe, kind of hoping they would take over, but they both motion for him to keep going. Barry doesn’t even look at Singh, knowing he’s still trying to wrap his head around all this and not expecting him to be the one to drop this bomb on Cisco and Caitlin. “They’re the same person.”

Caitlin shakes her head again. “That’s impossible.”

“Look, Caitlin, it took me a long time to believe it too, but it’s him.”

“Dr. Wells is a speedster? He’s paralysed.”
“Is he, though?” Joe asks.

Caitlin can’t answer that, so she moves on. “And, why would he want to kill Barry’s mother? It doesn’t make any sense.”

“Wells is smart, he’s been twenty steps ahead this whole time.” Len points out. “What seems like a random move now, could be something vital down the road for him.”

Barry can see that Caitlin is starting to panic, and she glances at Cisco a couple times. He’s been quiet this whole time and just staring at the board. “Cisco? Say something.”

“I’ve been having these dreams.” Cisco finally says. “Mostly at night, but sometimes during the day.”

“Like yesterday when we were working on Raymond’s suit? Is this why you’ve been tired and haven’t been sleeping?” Barry didn’t know his dad kept such close tabs on his friends, but he’s not surprised.

Cisco nods jerkily. “Yes, and no. They don’t really feel like dreams. They… they feel real.”

Barry swallows. “What happens in the dream?” He asks the question on everyone’s mind.

“Dr. Wells is the Reverse-Flash. And, he kills me.”
Who is Harrison Wells?

Chapter Notes

So I finally saw the Legends season 3 trailer and I totally called Mick hating clowns! Didn't I mention that I'm psychic lol.

Happy Monday and I hope everyone enjoys this chapter!

The next evening, Joe calls for a meeting at his house so everyone can get caught up on the same page and figure out what their next move is. Barry had head out for pizza a while ago, but still hasn’t returned by the time Caitlin, Cisco, Mick, Thawne, and Singh arrived. Iris came downstairs, dodging Caitlin who was sitting on the steps. Thawne and her made awkward eye contact, but didn’t say anything to each other. Guess those two still haven’t kissed and made up yet. Speaking of awkward, Len is pretty sure this is the first time Mick and Thawne have been in the same room together. Thawne makes an effort though and hands a shocked Mick a beer with a curt, “Thanks for saving my life from Hayward.”.

Mick takes the beer. “Did it fer the Cub.” He says, a little dazed.

The room goes back to an awkward silence after that, and Len and Joe look at each other across the room. “Speaking of the Kid, where’d he run off to?”

Joe shrugs. “I sent him out for pizza, should be here any time now.”

Len rolls his eyes. “Only Barry can have super speed and still manage to be late.”

A gust of wind rushes through the living room, and Barry appears by the coffee table with a stack of pizzas in his arms. “Pizzas!” He announces and places them on the coffee table for everyone to dig in.

Thawne reads the top of one of the boxes out loud. “From Coast City? No way.”

Cisco runs over from where Caitlin’s sitting. “What?! Why did we think of that?”
Of course Barry ran across the country for some pizzas. Barry shrugs off his jacket. “Supposedly the best in the west.”

Len peeks into the other room where Caitlin is all alone. “Caitlin, you want some before these animals devour everything in sight?” He gestures to everyone digging into the pizza.

She shakes her head, and it shows her mental state that she doesn’t even fake a smile. “I’m not hungry.”

Len nods in understanding and joins the group over in the living room. Singh wipes his mouth after taking a bite of pizza. “You know, Allen, a couple months back I was in my office eating lunch and the funniest thing happened. I turned my back for a second, felt a breeze suspiciously like the one that just happened now, and then my food was missing. You wouldn’t happen to know anything about that, would you?”

Barry chokes on his bite and winces as he swallows it. All eyes are on him as they wait for an answer. Barry glances around the room. “I, uh, no- no. I have no idea, plus I don’t even, eat lunch?”

Iris gasps. “Barry Allen, you didn’t.”

Barry’s shoulders drop in defeat. “I was really hungry, okay? I need to eat, like, ten thousand calories a day as opposed to a normal person’s two thousand a day. It is seriously taking all my will power not to eat all three of these pizzas right now.”

Len is stunned when he looks to see Singh’s reaction and finds him fighting a grin. He seems less angry about his stolen lunch and more amused by Barry’s attempt to lie and also a little amazed by how much Barry has to eat in a day. “You should see our grocery bill. I’m tempted to start a gofundme titled Feed the Flash.” Len adds.

Barry and Len start a little shove match that Mick puts an end to by standing between them. “So West, you gonna get to the point o’ this lil pow wow, or are we jus’ gonna stand around an’ talk about the Cub’s eating habits all day?”

Joe stands in front of the fireplace and at the head of the room. “Right. Six months of investigating Harrison Wells has led us nowhere. So we’re going back to the beginning to see what we can find out.”
“What does that mean?” Thawne asks. Caitlin gets up and wanders over behind the couch, arms crossed.

Cisco grins, already knowing the answer. “Road trip, baby.”

Joe already went over this with everyone but Thawne, Mick, and Singh, hence the meeting. “Joe and Cisco are gonna go to Starling City.” Barry elaborates further.

“Starling City, what for?” Caitlin asks. At least she’s getting more into this.

Iris digs for a file on the coffee table and hands it to Caitlin. “I found this in the archives at work. It’s everything the SCPD released about the car accident Tess Morgan and Harrison Wells were in fifteen years ago.”

Caitlin takes the folder and skims through it. “I still don’t understand. Why?” She asks after closing the folder.

“Dr. McGee said that after Wells’s accident he became, like, a complete stranger. Just a different person entirely.” Barry tells her.

“Because the love of his life died? You, of all people, can understand how grief can change a person.” Leave it to Wells to have all these kids loving and worshiping him. If it wasn’t for those dreams Cisco kept having, they would probably be trying to convince him of Wells’s guilt too.

“Caitlin, we believe that Wells is the Reverse-Flash and killed Barry’s mother. And he may have done the same thing to Tess Morgan. We have to learn everything we can about that night, see where it leads us.” Joe tells her plainly. No matter how blunt it is, she needs to hear this.

“As a scientist, aren’t you suppose to leave no stone unturned?” Len tries to use her more logical side. “It doesn’t hurt to look. If we’re wrong, great. No harm, no foul. We’ll go on and look into another person. But Caitlin, you need to look at all the facts with an unbiased eye.”

“Oh, um, great speech Len and I’m totally killing the mood here, but someone needs to cover for me with Wells while I’m gone.” Cisco gives a hopeful grin.
Caitlin pauses. “You mean lie?”

Cisco inhales sharply. “Yeah?”

Len sighs and rolls his eyes. “Okay, fine, whatever. I’ll do it. If you guys lie anything like the kid here,” He gestures to Barry, who squeaks in protest. “He’ll see through it in an instant.”

Thawne holds up his beer bottle in a mock toast. “Guess there are some benefits to having a professional liar in our little posse.”

Len sends him his most charming smile. “Happy to be of service.”

Caitlin goes pale and shakes her head. “I need some air.” She mutters before fleeing outside.

Barry calls for her, and Cisco even tries to follow her outside, but she slams the door in his face. Cisco turns to look at them and shrugs.

“Doesn’t look like Caitlin’s with us.” Joe comments.

“No, she’s with us. I’ll talk to her.” Barry defends his friend.

Joe tells everyone to act normal when Thawne asks what they should do while him and Cisco are gone. Len doesn’t even try and hide the rolling of his eyes. What does he think they could do, the number one priority is not tipping off Wells that they suspect him of anything.

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Len joins Barry to S.T.A.R. Labs the next morning and stays quiet as Barry and Caitlin have a mini fight about Wells’s character. Caitlin still firmly believes in his innocent’s and Barry is still trying to talk her into at least having an open mind to the possibility that Wells is the Reverse-Flash. When the man himself comes rolling into the cortex, Len clears his throat.

“Morning, Wells.” Len makes sure the others in the med bay hear him as well.
Wells squints at his odd behavior, but luckily doesn’t comment on it. “Mr. Snart.” He finally greets him with a small nod. The others walk out with deer in the headlights look. “Now, what type of proof are we looking for?” Wells asks, having overheard the tail end of their conversation.

They both glance at each other and Len fears that one of them is about to say something stupid. “Barry thinks that one of his cases might be the work of some metahuman.” Len jumps in. Technically he’s not lying, Barry was saying something about a woman who swears up and down that she didn’t rob the bank she works at, despite her being caught on camera.

“Ah, we are always happy to help, Barry, as you know.” Wells seems eager to help out. “Have you heard from Cisco? He hasn’t arrived yet.”

Before Len can answer for the two again, Caitlin beats him to the punch. “He has to help his brother, Dante. He might need a few days off.” Len’s pleasantly surprised. Turns out Caitlin can lie way better than Barry and Cisco. In another life, she would make an amazing criminal.

Barry flashes out after getting a call from Thawne that the bank robber/potential meta was spotted, leaving Caitlin and Len alone.

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This has to be one of the first times that Len is excited to work a case. When Barry gets back, he describes his experience seeing a grown, middle-aged man, shapeshift into a teenage girl. He always dreamed of being a shapeshifter, being able to break into anywhere by just looking like the right person and being able to just walk in without any fuss. Len had been tempted to go to Starling with Joe and Cisco, maybe stop in on Queen and Raymond, but he had decided against it at the last minute and boy, is he glad he did.

The only problem is that both Len and Barry can’t touch the meta. They don’t know if he can also take Barry’s speed, along with his appearance, and Len would rather not have someone run around town with his face, committing crimes. They would also run the risk of this person unmasking Barry and Len as the Flash and Captain Cold respectively, so it’s like what Barry said and, “Hands off the metahuman.”.

Len is annoyed to admit that Wells has a good idea of figuring out who this guy is originally by working backwards on all of the crimes committed where the suspect pled innocent, even when they were caught on camera.
After spending so much time with Cisco, Len’s able to hack into CCPD’s database and got a list of crimes fitting that description, much to everyone’s surprise.

He shrugs at their impressed faces and leans back in his chair at the console. “What? I was a teenager in the eighties, personal computers were all the rage. I once stole an IBM PC and took it apart to figure out how it worked.”

Barry snickers as he leans forward to look at the list. “You are such a nerd.” He mutters. Before Len can give a retort, Barry points at something on the list. “There. The thefts started a month after the particle accelerator explosion.”

Len clicks on the file to enlarge it. “Jacob Fisher.” Wells reads out loud. “A teller at the federal credit union. Claims he was innocent and was framed by his best friend, a Hannibal Bates.”

Len snorts. “That’s what you get for being friends with a person who’s first name is ‘Hannibal’.”

Barry shrugs his coat on. “I’ll go pass this on to CCPD, thanks for the help, Dr. Wells.”

Wells doesn’t look up from the computer. “Always here to help, Barry.”

Len gets up to follow Barry out, and they exchange a look with Caitlin. She’s definitely using this as a point in her column that Wells is innocent.


Len waits for Barry at S.T.A.R. Labs with Caitlin and Wells all morning before Barry marches in with Singh close on his heels. Len finishes off the red vine that he had raided from Cisco’s not-so-secret candy stash and sits up from his reclined position at the console.

“To what do we owe the visit, Cap?”

Singh isn’t going to be a member of Len’s fan club anytime soon by the glare he sends his way.
Barry just rolls his eyes, not in the mood to play around. “We have a problem.” Barry leans down and pulls up a video from what looks to be a cop car’s dash cam. Two uniforms are standing in front of the car with Thawne running up to them. Then, out of nowhere, Thawne lifts his gun, tells them to die, and shoots both the cops point blank in the chest, then fires a shot at the camera, leaving the rest of the video in static.

Caitlin looks shocked at the events on the video and Wells seems to be confused. “Something tells me that that wasn’t really Thawne there playing target practice with a couple uniforms.” Len doesn’t bother phrasing it as a question, if Barry and his boss came here, then it’s obviously the work of the shapeshifter.

“Please say someone here has something more than just a name? Maybe something useful like how to stop this guy or how to prove it wasn’t my detective that shot my officers?” Singh must be really desperate if he’s even begging Len for help on this one. Guess there are still some good cops out there, unlike his father.

Wells is typing at a computer on the other side of the room. “Worry not, we are nearly there on cracking how Mr. Bates’s powers work. It shouldn’t be more than an hour.”

“In the meantime, you should go home and change, Kid. You look, and smell, like a homeless teenager.”

Barry gives Len a betrayed look. “But, Dad, Eddie.”

“Is not going anywhere in the next hour it takes for these two to finish whatever science thing they’re working on.” Len shoos him out from his seat. “Go. You’re still in your clothes from yesterday, and your boss might be too polite to say it, but I’m not. You stink. I’ll call you if anything turns up.”

Singh sends him a thankful look as Barry speeds out of the room.

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Forty minutes later, Len’s shocked that Barry hasn’t returned yet. He must be showering at normal speed and enjoying having hot water for once. Normally Mick uses it all, but he left town yesterday morning to talk to some contacts in Starling about the Wells car crash that maybe Joe and Cisco won’t be able to dig up on the more legal end of the spectrum.
Caitlin jumps up from her seat, startling Len out of his thoughts. “I think I figured out how to stop our Everyman.”

Len smirks. “Everyman? A little on the nose, don’t you think?”

“Barry was serious about you guys naming the metas?” Singh asks. He refuses to go back to Thawne empty handed and chose to stay here at the labs.

“Cisco normally does the naming, as you can see.”

Caitlin huffs. “Just, call Barry and get him back here, Smartass.”

Len pulls out his phone with a chuckle and dials Barry’s number. It rings longer than normal, but Len just figures that he’s still in the shower. Finally, by the fourth ring, Barry answers with a, “Hello… Bio-Dad?”

Barry voice sounds funny and Len glances at his screen to make sure he called the right number, and sure enough, Barry’s name is on the screen, along with the picture Len took of Barry after he rode on the back of his motorcycle for the first time. Len sighs, figuring Barry is still annoyed at him. Barry had put him in his phone contacts as ‘Bio-Dad’ as a joke one night, knowing it bothered him, but he never actually called him that out loud before. “I get that you’re still mad at me for embarrassing you, but we need you here at S.T.A.R. Labs. Caitlin thinks she figured out a way to stop this Everyman, her name for him, not mine.”

“Everyman, I like it.”

“Okay, then. Just get over here.” He hangs up and stares at his phone.

“What’s the matter?” Caitlin asks. Wells had gone off to a different part of the lab some time ago, so Singh is the only other person left with them in the cortex, looking just as confused as Caitlin.

“Nothing, Barry just sounded… weird? It must be the stress of everything with Wells and now this thing with Thawne,” Len shakes his head. “I’ll talk to him later.”
Ten minutes later finds Barry wandering into the lab, not whooshing in like normal. He’s looking around like this is the first time he’s been here. He must be more pissed at Len than he thought, if he won’t even look at him.

“You sure took your sweet time, Caitlin’s nearly done with the serum.” Barry turns his head to him, wide-eyed.

“Oh, is that right?” Barry walks right past Len and to the little lab that’s off of the cortex where Caitlin is working.

Len and Singh exchange a look before getting up and following the kid. “Allen, are you alright?” Singh asks.

Barry spins around to them, the same weird look on his face. “I feel fine.” Caitlin puts the serum in a centrifuge and Barry wanders over behind her. “So this serum you’re making, is it a temporary thing or will it take away his powers permanently?”

“Not permanently. Just long enough so we can stop him.” She takes the serum out and turns, but freezes when she finds Barry right in front of her.

Len grabs Barry by the arm and pulls him out of her way. “Seriously, what is wrong with you? You’ve been acting weird ever since I called you.”

Barry studies the hand on his arm, then follows it up to Len’s face. “Really, Pops. You worry too much. I already told our friend here I’m fine.” He looks down at the hand still on his arm. “Are you going to let me go now?”

Len drops Barry’s arm and takes a couple steps back. “Right, sorry.”

“Hey guys, anyone here?” Iris calls out from the entrance of the cortex.

Barry smiles at her, but something seems off about it. “Hey, you.” He sounds almost forced.

She sends him a smile. “Hi, Barr. So I’ve been watching that footage you showed me of Eddie, and I
think I may have found something.” Everyone gathers around her as she pulls up the video and plays it. “Watch.” After the video ends she looks around at them expectantly. Len spends the time watching Barry instead, not able to shake the feeling that something is wrong. “Hey, Len, what’s wrong?”

Len shakes his head. “Nothing. You’re obviously seeing something that we aren’t, Miss West, so why don’t you fill us in?”

“Look again,” She pauses it at the frame before Thawne shoots the camera. “Eddie is not left-handed.”

“How did we not see this before?” Singh asks.

Len goes back to watching Barry and sees him reaching for something in his back pocket. With his left hand. Len rushes and pins the fake-Barry’s arm behind his back, a gun clattering to the ground. Len hits him in the back of the head before he can change shape, and Bates goes limp, still looking like Barry.

Iris jumps up. “Oh my God, what did you do?”

“Excellent timing, Mr. Snart. I was just about to knock our imposter out myself.” Wells says from the entryway, taser in hand. “You have great observational skills, Miss West. Both the man in the video and our friend here are both left-handed.”

“That, and Barry’s never called me Pops before. Our Barry must still be back at the apartment.” Len grunts as he puts Everyman on the floor. Great, now he’s calling that. “What are we going to do with this guy? Pipeline?”

“I need to take him in.” Singh decides. “That way I can show the DA what he can do so she can drop the charges against Thawne.”

“I’ll go with you.” Iris offers. Singh nods and they handcuff Bates.

“I’m gonna go check if Barry’s alright. Wanna join me Caitlin? If Bates knock the kid out, you might need to check on him.” Caitlin agrees and the four split up, leaving Wells at the lab to finish making the serum.
Len and Caitlin enter the apartment and start calling out Barry’s name. There was no forced entry, and it looks like there wasn’t any type of struggle, so Everyman must have got in by using a face that Barry would recognize, then knocking him out cold. They check Barry’s messy room (That liar told Len that he had cleaned his room a couple days ago. He can’t lie when it counts, but when it comes to being lazy, he can lie like a pro. Len going to remember this for later) and open the closet to find Barry tied up and duct tape over his mouth. He’s still out cold which explains why he didn’t make any noise when Len and Caitlin were calling out for him.

“Barry!” Caitlin and Len bend down and turn Barry on his back.

Caitlin slaps Barry awake and he grunts behind his gag. Len rips off the duct tape and Barry groans.
“For real? Why did you slap me?”

Caitlin starts working on untying his feet, while Len works on his hands. “You were unconscious, Dummy.” Len says.

Barry sits up with some help. “You know, smelling salts work just as well.”

“Sure, because we totally have smelling salts on hand. They’re right in the cupboard next to your poptarts.” Len rubs Barry’s shoulder. “Are you alright, Kid?”

Barry rubs the back of his head, no doubt where he got hit. “Yeah, I’m good. But listen guys, Bates was here.”

Caitlin and Len look at one another before turning to Barry. “Yeah, we know.” Caitlin answers for both of them.

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The three make it back to the lab, and find Iris and Singh there. Iris rushes over a gives Barry a hug.
“You alright, Allen?” Singh asks.

Barry pulls back from Iris. “I’ll have a headache for a bit, but I’ll be fine. Did you guys get Bates to the station okay?”

Iris and Singh glance at each other. “He got away.” Singh sighs.

“He turned into a little girl and started banging on the window when we drove by a construction site yelling, ‘The bad people took her.’” Iris summarizes.

“Well, while you all were out, I stayed here and found out quite a bit about our metahuman.” Wells presses a couple buttons on his wheelchair that bring up the image of some cells on the large monitors. “His cells have the ability to transmogrify at quite the rate.”

Barry fixes the cuff on his sleeve. “Which is how he can become anybody.”

“Which is how he can look like anyone.” Wells corrects Barry. “Because he cannot appropriate your memory or your powers.”

Barry nods. “Got it, hands on the metahuman.”

Wells and Caitlin catch Barry up on the serum, while Singh and Len hang back, leaning against the console. “Do you understand any of this?” Singh whispers.

Len snorts. “Nope. I’m a thief, not a scientist. I didn’t even finish high school. Hell, the only thing I know about cells is that the mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell.”

A computer starts beeping and Caitlin checks to see what it is. “Barry, we got a ping from your cell phone. Looks like Hannibal Bates is at the airport.”

Barry nods. “Payback time.”
Barry takes down Everyman after a fight at the airport, and luckily his shapeshifting abilities all got caught on camera for Singh to take in to show the DA. Barry’s relieved that the video doesn’t have any sound, since at one point Bates had shifted into his dad and called him son. Cecilia would have a lot of questions about the Flash if she knew that Leonard Snart was his father, and it would only be a matter of time before people started linking Barry with Len’s son/the Flash.

Another good thing is that all the charges against Eddie were dropped, and him and Iris made up from their fight. He’s still not pleased that she was keeping Barry’s identity from him, but after nearly getting sent to prison for a crime he didn’t commit, it put a lot of things into perspective for him. Looks like Iris is moving back in with Eddie.

Back at S.T.A.R. Labs, Barry stands with Len, Caitlin, and Wells outside of Bates cell in the pipeline as he wakes up, still in the form of Iris.

“Let me out of here!” Fake-Iris screams as she pounds on the glass. Bates shifts into Barry again and pouts at Len. “Please, Dad, let me go.” When that doesn’t work, he shifts into Len and smirks at Barry. “C’mon, Kid. Be a daddy’s-boy and open the door for me.”

Wells rolls forward with a sigh and a small chuckle. “I’ve seen a lot of things you can become, but who are you, Hannibal Bates?”

Bates shifts into… something. He looks both young and old, he has slacks on and a plain button up shirt. He’s bald, has no eyes where his eye sockets are, no teeth in his mouth, and has no distinguishable facial features at all. He smirks and chuckles. His voice is Weirdly deep, like a mix of many different voices at once. “I, uh, can’t remember.” The smirk drops from his face and panic sets in. “I can’t remember.”

Barry’s not surprised that Wells just backs up to turn around. “Well, let’s lock up shop. Goodnight everyone.”

Wells leaves, while Caitlin and Len stay with Barry as he locks the pipeline down. After the door shuts, Caitlin looks out where Wells went. “What about Dr. Wells?”

Barry holds out a hand to her, which she takes. “Come on, I need to show you something. You might wanna see this too, Dad.”
Barry gets Len and Caitlin to the station and up to his lab with no trouble, where Joe, Cisco, and Singh are waiting for them, along with the body that Joe and Cisco had found in Starling. Without a word, Cisco pulls up the DNA results for Caitlin to see.

She gasps. “This can’t be possible.”

Len and Singh are the only two confused, not sure what all the information on the screen means. Cisco sighs. “I ran the DNA test twice, it’s a perfect match. That body is the real Harrison Wells.”

“If that’s the real Dr. Wells, then who have we been working for this whole time?” Caitlin asks out loud.

Barry stares at the body, remembering what Dr. McGee had told him in his lab. “Dr. McGee said that after the accident, Dr. Wells became a completely different person. That’s because he was a different person.”

“But how? He looks like the real Wells.” Singh asks.

Len scoffs. “We just dealt with a meta that can take the form of any person he wants, and you’re asking how this fake-Wells looks like the real Wells?”

Barry stands between them when it looks like Singh wants to actually murder Len. Just when Barry thought they were getting along today, Len had to ruffle some feathers.

Singh leaves first, saying he needs to get home to his fiance. Then Cisco and Caitlin head to S.T.A.R. Labs, with Joe following them downstairs to get some last minute paperwork done at his desk. He may have taken a day off, but his paperwork didn’t. That leaves Barry and Len alone up in the lab with the body.

“When you were a baby, I never imagined you’d be as comfortable around dead bodies as me.” His dad says as he sits in Barry’s chair at his desk.

Barry can’t help but let out a dry laugh as he puts a pair of gloves on. The body’s over fifteen years old, so all evidence of who killed the real Wells is probably long gone, but he figures it doesn’t hurt to look. “You sound more like Joe every day. He said the same thing to me when I first got this job.” Barry scraps evidence from under the body’s nails, putting it in a tube to test later.
“You take that back.” Len smiling as he says it, so he’s not really mad about it.

“I bet if you ask, Singh might give you a job here. Detective Snart has a nice ring to it.” Barry laughs as he says it, and looks up to share a grin with his dad, but finds him frowning. “What? You know I’m joking right?”

Len shakes his head. “Yeah, it’s just- That’s what all my father’s buddies called him. He used to be a cop here, a dirty cop, but a cop all the same.”

That explains Len’s hatred of CCPD a lot actually, and why he was so distrustworthy of Joe, Eddie, and Singh. “I’m sorry, I had no idea. You never talk about him, aside that he was a thief and abusive.”

“He got kicked off the force when I was around six. He got caught trying to steal some emerald and got five years in jail. Before jail he wasn’t abusive, at least not physically.” Len fidgets with his hand, staring at them the whole time. It’s a habit Barry’s learned is something he does when he’s nervous. It’s the only tell he has, now that Barry thinks about it. “When he was in jail, I even thought about being a cop, one that was good like Joe. But then a couple years after my dad got out and my sister was born, he would make me go on jobs.” He wiggles his fingers. “I was small for my age, I could fit into little places where adults couldn’t. When I was fourteen, a job went wrong, like usual, and my dad made me stay and take the fall for him. With who my father was and now that juvie record, I could kiss any hope of being a cop goodbye. The only good thing to come from that first trip to juvie was that I met Mick.”

“Well, if it’s any consolation, I think you would have made a really good cop.”

Len smiles at Barry with a rare tenderness. “Thanks, Kid.”

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That same night, after Barry finished getting any evidence he could off that body, him and Len made one last stop at S.T.A.R. Labs to check in with Cisco and Caitlin. Cisco’s clicking through something on his computer, and Caitlin, Barry, and Len wander up behind him.

“What are you doing?” Caitlin asks.
Cisco stays focused on his task. “After the accelerator exploded, I built a 3D model of S.T.A.R. Labs so that I can pinpoint exactly what caused the malfunction.”

“And you never ran this test?” Barry asks.

Cisco almost sounds insulted Barry asked such a question. “Of course I did. I just never had a reason to look at any area outside the pipeline or the cortex. It’s a big building, lots of places for Wells to hide something.” One of the maps Cisco pulled up caused the computer to start beeping and an area got highlighted in red.

“What is that?” Barry asks as he, along with Caitlin and Len, lean forward to look closer at the screen.

“That shouldn’t be there.” Cisco points at the highlighted part of the screen.

Cisco stops by his lab downstairs and grabs some type of wand that can pick up tachyonic particles. He had said when he was in Starling with Joe they found tachyons around the body of the real Wells, so waving the wand around where the room that shouldn’t be there should help them find what the fake-Wells is hiding.

They walk down the hallway until Cisco stops in front of a blank wall and he takes his headphones off. “Right here.”

Barry starts grazing his hands up and down the wall until part of the wall lights up under his palm and a secret door opens up, showing a pitch black room inside. Barry turns to everyone behind him, but they’re all waiting for him to go first. He takes the lead and enters first, a blue laser scanning him as he walks in. After everyone’s inside the door slides shut, leaving the room in darkness. Then, in front of them a case lights up, the suit for the Reverse-Flash on display. That squashes any doubts in Barry’s mind now on who the Reverse-Flash is.

“Oh, my God.” Caitlin mutters as she walks toward the suit.

The rest of the small room lights up, showing weird braille-like things on the white walls. Barry separates from the others and goes over to the post near the far wall. He can’t look at that stupid suit that’s been haunting him since he was eleven anymore.
He brushes his hand across the top of the post and he nearly jumps at the sound of a computer beeping. Out of nowhere, the front page of a newspaper gets projected on the far wall. As he reads the headline, he feels his heartbeat speed up even more than usual.

“Uh, guys?” He gets the other’s attention. They come up behind him and gasp when they see the paper.

FLASH MISSING VANISHES IN CRISIS

“What the frak?” Cisco asks under his breath.

Barry feels a pressure on his shoulder and looks down to see his dad’s hand. “April twenty-fifth, twenty twenty-four?” He reads the date out loud.

Barry gulps. “This is my future.”
The Trap

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry this is late. I had it done today, but do to life I couldn't get on my computer to post it until now.

I forgot to mention this a couple chapters ago, but I'm so glad everyone is liking the hinting at ColdAtom. I only put it in one chapter to test the waters and everyone seemed to enjoy it so I'm going to stick with it later when I get to Legends.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Barry, Len, Cisco, and Caitlin are waiting in Joe’s living room for Joe, Eddie, and Singh to arrive. Barry had flashed the four of them to Joe’s and out of the time vault, as Cisco named it, without a second to spare before Wells showed up. Barry sent a text out to have everyone meet in person so that he can tell them that apparently Wells is not only the Reverse-Flash, but he’s also from the future.

Everyone is pacing in the room, waiting for the others to arrive, except his dad, who’s lounging on the couch and texting on his phone. Barry stops right in front of him with his arms crossed. “How can you just sit there and text your boyfriend in the middle of all this?”

Len shifts his eyes up from his phone. “First of all, I’m not texting Raymond, I’m giving Lisa an excuse for why we’re not at home.”

Cisco stops pacing behind the couch and gives a forced grin. “Dude, Barry never said it was Ray. That’s pretty interesting that when he says boyfriend, your first thought is of Ray.” Barry sends Cisco a grateful smile that he’s trying to lighten the mood a bit after everything, but judging by the glare Len sends over his shoulder at Cisco, he’s probably not that happy it had to be at his expense.

Len turns his glare back at Barry. “And second of all, I’m the furthest thing from calm right now. That bastard wants to kill you. He already tried once, I’m not about to let him have a second chance. It’s taking all my willpower not to go out and just shoot him in the head.”

Of course that’s the time Joe, Eddie, and Singh all walk into the house. “Whoa, Len. Maybe save the death threats for when the cops are not in the room?” Joe says.

Len rolls his eyes and shakes his head as he gets up. “Trust me, you’ll be saying the same thing after
you hear what Barry has to say.” Len starts to walk to the kitchen. “I need a drink.”

“Hey, Dad?” Barry stops him before he leaves. Len turns around with an eyebrow arched. “I love you.”

Len sighs, the tension leaving his body. “Love you too, Kiddo.”

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After Len has a couple shots of the harder stuff that Joe thinks is hidden, he grabs a beer from the fridge and figures he’s stalled enough. He’s done hearing about this speedster psycho from the future that wants to see his son dead.

Len leans against the door frame in the dining room, idly sipping his beer as he listens to Barry talk about time travel. God, if he ever hears about time travel again in his life, it will be too soon. Barry points out that Cisco’s dreams of Wells killing him started after Barry went back in time a day, and that if they create the same conditions from that missing day, they might be able to get Wells to confess to killing Nora and finally get Henry out of jail.

“I don’t like this, it’s too risky. Too many variables at play.” Len finally speaks up.

“Says the drunk thief. Like father, like son.” Thawne mutters.

Len slams his beer on the table and stalks forward, he would have made it to Thawne if it wasn’t for Barry holding him back. “What did you say to me?”

Thawne is being held back by Singh. “You heard me, do you really think it takes five minutes to get a beer from the kitchen? I read through Lewis Snart’s file, he used to be a drunk, even before he got kicked off the force back in ’75 for being a horrible thief.”

“Oh, you read about it? Well guess what, Pretty Boy, I lived it. Eighteen years of cleaning up after every drunken rage he went through, having to take the blame after every one of his plans went wrong, because they always did! Eighteen years of taking beating after beating so my sister wouldn’t have to, then getting kicked out at eighteen because I was an idiot and told him I didn’t want to be a thief! When I held Barry in my arms for the first time, I told myself I would never be like that monster. Hell, I gave my only kid up - the biggest sacrifice of my life - so he could have the best
chance at life possible, and now I find out it was for nothing? Then yes, I’m going to drink right 
now, otherwise I’m going to go completely insane!” Len backs up, out of Barry’s hold, and heads 
for the door. He can’t stand everyone staring at him with varying looks of pity. “And Thawne? I 
think this goes without saying, but don’t ever compare me to Lewis again. I am nothing like that 
man.”

With that, he slams the door shut and only gets as far as around the corner before he leans against the 
side of the house and his legs give out from under him. He slides to the ground and buries his face in 
his hands, taking deep, shaky breaths. He can’t believe that he just blew up like that in front of 
everyone, all over some stupid little comment from Thawne. This is why he tries not to drink around 
others, but with all the stress with Wells and Henry and Barry, he figured no one would say 
anything. Looks like he was wrong about that.

Len rests his forehead against his knees and tries to fight the stinging in his eyes. He hasn’t cried 
since he gave up Barry over twenty years ago and isn’t going to start now. He sniffs and curses his 
luck when he hears footsteps approaching. He keeps his face hidden against his legs and wraps his 
arms around them for good measure.

The footsteps stop in front of him, but whoever it is doesn’t talk so Len isn’t sure who it is. He’s 
positive it’s not Thawne, he’s too stubborn to apologize. It’s probably Joe or Barry. He doesn’t want 
to see them right now either way. “Go ‘way.” His voice is muffled by legs.

“Not until I know you’re okay.” Great, out of all the people to come out and check on him, it had to 
be Singh. He’d rather it be Barry or Joe.

“I’m peachy, now go.” He growls, still not looking up.

He hears Singh shift in place and sigh. He could just see the eye roll now. “Yes, because people who 
are ‘peachy’ sit in wet, muddy grass for fun.” Len didn’t even realize the lawn was wet, but now that 
he mentions it, he is really uncomfortable. “Listen, what Thawne said was out of line. I’ve arrested 
your father a couple times and I know, without a doubt, that you are nothing like him.” Len wipes 
the not-tears from his eyes and look up. Singh is crouched in front of him. “From what little Barry 
and Joe have told me over the past couple weeks, you are an amazing father. You are kind and 
protective and loyal to those you care about. You also bring people together,” Singh lets out a little 
laugh. “Barry never stops talking about his new younger brother. That’s the complete opposite of 
Lewis. And I think, with all the drama with Wells and Barry, everyone seems to have forgotten that 
Barry wasn’t the only one to lose someone that night fifteen years ago. I’m sorry.”

Len blinks in shock. No one’s ever apologized to him like this before, at least someone that isn’t 
family. He tries to figure what angle Singh is playing here, but the longer they sit in silence, the more 
he realizes that there is no angle, he’s just genuinely apologizing. To him. It’s weird, Singh being
nice to him. Len wipes his face one more time before putting his mask in place. Smirking he knows and can hide behind. “Getting your practice in before you and the fiance decide to have a kid or two?”

Singh shrugs with a quiet “What the hell?” before sitting down next to him on the wet grass, his knees no doubt hurting from crouching in the same position for the past couple minutes. “No way. With all the wedding planning going on, Rob and I are not even thinking about throwing a kid in the middle of all of it. Do you have any idea how much a wedding cake alone costs?”

Len feels a bit better now that the conversation has moved away from all the heavy, emotional stuff. “You know, if you want to save a couple bucks, Mick’s a fantastic baker.”

Singh rests his arms on top of his knees. “Is it wrong that I’m actually considering letting a known felon and arsonist bake my wedding cake.”

“Think of it this way, if he’s busy baking a cake then he won’t have time to go out and start fires. So really, you’d be doing the community a favor by keeping him distracted.” Len points out.

Len wants to laugh when it looks like Singh really is considering letting Mick bake, when Barry rounds the corner. “There you are, I’ve been looking everywhere for you.” Barry pauses with a knitted brow. “Why are you two sitting in the mud?”

Len and Singh share a look, and Len shrugs for the both of them. His brain decides now is a great time to remind him that he’s on the less than sober side of the spectrum at the moment. “Why not? The night is young and life is short. Who are you to deny me the chance to sit in the mud?”

Barry chuckles, used to his drunk ramblings, and turns to Singh. “What he said.” He points at Len.

“Well, if you two are done playing in the mud, Joe’s ordering some take-out. Eddie left, so the coast is clear if you wanna come in, Dad.” Barry turns to leave and Len blames his next action on the alcohol. He takes a fist full of mud and lobs it at Barry, hitting him square on the back. Barry spins around. “Daaaaaad, what the hell?!” He whines. “This is my favorite shirt! God, sometimes I wonder who the parent and who the child is.” Barry grumbles as he leaves.

Len twists his head to Singh with a grin. “You should rethink your plan on kids. They’re a blast to have around and I’ve honestly have never been happier than when Barry’s around. I’m sure there’s some kid out there that could use a good home.” The mood is getting a little too kumbaya for his
tastes, so Len picks himself up from the mud. He holds a hand out for Singh. “We better head in before Barry the Human Garbage Disposal eats all the food.”

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The next night, Len gathers with the others in Barry’s lab to see if they could get Cisco to remember everything from the other timeline. Barry, along with Cisco and Caitlin, spent most of the day at S.T.A.R. Labs building goggles to help Cisco talk and stay aware in his sleep. Caitlin had explained the whole thing to Joe and him, but all they really understood was something about higher and lower brain functions working together, and even that might be wrong. He was scared if he asked for more clarification that she would have continued to talk science to him.

Singh was busy for the evening and Thawne is avoiding both Joe and himself (Barry had told him the reason Thawne had been so biting with his remarks yesterday was because he had asked Joe for Iris’s hand in marriage and Joe had said no.) so it’s just Len and Joe with the kids tonight.

Joe hands Cisco a cup of warm milk as a joke. “Here, drink this.”

“What am I, five?” Cisco complains as he takes the glass anyway. He hands it back to Joe after drinking it and lays down with the goggles on.

“If it helps, I can sing a lullaby.” Len quips from the other side of the room. He has his arms crossed to keep from fidgeting, and he doesn’t want to admit it, but he’s worried for Cisco. He’s watched Inception, he doesn’t really want to find out “If you die in the dream, you die in real life” is a thing that could really happen.

Barry holds in a laugh and shakes his head. Caitlin continues getting Cisco ready. “Thanks for the offer, but the glasses are emitting a low-level delta wave that should help Cisco fall asleep.”

Len watches in amusement as Cisco falls asleep mid-sentence about how long it takes him to fall asleep.

“So that’s how you get him to shut up.” Joe jokes.

Cisco tells them he’s in the cortex and he just had Caitlin take Wells for coffee to get him out of the lab, thinking Wells had tampered with the trap from Christmas. Then he gets distracted by his shirt.
“Oh, man, I love this shirt. I thought the dryer ate it.”

Joe snorts and has to cover his mouth from laughing. Len elbows him, fighting his own grin. Barry glares at both of them to stay quiet, then turns back to Cisco. “Focus, Cisco.”

Cisco goes on narrating everything that’s going on, and Len does not like what he’s hearing. The trap had been tampered with, and the Man in Yellow had been a hologram the whole time. That explains why he had only talked to Wells that night, that whole conversation had been from a script all along.

Cisco starts freaking out when Wells shows up in Cisco’s dream. Caitlin tries to calm him down, but it doesn’t seem to be working. Cisco utters a name, “Eobard Thawne.”

“Thawne. Like Eddie Thawne?” Joe asks.

Cisco starts talking about Nora, how she just got in the way when Wells, or Eobard Thawne, tried to kill Barry. Cisco heart rate starts to rise, the monitors beeping faster and faster.

“Cisco, it’s a dream. He can’t kill you.” Len sets a hand on Cisco’s shoulder, but Cisco’s too far gone in the nightmare. Caitlin yells about how he could lose higher brain function and Len tries again. “Cisco! C’mon, Kid, you’re safe.”

Cisco can’t seem to hear him anymore. “His hand, it’s vibrating! He’s gonna kill me!”

Caitlin turns to a computer. “Oh, God, he’s gonna have a stroke.”

“Get him out of there!” Barry yells.

“Help me! He’s gonna get me! Help!” Cisco screams. “No!”

Cisco sits up straight and scrambles to take the glasses off. Len doesn’t think as he pulls Cisco into a hug, the younger man still breathing heavy and he has a tight grip on the back of Len’s shirt as he buries his face into Len’s shoulder. Len sits down on the edge of the cot to make things more comfortable as he cups the back of Cisco’s head. “You’re alright, he can’t get you. You’re safe here.
It was just a nightmare.” Len whispers.

“It felt so real.” Cisco’s voice is muffled by Len’s shirt.

Barry’s phone rings at the same time Joe’s does, but Len ignores both of them in favor of watching over Cisco. Caitlin tries to check Cisco’s pulse, but he won’t let go of Len. “Cisco, Caitlin needs to check your vitals, okay?” Len pulls back slowly. Cisco wipes his eyes and nods, holding out an arm for Caitlin. Len pats his shoulder. “Good kid.”

“A fire? Where?” Barry asks whoever’s on the phone.

He puts the phone on speaker, and Len feels Cisco tense under his hand when Wells’s voice is heard. “New Brighton. Bradford Tower High-Rise.”

Joe hangs up his phone. “That was Singh. His fiance works in that building. The fire crew can’t get in and he was hoping you two might be able to help instead.”

Len puts his hands on both sides of Cisco’s face, getting him to look at him. “You gonna be okay?”

Cisco nods and the next thing Len knows, Barry grabs him.

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Barry must have went by S.T.A.R. Labs and got them changed, because when they stop in the middle of the fire, they both have their costumes on and Len has his cold gun. He tries firing his gun at the flames, but they’re too hot and only makes hot steam.

“Dr. Wells, the sprinklers aren’t working and the cold gun only made steam.” Barry says into the comm.

“Don’t worry about the fire, Barry. Just get everyone out.” Len hears Wells over his own comm.

Barry starts to panic, too many people for him to carry out. Len starts shooting at the smaller flames
with the cold gun set to the coldest setting. It works some, but not enough to put out this giant fire. While Barry listens to Wells, something to do with making a vacuum, Len makes it to the other side of the room where all of the office workers are trapped. The ceiling above them starts to crack, and Len fires up, freezing the junk of ceiling in place. With all the heat in the room, it’s only a matter of time before his quick fix melts and crashes down. “Scarlet, whatever you’re gonna do, do it now!” Len yells out as he keeps the flames away from everyone.

Barry tries spinning his arms like Wells said, but it only makes the flames grow bigger. People scream and Len holds up an arm to protect his face. *He really chose the wrong outfit* Len thinks as he sweats in his parka, maybe he should switch to something sleeveless.

Barry tries again, and this time it works as all the flames go out. Barry flashes everyone downstairs, taking the most injured first while Len helps make sure everyone gets accounted for. Barry grabs Len last and they watch as everyone stumbles out of the building. They see Singh run up and pull one of the men into a hug and Len figures that’s his fiance. Singh looks over Rob’s shoulder and spots them, giving them a small, but grateful, nod. They nod back and Barry flashes them out.

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Len heads home as soon as he changes at S.T.A.R. Labs. Barry wants to stop at Joe’s for a bit and offers for him to come too, but Len turns him down. He fakes a headache and escapes Barry’s puppy-dog face, slipping out as quick as he can. Normally he’d love to go to Joe’s and raid the man’s kitchen, but honestly he’s just not in the mood to be around others. How could he when it’s his fault that Nora got killed and Henry’s sitting in prison? Wells was after Barry, if he would have kept Barry than it would have been him that was killed, and Nora and Henry would still be together. Looks like his father was right about something, he is poison to everyone and everything he touches.

As Len sits alone in his apartment, first aid kit on the counter as he patches up the burn on his arm, he can’t help but keep thinking back on the night he gave Barry up.

*A twenty year old Len paces outside the hall at the clinic after hours as Henry stitches Lisa up in one of the small rooms. She’s only eight years old and Henry thinks she needs about twelve stitches on her right shoulder.*

*Len had been in the apartment with Mick as they were putting Barry down when the phone rang, startling the thirteen month old and sending him into a crying fit. Len rocks the baby in his arms, trying to calm him back down, while Mick runs to get the phone. A minute later he comes running back in, saying it’s Lisa crying on the other end. He shoves Barry into Mick’s arms and takes the phone to the other room.*
“Lise, what’s wrong?”

Lisa sniffs and her breathing is hitched. “He- he threw a bottle at me, Lenny. There’s so much blood, and it hurts so much, I don’t know what to do. Please, help me?”

Len curses under his breath as he throws a coat on and grabs his keys. “I’ll be right there, okay? I need you to get a clean cloth and press it against the cut, can you do that for me?”

“But, Lenny, it hurts,” It breaks Len’s heart to hear his baby sister in so much pain.

“I know sweetie, but you need to stop the bleeding. Listen, I’m going to put Mick on and he’ll talk to you until I get there, alright?”

Len runs into the room where Mick managed to get Barry back to sleep. Lisa sniffs on the other line. “Okay, I’ll try Lenny.”

“There’s my brave girl. Now, I’m going to put Mick on, okay? I love you and I’ll see you soon.”

“Love you, Lenny.”

Len gives Mick the phone, telling him to make sure Henry meets him at his clinic, and runs out the door as fast as he can. He makes it back home, breaking just about every traffic law there is, and runs in to find the door unlocked. He finds Lisa on the floor in the kitchen, holding the phone in one hand and the cloth up against her shoulder in the other. She tells Mick that her brother’s there and hangs up the phone.

“Lenny!”

Len picks her up, balancing her on his hip, and careful not to touch her right side. He glances over the counter into the living room, where Lewis is passed out on the couch, beer bottles all around him. Len forgets him for now and carries Lisa out to his car, telling her she’ll be okay and that they’re gonna go see a doctor friend of his.

They get to the clinic in record time and Len’s relieved to see Henry’s car parked outside. He carries
Henry comes out of the room, clicking the door shut and drying his hands on a paper towel. “It was a shallow cut, no arteries were hit and I didn’t see any sign of infection, but I gave her some antibiotics to be safe. She’s sleeping now, if you want to go see her.” Len sighs in relieve and he lets all the tension go as he slumps into Henry’s arms. “She’s fine, Leo. You did everything right.”

Len stays in Henry’s hold, knowing what he has to do. “This isn’t the first time he’s hurt her since I left, if anything it’s only getting worse. I can’t keep doing this.” Len feels a stinging in his eyes as he pulls back and looks right at Henry. “You and Nora are still trying for a kid right?”

Len can tell Henry is confused by the sudden change in conversation. “Yes? Why?”

Len can’t believe what’s he’s about to say, but knows this is the only option now. “You should take Barry, raise him as your own.” Henry goes to protest, but Len speaks over him. “I need to be there to keep Lisa safe, she needs me. Barry’s young enough, he won’t remember me, not in the long run. And you and Nora could give him so much better a life than I could. Please, take care of my son.”

“Leo, this is crazy. Barry needs you too. I’ve told you, I could try and get custody of Lisa, get her out of that house, and-“

“No.” Len interrupts him. They’ve had this argument before and they both know it. “I told you, Lewis still has friends in high places from when he was on the force. Do you really think it was just a coincidence that my grandfather had a heart attack right before he got custody of me and Lisa back when I was thirteen? If he’s able to have his own father killed to keep Lisa and I around, what do you think he’ll do to you and Nora? And what if he finds out about Barry? I can’t have that monster anywhere near my baby boy, I just can’t. Please, I’ve been thinking about this for a while now and it’s the only way to keep both Lisa and Barry safe.”

Henry runs a hand down his face, sighing. “I hate to see you go back to that house, Leo. You finally have a shot. You’re about to get your GED and I’ve told you that Nora and I can help put you through college. You’d be amazing at anything you choose, you’re so smart.” Henry cups Len’s face and wipes a tear with his thumb. It breaks his heart to hear Henry say it all aloud, all the things he’s dreamed of doing and now won’t be able to when his father no doubt makes him steal and take the blame all over again. “Oh, my brave Leo the Lion, I wish I could do more for you.”

Len lets himself lean into the touch, savoring it. “I’m gonna miss this.”
“Going to. Gonna isn’t a word.” Henry corrects his grammar out of habit. Henry’s always been a stickler for his grammar, saying no one will take him seriously if he sounds like an idiot. Len can’t help but laugh, normally when Henry corrects his grammar it makes him want to pull his hair out, but now he finds he’s gonna - going to - miss that too.

Len makes sure to drop Lisa off before Lewis wakes and notices her missing. He heads home, changes out of his blood stained clothes, and checks in on Barry.

The baby is awake in his crib and smiles when he sees him, reaching his little hands out. “Dada.”

Len smiles and picks Barry up. “What are you doing up, little one? Did you trick Uncle Mick? Did you?”

He tickles Barry and the baby starts to giggle, grabbing for his hand. He’s going to miss his laugh. “Dada. Dada.”

Barry had said his first word a couple weeks ago, and now it’s all he says. They’ve tried teaching him other words, but he’s firmly sticking with dada for now. Len starts rocking him, taking him to his bed. “Do you want to sleep with Dada tonight?”

If Len didn’t know any better, he would have thought that Barry understood him. He gets excited and starts clapping his little hands together, chanting dada over and over again.

Len and Mick could only afford a crappy, two bedroom apartment, so Barry’s crib is in Len’s room. All he has to do is take a step, turn, and then he’s sitting on his bed. That’s another pro for Barry going to live with Henry and Nora, Barry will get his own room. He still doesn’t need one now, he can’t even walk yet, but in less than a year from now he will.

Every parenting book that the library had said not to let the baby sleep in the bed with the parents. At first because he could get crushed or roll off the bed, and then later to make sure to have boundaries and not let the kid fall into a bad habit of always wanting to sleep with the parents, but he figures since it’s his last night with Barry, he wants to spend as much time as possible with his baby boy. His mind is racing so much, he won’t be able to sleep anyway, so he may as well use the time just holding his kid and try to memorize how Barry looks, how he still has that baby smell to him, and his smile. Barry has the brightest smile.

Len lays on his back, resting Barry so they’re chest to chest, and keeps a hand resting on the baby’s
back. He’s a lot bigger and heavier than a year ago when he was only a week old, but Len doesn’t care. He wants to be able to feel every single breath of Barry’s, and to just hold him close and savor this time they have left. Barry’s patting his chest, saying nonsense words with dada thrown in every so often, when he interrupts himself with a huge yawn. “Don’t fight it, my baby boy. Just let yourself sleep, Dada will be here.” Len says with a whisper. He starts humming Hey Jude. Barry’s eyes start drooping, and before he knows it his breathing evens out and Barry’s fast asleep.

Like Len thought, he stayed awake the whole night, memorized by Barry breathing in and out. Sometimes he runs a hand through Barry’s brown hair. Neither Len nor Barry’s mom have brown hair, but Len’s grandfather did. And with him and Jackie both having blue eyes, you’d think Barry would too, but no. Barry got his green eyes from Len’s grandfather, too. Barry looks so much like his namesake that they could be twins, that’s why when it came to naming him Bartholomew was the first and only name he thought of.

Morning comes too quickly for him and Barry wakes up slowly. He blinks sluggishly at Len, then smiles. “Dada.” Barry pats him on the face.

Len smiles back and lets Barry wrap his little hand around his fingers. “Good morning, Barry. Did you sleep well?”

Barry just answers back with more Dadas. Len sits up against the headboard and lets Barry crawl around him. It hits him that he’s never going to see Barry’s first steps, or see him off to his first day of school, or teach him to drive or shave. He’s going to miss so many firsts. A lump forms in his throat and tears well up in his eyes again. Before he can wipe them away, Barry looks up at him and his smile drops to a little frown. “Dada?”

Barry’s sitting up now and reaches to wipe one of the tears that fell down his face. Len forces himself to smile for Barry’s sake and wipes the rest of the tears away. “Everything’s okay, baby boy. Now, someone is stinky and needs a diaper change, I wonder who it could be?”

He rises from the bed, bringing Barry with him and spins him around once before settling the kid on his hip. Barry giggles from the movement. He gets Barry changed quickly (ignoring the voice in his head saying this is the last diaper he gets to change) and the two head out to the main room to find Mick. Len puts one of Barry’s shows on the tv to keep him distracted while he tells Mick the plan. He’d already brought this up before so Mick knows he’s not making a rash decision, but it hurts more now since this isn’t just a ‘what-if’ anymore, it’s a real plan that’s going to happen today.

Len’s sitting on the floor, back to the couch, and watching Barry the whole time as he talks. When he’s done, Mick slides down to the floor next to him and pulls him into a rare hug. “I’m gonna miss th’ lil Cub, too.”
Mick waits for Len to pull back, and when he finally does, Mick gets up without a word and goes to pack up Barry’s things and take apart the crib and changing table so they’ll fit in the car. In that time, Len fed Barry (his last breakfast) and then sat on the floor with him. At one point Barry crawled over to Len and climbed into his lap, content to watch his show from there.

All too soon, Mick has the last box packed in the car and waits for Len next to the couch. Barry had fallen asleep in his lap and Len’s been watching him for the past ten minutes. “You sure ya wanna do this? There’s still time fer ya ta change yer mind.” Mick whispers.

“What I want doesn’t matter. This is what’s best for both Barry and Lisa.” Len whispers back as he turns off Yogi Bear (for the last time) and stands slowly so he doesn’t wake Barry from his nap.

Outside, Mick had thought ahead and cleared a spot in the back for him to sit next to Barry’s car seat. As he’s buckling Barry in, the kid wakes up and blinks in confusion at his change in surroundings. “Don’t worry, Kiddo, we’re just going on a little car ride to see Gram and Gramps. Won’t that be fun?”

Barry bounces up and down in his seat, he’s always liked car rides. When they get to Henry’s house, Barry looks out the window and starts clapping, knowing where they are. Len holds Barry the whole time things are getting unpacked by Henry and Mick, Nora trying to talk him out of this the entire time. The next thing Len knows, he’s standing in their living room, about to hand Barry over, and it really hits him that this is probably going to be the last time he ever sees his son.

Mick’s waiting in the car after telling him to take all the time he needs and saying goodbye to Barry. He shifts Barry in his arms so he can get a better look at him. “Now, Kid, you better be good, okay? No giving them a hard time. And stay out of trouble, no getting into fights like your old man. I want you to use that brain of yours, get into a good school and be the best at whatever job you choose.”

Barry pats him on the chest. “Dada.”

Len smiles and chokes back a sob, he’s done enough crying today. He nods at Barry. “That’s right, my baby boy, I’ll always be your Dada and I’ll always love you.” Len kisses Barry on the forehead, then rests his own forehead against Barry’s, taking deep breaths with his eyes closed and trying to commit Barry’s scent to memory. After a long moment, he pulls back and brushes a hand through Barry’s hair one last time. “Goodbye, my sweet baby boy.”

He reluctantly hands Barry over to Nora and Henry gives him a quick hug. “You are so brave.
You’ll always have a home here, Son.” He whispers in his ear.

Henry pulls back and takes Barry so Nora could have a turn. “Be strong, Sweetheart. Remember that we’ll always love you.”

Len’s so tempted right now to just stay and take Henry up on his offer to try and get custody of Lisa, but he’s knows he can’t risk both of their lives. He knows he can’t selfishly keep both Lisa and Barry, so he pulls back and nods to them. He gives Barry one last little wave, and that’s when it hits the baby that something is wrong here. Henry and Nora follow Len to the door and Barry starts getting fussy and reaches out for Len.

“Dada? Dada! NO! Dada!” He feels a pit hit the bottom of his stomach that Barry’s second word had to be ‘no’ and he only said it because he wants Len to come back. Len knows if he turns around, he won’t be able to resist scooping Barry up and never letting him go, so he keeps walking forward without stopping. He gets in the passenger seat of the car, Barry screaming at the top of his lungs now, but he forces himself to stare straight ahead.

“Let’s go, Mick.” Len growls out when Mick doesn’t start the car.

“Are ya sure-”

“NOW, Mick.”

Mick huffs, but starts the car anyway.

“-enny! Lenny, open this door right now! I know you’re home, brother dear, I texted Barry and he told me so!” Lisa’s pounding on his door and yelling, probably waking half his neighbors up.

He finishes putting the first aid kit away and pulls his door open with a scowl. “Inside voice, Sis, I’m right here.”

She brushes past him and straight to his kitchen for a drink. She pops a beer open and leans against the counter. “Where have you been? For the past couple days you’ve been blowing me off and I want a real reason, not another one of your lies over a text.”
Len rolls his eyes and swipes the beer out of her hand. “Like I said, I’ve just been busy. Believe it or not, that’s up to you.”

She narrows her eyes at him and Len knows she’s not believing anything he’s saying. “Then why do you smell like smoke? And before you lie to me again, I know it wasn’t from you hanging out with Mick. I’ve been with him for hours now, since someone blew me off.”

Len mentally curses. He had changed his shirt, but not his pants and he hasn’t gotten the chance to shower yet. He subtly sniffs himself and yup, he smells smokier than Mick.

“And it’s just the strangest coincidence that you smell of smoke right after that big fire downtown, did you know that was on the news? It was pretty interesting, one of the news crew got a shot of Central City’s newest crime fighting duo.”

Len sighs. “Lisa, I can explain-”

She pushes off the counter. “You really think I’m stupid enough that I don’t recognize my own brother when he’s wearing some dumb parka? Huh, Lenny? Or do you prefer Captain Cold now? And what is wrong with you, dragging Barry along on this suicide mission? I know that’s him under the mask, so don’t even try and convince me otherwise.”

“If anything, he dragged me into this.” Len mutters.

“What I want to know is why you’re into all this hero business? What’s with all this father-son crime fighting team? And why didn’t you tell me? I thought we never lied to each other.”

This whole conversation is derailing fast. “Lise, just sit down and let me explain-”

Lisa steps out of his reach and brushes past him again for the door, hitting his hurt arm. He hisses at the sharp pain and she spins around at him. She grabs his left wrist and pulls the sleeve back, showing his burnt arm. “What the hell is this?”

He gets his arm back and out of her line of sight. “It’s not as bad as it looks, a first degree burn at the worst. I’ve seen you with sunburns worse than this.”
She shakes her head, lips in a thin line. “I don’t care, Lenny. You wanna get yourself killed on this fool’s errand, be my guest. I don’t want a front row seat when it happens though.”

With that, she marches out of the apartment, slamming the door behind her.

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Len stays in his apartment, ignoring everyone until he has to go to S.T.A.R. Labs for the trap. Thawne, or Eddie - he can’t call him Thawne or it will just get too confusing with Eobard running around - spots him as soon as he gets off the elevator and makes a beeline for him.

“Len, I am so sorry for what I said the other day. I was in a terrible mood and took it out on you and that’s not fair to you.”

“Isn’t that just the story of my life.” He mutters under his breath. Eddie looks even more guilty if that’s possible and Len wants to bang his head into a wall. “Don’t worry, Pretty Boy, I have thick skin and I’ve had a lot worse thrown at me, literally and figuratively. If it makes you feel any better then sure, I forgive you. Now let’s move on, I’m itching to make a speedster popsicle.” Len pulls his cold gun out of its holster and rests it on his shoulder for added emphasis.

Cisco’s talking with Joe and Eddie, so Barry takes the distraction to stand beside Len. “You can lie to them, but not to me. What’s really going on with you, Dad?”

In the short amount of time Barry has been with Len, he’s already able to read him like Mick and Lisa, and they had thirty plus years of time to learn all his ticks. Leave it to his kid to be perceptive enough to be able to learn to read all his body language in just six months. Len shrugs. “Just drama with Lisa, nothing you have to worry about.” Len doesn’t need to add anymore burdens for Barry, he’s carrying enough as it is.

“Does it have anything to do with her texting me last night wondering where you were?”

Len sighs as he holsters his gun again and uses the free hand to ruffle Barry’s hair. He figures honesty is the best policy right now. “Yeah, it’s just normal sibling fights. She’s pissed about something I did, just give her some space to cool down and I’ll talk to her again in a week.”

Barry bats his hand away and tries to salvage his hair. “Alright, if you’re sure.”
Their conversation ends when Caitlin leaves the elevator and tells them that Wells is going to be gone until five. Cisco explains how his trap is reverse engineered to keep speedsters out instead of in, and asks Barry to test it out. Everyone backs up at Cisco’s request and Barry runs at him, only to bounce off the invisible wall and slam into a silver cabinet with a loud bang. Looks like it works.

Barry gets to his feet with everyone around him to help, except Len. Barry sends him a mock glare. “Gee, thanks for all of your concern, Dad.”

Oh, Len both loves and hates that Barry inherited his sarcasm. “They seemed to have it handled, and last I checked, you heal pretty quickly.”

“Everything seems all set. Now we just have to wait for Wells to arrive.” Cisco says.

“And I will be in the cortex watching and recording everything that happens.” Caitlin says her job.

“As soon as we get a confession out of him, Barry and I will move in.” Len nods to Barry.

“And Singh is standing by in his office, ready to offer us any backup if we need it.” Barry tells them.

Eddie looks around. “So, what do I do?”

“Wells also threatened Iris.” Joe tells him. “So if something goes wrong here, keep an eye on her until Wells is neutralized.” Iris hadn’t been very happy about it, but Joe was very clear that he didn’t want Iris anywhere near this place when this trap goes down.

“I’ll always keep Iris safe, Joe.”

Len detects a little resentment in Eddie’s voice there. The others pick up on it too, because Barry motions for Joe to go speak with him in private, leaving Len alone with Caitlin and Cisco. “Dude, you have any idea what that was about?” Cisco asks him as he points to where Joe and Barry disappeared to.
“Yup.”

Cisco gives him a flat stare when he doesn’t elaborate any further.

Len doesn’t fully understand why Joe’s so against Eddie marrying Iris. Len wouldn’t want Barry to be dating any cops himself, but if it had to be Eddie’s not horrible. Although he didn’t spend almost twenty years watching Barry be hopelessly in love with Iris like Joe did. If he did, then that might sway his opinion of the matter completely.

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Around five, Barry, Len, and Joe hide behind a large machine downstairs while Cisco pretends to be working on the trap. Caitlin’s voice comes on the intercom with a whisper, “Here he comes.”

Len and Joe draw their guns.

Cisco turns on the projection of the Reverse-Flash and gets into position.

Len has a bad feeling about this, even accounting for the speed of his wheelchair, Wells should be here by now, but he isn’t. He shakes the feeling off and just figures his nerves are getting to him. The elevator dings and he hears the doors slide open, everything is going to plan so far.

The projection turns off and there are shuffling of feet, then, “Hello, Cisco.” Wells starts clapping. “You’ve been busy.” He chuckles and it makes Len’s skin crawl. “You really are incredibly clever, Cisco. I’ve always said it.”

“You’re him. You’re the Reverse-Flash. Joe and Len were right the whole time, weren’t they?” Good job, Cisco. Stick to the plan, you can do this, Kid.

“Good old, Joe.” They hear what sounds like a laptop being shut. “Joe West had his doubts all along. Even from that first night in the hospital, Joe knew something wasn’t right. Cops. As inconvenient now as they will be in a hundred years from now.” Wells scoffs. “And Len. He was certainly a wild card in all this. He had done such a good job erasing his relation with Barry, that there was not one record of it in the original timeline, even after Snart finds out the Flash’s identity. I myself was pretty shocked to find out the Flash’s nemesis was his own father all along.”
Len feels the wind knocked right out of him. “Nemesis?” Did that mean he had tried to hurt, or even kill, his own kid in that original timeline?

Barry’s ignoring all of that, his focus on one thing only. “C’mon, Cisco, we need a confession.”

As if able to hear him, Cisco twists the conversation to Nora. “You killed Barry’s mother. I want to know why.”

“It was never my intention to kill Nora, but from my perspective, she was already dead. It just happened sooner than it was suppose to.” Wells raises his arm and Cisco starts backing up to the safety of the trap.

Barry and Len both turn to Joe, and he shakes his head. “No, that’s not an admission.”

Cisco trips and scrambles to get up. “Oops.” Wells says sarcastically.

Cisco pulls out his phone. “You’re not gonna get away with this.”

Wells steps up. “Oh, I’m not gonna get away with this?” Cisco turns on the force field, but it doesn’t seem to bother Wells. He just lowers his arm and chuckles. “Oh, you’re smart. You’re smart, Cisco.” He lifts his leg with a grin and steps through the force field. “But you’re not that smart.”

Wells lifts his arm, ready to kill Cisco, and Joe jumps up and fires his gun. “No!” Barry uses his speed to grab the bullets, but he bounces off the force field and a bullet hits Wells straight in the chest. Barry jumps up. “He didn’t confess!”

Len stays back with Joe, everything happening at once. Caitlin shows up, asking Cisco if he’s okay, and Barry stands over Wells’s body, an emotional wreck. Len gets over it and hurries to Barry, grabbing him from behind and pulling him into a hug. “It’s fine, I got you. We’ll figure this out.”

Caitlin kneels down and checks his pulse. “He’s dead.”
Barry grips the arm that wrapped around him. “But, he didn’t confess. Dad’s gonna be in prison forever. The only time the three of us can be together is with a sheet of glass between us.”

Len pulls Barry closer to him. “I know, Kiddo, we’ll figure something else out.”

“Whoa! What the hell?” Cisco yells and they watch as Wells’s body turns a grey color, then shift into Hannibal Bates.

“The shapeshifter?” Len asks aloud as he lets go of Barry. That explains why he took so long to get down here, he must have taken a little detour to the pipeline.

Wells’s voice comes on over the intercom. “I told you this before, I am always one step ahead, Flash. Allow me to reintroduce to you Mr. Hannibal Bates and his incredible ability to transform into any person he touches. I knew that ability would come in handy. I did not expect it to come in handy this soon.”

“You used him! Like you used all of us!” Barry screams.

“He served a purpose. Didn’t take much convincing, just the simple promise of his freedom. I got that idea from you, Mr. Snart. I seem to remember you making the same deal with a Miss Shawna Baez when your son’s life was in danger.”

Len grinds his teeth. “That is not the same thing, and you know it.” He spits out.

“You ruined our lives, all of our lives!” Barry cuts in.

“We stood by you after everything that happened!” Caitlin adds.

“I can see how this must be difficult for you to understand, but trust me, your lives now are so much better because of what I have done for you.”

Doesn’t that sound familiar, his father said something similar when Len was young and complained about being forced into his criminal life.
“You don’t have to hide, we know you’re not the real Harrison Wells.” Joe speaks up. “Just tell us who you are.” Now Len sees where he’s going with this, maybe they can get him for the death of the real Wells and then add on more charges later, like the death of Nora Allen.

“A confession will get you nowhere.” Damn it, he didn’t go for it. “You've seen who I am. You know what I can do.”

“You wanna kill me, go ahead. I’m not going to fight you. But just tell the police what you did. Get my dad out of prison.” Barry begs.

“I don’t want to kill you, Barry. I need you. And,” He pauses. “I also did not anticipate, as difficult as the past fifteen years have been for me, how much I would love to come working with you. With all of you. And yet, that does not change what needs to happen.”

“Then face me now!”

“Oh, we will face each other again. I promise you. Soon. Very, very, soon.”

Wells hangs up and Barry begins to pace, running his hands through his hair. Len puts a hand on his shoulder to try and calm him down, but Barry just shrugs it off. Len lets him pace and Cisco’s phone buzzes with an alert. “Guys, he’s in the time vault!”

Barry rushes off without a word, leaving them alone.

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Len makes it upstairs to the cortex with the others when Barry comes stumbling in at top speed. “We have to find Iris.” Barry slows down enough to tell them and goes for his suit.

“Kid, slow down for a second. Why?” Len tries to get Barry to think before acting. Wells is a planner, he must have something up his sleeve.
“Wells has been watching all of us. He has surveillance set up everywhere. Our homes, my lab at the police station… Central City Picture News. Cisco, call me when you have a location!” Barry leaves with that.

Joe gets on the phone, no doubt calling Eddie and warning him that Wells might be coming. Len decides the best place for him now is to help Cisco and Caitlin on the computers. God, he knew he should have listened to his gut. He knew something bad was going to happen, but he was so lost in his own head over that fight with Eddie and then Lisa, that he didn’t have complete focus on this dumb trap. Hopefully Barry can find Iris before it’s too late.

“Damn it, neither of them are picking up.” Joe complains as he tries again. A gust of wind comes through the cortex and Iris appears in front of the console. Len stands, along with Cisco and Caitlin, and Joe drops his phone. “Oh, Iris, you’re okay! Thank god.” Joe pulls her into a hug and she looks to be shaking.

“It’s Eddie! The Reverse-Flash took him!” She yells into his shoulder. “We were standing on this bridge, and, and out of nowhere he just appeared and whisked him away!” Joe holds her, trying to calm her down.

Barry’s in his suit so Len turns on the comms. “Kid, where the hell are you? Don’t you dare be fighting this monster alone!”

“I’m looking for Eddie! Wells is faster than me though and got a head start!”

Len won’t be any help out in the field with Barry, he doesn’t have the speed to cover as much ground as Barry does, so he buckles in and gets ready for as long as it takes to find Eddie. He may tolerate Eddie at the best of times, but he’s still part of Team Flash. And no one on his team gets left behind.

Chapter End Notes

That long flashback was not planned, but it fit so well, once I got started it had a mind of its own.

So happy Lisa is back, hopefully she’ll be getting her gold gun next chapter.
Oh, man, this is so late! I'm sorry! This chapter was kicking my butt, it was like pulling teeth trying to write each word. Over half the plot of the episode was about Iris finding out Barry's the Flash, but since she already knows in this 'verse, I had to almost completely rewrite it, while still keeping the Grodd stuff and so it will line up correctly with later events. In short, life is hard.

David’s been pacing in his office all morning and sighs in relieve when Joe and Barry finally walk into the bullpen. He pokes his head out his door and calls them in. They drag their feet to the office and if he didn’t know any better, he’d say they both look like they didn’t sleep at all that night.

After Barry closes the door behind them, David leans back against his desk and crosses his arms, getting right down to business. “What happened last night? And where’s Thawne?”

David gets a bad feeling when Joe and Barry share a look. Barry decides to take the lead, running his hands down his face. “We all played right into Wells’s trap. He had cameras everywhere, so he knew everything that was going to happen, and then he took Eddie. I looked everywhere last night, no sign of either of them.”

David sighs. “Damn it, this could not be happening at a worse time. I got the Mayor and the press breathing down my neck about these gold-store robberies. Perps hit two more in the last week, and I have nothing to show for it.” David regrets ranting about that in front of Barry the second he says it. He had completely forgotten that he was the CSI on that case, and by the stressed out look on his face he had forgotten that too until just now. “Allen, with everything going on, I completely understand if you want me to hand this case to someone else-”

“No.” Barry practically interrupts him. “I’m fine. I have test results up in my lab that should be done now, I’ll go grab them.”

David takes in the bags under Barry’s eyes, but nods. “Alright, just don’t push yourself too hard.” Barry hurries out of the room without another word and Joe goes to follow him, but David stops him for a moment. “Keep an eye on him?”

Joe nods, bags under his eyes too. “I always do.”
When Barry gets the chance during his break, he heads to S.T.A.R. Labs to check in on everything. He’s surprised to find his dad and Cisco tinkering with the cameras from Wells that he had collected before work and left in the cortex. “You guys aren’t really planning on keeping all those cameras Wells used to spy on us, are you? They’re kind of creepy, don’t you think?”

“First rule of mechanical engineering, dude. Never waste good tech.” Cisco says, never once looking up.

“And I want to find out how Wells was able to keep these cameras hidden in my apartment undetected.” Len points out. “It might come in handy in my other line of work.”

No matter how crappy Barry feels right now, he can’t help but chuckle at that. He throws his hands up. “Please, Dad, say no more. I’d like to have as much plausible deniability as possible for my other line of work.”

Len shrugs. “Suit yourself.”

An alarm starts going off, interrupting everyone, and Cisco wheels his chair over to the nearest computer. “Central City Gold Reserve is under attack.”

“Gold? Singh mentioned that that’s a high profile case. You wanna help out, Dad?”

Len shifts his eyes up from his work, not dignifying that with a response.

“Right, not a cop. I’ll be right back then.” Barry heads to the scene alone figuring this will be an easy in-and-out type case.

Len shakes his head, not bothering to hide his grin after Barry leaves in a gust of wind and the smell
of ozone lingers.

“You are such a hypocrite, dude, I got your number. Admit it, you love this hero stuff.” Cisco gives him a side eye.

He’d never give Cisco the satisfaction of saying it aloud, but the kid has a point. He really has been getting into all the hero stuff, the best part being that since his identity is hidden, Captain Cold can be as good as he wants and the Snart name will still hold a lot of weight in the criminal world. If it was just him, it’d be pretty boring and he’d grow tired of it in a week. But he loves that he gets to spend some time with his son, and dare he admit it, he’s also grow to tolerate all the people that came with Barry; Joe, Eddie, and Singh included.

Before Len can come up with some lie to get Cisco to drop the conversation at hand, the alarm for Barry’s vitals starts going off. “Cisco, what’s wrong with Barry?” He asks curtly. He leans forward and turns on Barry’s mike. “Kid, what’s going on out there? Talk to us.”

Cisco pulls up Barry’s vitals and shakes his head. “His heart rate’s going crazy, I’m texting Caitlin to get down here now. Can you-”

Len wheels over to the other computer. “Get a camera up from the area? Already on it.” It takes a moment, Len not being as fast on a computer as Cisco or Felicity, but he manages. He has been hacking into security cameras since his twenties for jobs. He wrinkles his brow at the footage. “Barry’s on the ground, but doesn’t have any wounds that I can see. Whatever is affecting him is also affecting our gold thief, as well.” He turns on the mike again. “Barry, forget the gold and get your butt back here.” Barry’s still on the ground, but the gold thief seems to have recovered. He goes ramrod straight and makes a run for it, leaving the gold behind. “Seriously, if you’re not back here in the next minute, you are grounded until you’re forty.”

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Barry makes it back with four seconds to spare, meaning he’s saved from being grounded. They think he was joking, but he was dead serious, Lisa could vouch for that. Although his idea of grounding for her was that she wasn’t allowed to join in on one of his heists, which he doesn’t think would work too well with Barry. Maybe he would change the netflix password…

Len drags Barry over to one of the beds in Caitlin’s medical area, not even letting him get changed. “Sit.”
Barry huffs, but does as he’s told while taking off his cowl. “For real? I can’t even go change? It would *literally* take me a second.”

“Too bad. You’re going to sit there and wait for Caitlin to get here and clear you, then you can take your *literal second* to go change.” Barry crosses his arms and rolls his eyes. Len mirrors him and leans back on a counter. “It’s times like these I’m glad I didn’t have to deal with raising a teenager. Why don’t you take a nap while we wait for Caitlin, you get grumpy when you’re tired.”

Barry scoffs. “Pot, meet kettle. Wanna explain why you’re wearing your glasses? Because last I checked, you only do that when you stayed up all night and your contacts are bothering you, so maybe *you’re* the one that needs the nap, Old Man.” Barry bites back.

Cisco stands between them with his hands up as referee before Len gets the chance to snark back. “Whoa, hey. Dial it back, alright? We are *all* tired and have been up all night looking for Eddie, fighting isn’t gonna help anyone any good, so why don’t we just take a chill pill, pun maybe intended.”

Len and Barry both glare at Cisco, not in the mood for his jokes. He shrinks as he looks back and forth between the two. “You know, Joe always says how you two look related and I’ve never seen it until just now. It’s like two cold fronts moved in with your icy glares.”

They all sit in an uncomfortable silence as they wait for Caitlin to show up. She finally does after fifteen minutes and gets right to work, checking Barry’s blood pressure and giving him a CT scan. She finishes off by checking his pupils by shining a light in his eyes.

She clicks the pen light off. “Your eye movement is normal. No signs of neurological damage.”

Cisco’s been standing in the back with Len, both of them with their arms crossed. “Do you think our thief is a metahuman who put the whammy on you or something?”

Barry shakes his head. “I don’t know. When Rainbow Raider got in my head all I felt was anger. But this was not that, this was just… overwhelming fear.”

“Maybe a meta similar to Bivolo? But one that could induce different emotions?” Len spitballs. He sits down at one of the computers and pulls up the footage from earlier. “The only problem is that I don’t think it was from our gold thief. See, when you went down, so did he.”
“Maybe we both got whammied?” Barry tries.

“So Mick was right, Lenny, you really do play cop all day.” Lisa’s voice comes from out in the cortex. Len leans back in the chair and rubs his eyes from behind his glasses. He’s too tired to deal with Lisa now, on top of this new meta and Eddie still missing, but going by the shocked silence of the three he’s the one that’s going to have to deal with her.

“Sis, now really isn’t the best time.”

Cisco makes a choking noise behind him. “Damn, dude. This is your sister? But she’s…” Cisco shuts up, not knowing how to finish that sentence.

“Yes, cutie?” Lisa smirks, not hiding the fact she’s checking Cisco out.

Cisco stutters, face redder than Barry’s suit. “S- so, that would make you Barry’s aunt?”

“If you have to put labels on everything, yes. Now, what’s your name?”

Len rolls his eyes. “Down, Lise. These are Barry’s friends, Cisco and Caitlin. Now what are you doing here?”

Lisa crosses her arms and pout. “You’re not Dad, Lenny, and I’m not sixteen anymore. You can’t say who I can and cannot flirt with.”

Yeah, Len’s definitely glad he didn’t have to deal with Barry as a teenager because watching over his sister had been hard enough. Len lets out a tired sigh as he makes himself get up and drags Lisa to the treadmill room for a little privacy. She’s pulling her arm to get out of his grip and he lets her go as soon as he closes the door. “You wanna do this all now? Fine, let’s do it now. What do you wanna know?”

Lisa gives him one of her more angry glares that she only pulls out when she’s truly pissed about something. “Why didn’t you come home last night, either of you? I waited all night and you never showed up.” She’s using her calm, level voice, she really is pissed then.
“We’ve been busy.”

“Doing what?!“ She yells, throwing her hands up. “God damn it, Lenny! Were you ever going to tell me?!”

Len rubs his temples, not able to look Lisa in the eye. “I didn’t want you involved in any of this, what’s going on here is dangerous-”

“Dangerous? Our lives have been dangerous since day one!”

“You think I don’t know that!” Len raises his voice. He rarely, if ever, raises his voice at her, but this time is different. “This type of danger is on a whole different level than just worrying if Dad breaks an arm or something! People have already died! Do you understand that?! I did it to protect you, just like I have been since the day you were born!”

“I don’t need you protecting me! I’m not that scared little kid anymore!”

“Well you are to me! I already hate that those kids out there have been sucked into this, if I was able to keep at least you out of it, I was gonna take it! I will lie to you every time if it means keeping you safe!”

Lisa crosses her arms again and shakes her head. “God, I hate it when you get like this. I’m outta here, call me when you want to talk to me like I’m an adult that can make my own choices.” Lisa throws her hair over her shoulder and marches out of the lab.

After she slams the door shut behind her, Len slumps down on the edge of the treadmill and buries his face in his hands. His glasses get in the way so he takes them off and tosses them to the ground. Now he’s free to sulk in peace.

Or at least he was until the door creaks open. Len could tell by the sound alone that it’s Barry. He doesn’t hear the squeak of the leather-like fabric of his suit though, so he must have changed out of it. Barry doesn’t say anything, he just shuffles over to him, sits down, and wraps both of his arms around Len’s right one while he lays his head on Len’s shoulder.

“I guess it’s safe to assume that you and the geek squad out there listened in.” He doesn’t bother phrasing it as a question, he’d be shocked if they didn’t listen in.
“We kinda unmuted the cameras in here. Sorry.”

Len uses his free hand and reaches across to cup the side of Barry’s head and kisses the top of it before resting his head there. “Did I make the right call, leaving her in the dark? And before you say it, I realize what a huge hypocrite I was being. At the beginning of all of this, I talked you into telling Iris against Joe’s wishes, and then went and did exactly what Joe did. I was just so scared of losing her like I lost you, I might have just pushed her away.”

“Things were different with Iris. I let you talk me into telling her then because we didn’t have the threat of Wells looming right over us at the time. Hell, if I had kept it from her and she just found out now, she’d be so mad at me.” Barry pauses, thinking of what to say next. “Have you tried telling her that your scared?”

“No. Guess the communication gene just skipped over both of us.”

Barry untangles himself. He leans back and puts a hand on his chest, mock offended. “Excuse me? Speak for yourself, old man.”

“Remind me again how long you’ve been in love with Iris?”

Barry bumps him with his shoulder. “You might have a point there.” He pushes his sleeve back and checks his watch. “I need to get back to work. Turns out one of the downsides of having Singh know I have superspeed is that he expects me to be to work on time.” Barry stands up, but pauses before he leaves. “You’ll sleep, right? Just an hour at least?”

Len puts his glasses back on and Barry gives him a hand up. “Yes, I’ll go take a nap. Now go, before Singh decides you’re too much trouble to keep around.”

“You’re too much trouble to keep around.” Barry grumbles before flashing out.

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By the time Barry clocks out at work it’s already dark out. He makes it home and quietly tiptoes into the dark apartment. He shucks his shoes off by the door next to his dad’s boots and tosses his blazer in his room, before cracking open his dad’s door. He’s fast asleep, sprawled across his bed. Silently as he can, Barry reaches for the leather jacket hanging by the door and grabs it. He slowly clicks the
Using his speed, he changes into a pair of black jeans and decides to keep his red v-neck on as he slides the jacket on over it. He straightens out his clothes in the mirror and then messes his hair up for good measure. At the door, he reaches for his tennis shoes, but changes his mind and laces up his dad’s combat boots instead. Now he’s ready.

He speeds to a stop in an alleyway and walks for a couple blocks until he finds the place Mick texted him about.

Saints and Sinners.

Barry wants to see if he could talk to Lisa alone, without Len there, and try and clear things up between his dad and aunt. Unfortunately that means he has to go to one of the diviest dive bars in Central. At least having criminals for family, and living with said criminals for the past five months, means that he's learned how to dress like a criminal. Hopefully if he walks around like his dad, no one should bother him.

He takes a deep breath, stuffs his hands in the pockets of the jacket, and heads inside. The inside is hazy from cigarette smoke. He fights back the cough stuck in his throat, and his eyes sting as he looks around for Lisa. The place is pretty empty, a couple big guys that look like Mick are hanging around, and he’s pretty sure he recognizes a few from the holding cell at the station.

He spots Lisa quickly since she’s the only one at the bar. She’s sipping a beer and chatting with a muscular, black guy as he dries glasses behind the bar.

Lisa turns around in her seat when he gets near and leans back against the bar. She raises a brow at how he’s dressed and he has to fight down the urge to fidget. “What do we have here? Playing dress-up in Daddy’s clothes?” She spins back around and gestures for him to sit next to her, which he does after a beat. The bartender keeps eyeing Barry until Lisa waves him off. “He’s cool, Charlie. I’d like you to meet the youngest of the Snart clan, Barry. Barry, my dear nephew, this is Charlie. He’s been running this place for years.”

“Didn’t know Len had a kid.” Charlie grunts.

“He has two, but Barry’s his only biological kid. Lenny’s real hush-hush about the two of them, but I can trust you to keep quiet, right, Charlie?” Lisa gives him a dark look, one that Barry’s only seen a
handful of times from Len and Mick when they get extra protective of him.

Charlie gives a small nod and asks what Barry wants to drink. “Oh, um, water’s fine.” Charlie scoffs, but gets as he asks. He places the glass in front of Barry, crushing some peanut shells that were on the bar, and heads to what Barry assumes is the back office. Barry leaves the water untouched, not liking the brown tint to the water. He wrings his hands under the bar to keep from touching the sticky surface.

“What, nothing harder? Does Lenny not let you drink and say it’s to protect you?” Lisa asks bitterly.

“What? Of course he let’s me drink, I’m twenty-six, not sixteen. There’s just no point, alcohol doesn’t affect me anymore.”

Barry hesitates, not sure what to say next. Lisa picks up on his nervous energy and rolls her eyes. “I’d ask if Lenny sent you to talk to me, but he’d never let you come to a place like this, even if you are twenty-six. So why are you here?”

Barry’s not surprised Lisa could read him as well as Len could, Len’s probably the one that taught her to read body language. “I know Dad isn’t good at communicating how he feels, and that I have no room to talk, but he really does want to keep you safe.”

Lisa scoffs. “Well, he sure has a funny why of showing it.”

“You have no idea. He constantly threatens to lock me in my room until I’m forty.” Barry sighs when his joke falls flat. “Okay, look, I could have told you at any time, so if you want to be mad, be mad at me too. But I think Dad had a point, especially since Wells kidnapped Eddie—”

Lisa holds up a hand. “Wait, Wells as in Harrison Wells? That scientist that’s been on the news and caused the explosion that blew up Central? What does he have to do with any of this?”

Barry sighs again and fills Lisa in on everything that’s happened. From his mom being murdered by the Man in Lightning when he was eleven, how Len mistook Barry for him in the beginning, all the way to their discovery that the real Wells has been dead for fifteen years and the man wearing his face is really Eobard Thawne, a speedster from the future that goes by the name Reverse-Flash.

“So the Reverse-Flash came back in time to kill you as a child, failed because future-you sped kid-
you out of there, and then killed Nora in a fit of rage?” Lisa asks, trying to wrap her mind around all this information. “And all of you tried to trap him last night, but he already knew because of the cameras and played all of you, taking this Eddie, who is some distant relative of his?”

Barry drums his fingers on the bar and instantly regrets it. He wipes his hands on his jeans with a nod. “Yup. So that’s why Dad didn’t want you to know. He’s just trying to keep you safe and away from all this craziness.”

Lisa gets a pinched look on her face, like she’s ready to fight, when the door to the bar swings open and a pair of very familiar footsteps come towards them. A heavy hand lands on his shoulder and spins him around. “What the hell do you think you’re doing here?”

Oh, no, his dad looks super pissed. “Dad, I can explain-”

“Don’t wanna hear it. Go wait in the car.” His dad growls. He looks over the bar and nods. “Thanks for the call, Charlie.”

“But-”

“Now, Bartholomew.”

Barry shrinks at the use of his full name and nods. He slinks off the bar stool and heads straight for the door without another word and his eyes cast downwards. The car is parked right outside the bar and the passenger side door is unlocked, so he gets in and waits for his dad.

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Len’s not a happy camper. The phone wakes him up in the middle of the night and the call itself did nothing to lighten his mood. What was Barry thinking going to a place like Saints. He’s just lucky it was Charlie working and that he called him as soon as he could.

He goes to throw his coat on, only to find it missing, along with his boots. Out of all the times Barry had to try his hand at being a thief, it had to be at his expense. He finds a dark blue jacket instead and just slips Barry’s tennis shoes on to save time.
When he walks into Saints to find Barry talking with Lisa, he has an idea why his idiot son thought it was a good time to start dressing like him and hanging out at one of his old haunts. But just because he understands the why, doesn’t mean it gets rid of his anger at having to drive out here in the middle of the night to pick him up when his bed is calling out for him back at home.

He may have went a little overboard when he used Barry’s full name, but he’s mad and tired, he’ll apologize later. For now, he leans against the bar next to Lisa and glares at her. “What the hell were you thinking, bringing him to a place like this?” He hissed at her.

She slams her drink down on the counter. “Hey, don’t you dare blame me for this, he found me here. And I wouldn’t be so hard on him, dumbass, since he’s here on account of us.”

“What?”

“Yeah. He was trying to explain why you felt the need to keep me out of the loop. And they were good reasons, valid ones. But they aren’t going to excuse what you did. You still lied to me and kept things from me, something we promised to never do, especially when it concerns our safety.” She gets up and pushes past him. “Now go be a parent, something else that you kept from me.” She mutters on her way out.

“Now might not be the best time, Len, but here.” Charlie places a recite in front of him. “She never paid her tab.”

Len gives Charlie a forced smile and nods. “Of course she didn’t…” He pulls out his wallet and sets a couple bills on the counter. “Keep the change, hopefully that will entice you to not breath a word of anything you heard tonight between tweedledee and tweedledumb.”

“Course. And you’ll be the first to know if that kid ever steps foot in here again.”

At least that’s some weight off Len’s shoulders. He gives Charlie another nod and heads out to the car, where Barry is still waiting. He’s sulking in the passenger seat with his arms crossed. He closes his door a little harder than necessary and Barry turns his head away, leaning it against the glass and watching out the window as they drive in silence for a couple minutes.

“Why can’t I run home? This car ride is just painful for the both of us.” Barry pouts, breaking the silence first.
“Because, if I had to get up in the middle of the night to pick your sorry ass up, then you’re going to sit there and suffer with me.”

Len can’t see him, but he would bet money that Barry’s rolling his eyes right now. “This is so stupid.” Barry grumbles under his breath.

“No, what’s stupid is that you thought you could just waltz right in dressed like an extra from West Side Story and not get your ass kicked.” Len is trying really hard to not yell right now, but Barry is seriously testing his patience right now.

“What’s wrong with how I’m dressed? I’m wearing your clothes right now.”

“It’s not the clothes you wear, it’s your name that carries all the weight. I’ve spent over thirty years getting my name to mean something.” Len changes topics, knowing this one is a dead end. “What was your plan if someone recognized you from the station and decided to pick a fight with you?”

“Then I would fight back! That’s what I’ve been doing for the past half a year! I took down Tony, and he was literally made of steel!”

“You took Tony down as the Flash, not Barry Allen. You need to start thinking ahead, Kid. If even one of those criminals saw you use your speed then you could kiss your secret identity goodbye.” Barry throws his head back and groans, something he does when he’s losing an argument. Len lets the silence stretch out for a couple minutes before smirking. “I can’t believe that you were able to sneak into my room and steal my coat without me waking up. If you ever have a change of heart and want to join Mick and I on a heist, there’s a spot with your name on it. I was thinking we could call ourselves ‘the Rogues’.”

Out of the corner of his eye he could see Barry trying to fight the growing grin on his face. “I can run through walls now, you and Uncle Mick would just slow me down.”

“Oh, you think so, Hotshot? You would be singing a very different tune if they were able to make some type of field that cancels out your meta powers like what Cisco did in those cells in the pipeline.”

“Then I’ll just get Hartley. I’m sure I could talk him into joining me, he’s like an evil Cisco.”
Len chuckles then gets more serious. “Listen, Kid, I know you mean well with Lisa and I, but I don’t need you fighting my battles for me.”

“I just wanted to fix things, it’s my fault you two are fighting in the first place.”

That’s why Barry went on this ridiculous crusade. Len pulls off on the side of the road so he could have his full attention on Barry. “It’s not your fault that we’re fighting, why would you think that?”

“Because, everything involving Wells is my fault! Mom died because Wells was after me! Dad’s been sitting in a jail cell for the past fifteen years because of me! Eddie got taken because of me! Now you guys are fighting over my secret!” Barry takes a deep breath and steadied his voice. “If I have the power to fix this one thing, then I’m not going to just sit back and do nothing.”

Len brushes Barry’s hair back and rests his hand on his cheek. “Look at me, none of this is your fault. The only person to blame is Wells.” If Len’s being honest with himself, he’s saying this just as much for his own benefit as it is for Barry. “Some things just take time to heal. We can’t save your mom, but we can get Henry out of jail. We’ll find Eddie soon enough and bring him home. If he’s hurt in any way, that’ll heal too. And like I said before, Lisa just needs time to cool down. Give her some time and she’ll come around on her own. Now, are you alright?”

Barry nods. “I will be.”

Len ruffles Barry’s hair for good measure. “Good. Now let’s get home, I could sleep for a week.”

They don’t get to sleep for a week.

A couple hours after getting home, Joe calls with an update about the gold thief. Barry gets everyone to S.T.A.R. Labs at dawn and they head for the cortex as Barry relays all the info Joe told him over the phone.

“The Central City Gold Reserve is about to transfer three hundred million dollars in gold bars to their Coast City vault. Singh told Joe that they think the Man in the Mask is gonna make a play for it.”
“Okay, but we still don’t know if he’s responsible for those weird images you saw.”

Barry brushes off Caitlin’s concern. “How are they transporting the gold?” Cisco asks.

“That’s what I was wondering myself. For science, of course.” Len smirks.

Barry gives him a disapproving look before answering Cisco. “Ice cream truck.”

There’s an awkward beat of silence. “Wait, you’re serious? Three hundred million dollars is being transferred in an ordinary ice cream truck?” Cisco exclaims.

Len shrugs. “It’s more common than you think. A big armored truck sticks out and screams ‘I have something valuable, please come rob me!’ while nobody thinks to rob a little ice cream truck or say, a produce truck.”

“Speaking from experience?” Cisco asks jokingly.

“Yup.” Len rolls his eyes at the shocked silence. “When my dad was in jail and my mom was working, if I wasn’t in school then I would ride in my grandfather’s ice cream truck with him. He told me all about it. I would never take the chance of robbing an ice cream truck, what if kids were nearby?”

“Awe, you’re a criminal with a heart of gold.” Cisco nudges him.

Len hits him back, only twice as hard. Serves him right for thinking he’s soft. He debates telling Cisco that it was only the ice cream trucks he avoided, but decides not to. He doesn’t need Barry giving him any more looks.

They hang around the cortex as they wait to see if their thief attacks the truck. Cisco’s the first to point out that Barry’s wearing his leather jacket, saying that Barry looks good in it. Len has to admit that he agrees. He really liked that jacket, but he thinks it’s worth losing it just to know what everyone’s reaction at the station is when Barry walks in, not in his usual nerd outfit, but a leather jacket. It might also help the kid’s image if Len dropped him off at work on his motorcycle as well.
Len’s so busy thinking about that, that when the alarm on Cisco’s computer goes off he jumps in surprise.

“Whoa, the truck just got hit by a landmine.”

Barry is out of there before Cisco could even finish his sentence and asks if Joe’s okay, since he volunteered to be part of the group that moves the gold. They aren’t sure, since there are no cameras in the area, so they just have to wait to hear back from Barry.

After a couple minutes, Barry’s voice comes over the comms. “Guys, we may have a problem. Goldfinger here is General Eiling.”

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That evening, they have Eiling in a cell at S.T.A.R. Labs, but he’s not acting like himself. If anything, he’s acting like a robot. He hasn’t spoken one word all day and didn’t even flinch as Caitlin pulled a bullet out of his shoulder. He knows from first-hand experience on how painful that is. As Barry, Joe, and Caitlin talk about that, Len snaps his fingers and waves at Eiling, but still nothing.

Cisco walks up. “I just got off the phone with A.R.G.U.S. Officially, Eiling is on administrative leave.”

Len turns to him. “And unofficially?”

“I talked to Diggle’s wife, Lyla, and she said Eiling’s been missing for the past three months, and A.R.G.U.S. is covering up for it.”

“That’s around the time Barry and I broke Professor Stein out of that military base.” Len says.

Joe walks up to the glass. “General Eiling, why were you trying to rob the gold reserve?”

“Maybe he’s in some type of trance?” Caitlin guesses when Eiling still didn’t answer.
“General, do you remember me?” Barry tries.

Eiling’s eyes move to Barry, alert now. “Flash.” He growls out.

“Whoa, how does he know you’re the Flash?” Joe asks.

Barry uncrosses his arms, and Len takes a half step in front of him. “I don’t know. I do know he knows that the Flash is Len’s son, but I didn’t think he knew what I looked like.”

“General-” Len starts to threaten him, but gets cut off.

“Eiling not here. Eiling bad.” He growls out again.

“Hey, Caitlin, any reason he’s talking like a toddler?” Len asks over his shoulder, not taking his eyes off Eiling.

“It might be some type of psychotic break presenting itself as dissociative identity disorder?”

“Caitlin…” Eiling says in a calmer tone. “Caitlin… Good.”

“Oh, uh, thank you?”

Cisco chuckles out of nerves and takes a bite of a red vine. “Forget multiple personalities, you guys have seen The Exorcist, right?”

Joe shakes his head. “You and your movies.” He nudges Barry. “Keep talking to him, he seems to respond to you.”

Barry looks to Len and Len shrugs. “I hate to say it, but he has a point.”
“Okay then, uh, why is Eiling bad?”

“Eiling… hurt me. I hurt… Eiling.”

“So, if you’re not Eiling, then who are you?”

Eiling, or whoever this is, puffs his chest out. “I… am… Grodd. Fear me.”

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Caitlin and Cisco brought everyone upstairs to the cortex and pulled up a video.

“Oh, Grodd is a gorilla.” Barry feels the need to point out aloud.

Cisco fills them in that five years ago Wells and Eiling were using Grodd to find a way to expand a soldier’s cognitive abilities during battle, but in reality Eiling was trying to make soldiers with psychic abilities. As soon as Wells found out about all the tests he put a stop to it, shutting down the entire project.

When the particle accelerator blew, Grodd got loose and nobody has seen him since. Until now, that is.

Caitlin shows her last brain scan of Grodd and compared it to the one she did of Eiling, and they are exactly alike. Somehow, with a mix of all the chemicals and the dark matter that was released that night, Grodd has telepathy and is able to control Eiling’s mind.


“I don’t like the idea that Wells rescued Grodd.” Joe says.

“And I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Grodd shows up at the same time we’re looking for Wells.” Len adds on.
And so they make a plan; find Grodd, they find Wells, then if they find Wells, they find Eddie.

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Iris joins them in looking for Grodd, since she has reports of weird sightings in the sewers.

“Alligators.” Cisco says as he drinks a slushie. At Caitlin’s confused look, he goes on. “C.H.U.D.’s.”

Everyone looks even more confused, so Len clarifies. “Cannibalistic Humanoid Underground Dweller.”


Len translates for Cisco again. “Rodents of unusual size.”

“Dude, how are we the only ones that watch movies around here?” Cisco asks him.

“Because our lives are strange enough as it is, without movies about giant rats and cannibals.” Joe answers flatly.

Iris pulls the conversation back to the matter at hand and talks about reports of people going missing in the sewers and the search party hearing strange animal sounds. Barry asks for the location and Len groans.

“Please don’t say we’re going in the sewers.”

Cisco laughs at him. “Sucks to be you, man.” Everyone gives Cisco a blank look and he sighs. “Sucks to be me, too.”

“It’s your monkey.” Joe shoots off as they walk out.
Down in the disgusting sewers, Len doesn’t feel like he’s ever going to be clean again. At least Barry had the common sense to leave his jacket at the labs, all of the clothes they’re wearing are going to have to be burned after this because this smell is never leaving these clothes.

Len wrinkles his nose as they wade through what he knows isn’t water. “I owe Mick big time if this is what he had to walk through. This smell is going to be permanently burned in my nose.”

“Suck it up and light these flares as we go so we don’t lose our way.” Joe hands Len a bundle of flares. He sees the banana in Cisco’s hand and snatches it. “Gimme that banana.”

Caitlin is watching the live feed from Cisco’s helmet back at the lab with Iris, ready to call for backup if anything happens when they hear heels clicking behind them. They both spin around to find Lisa with her arms crossed, but calmer than she looked yesterday.

“Who are you?” Iris demands.

Lisa tenses up, but Caitlin jumps in before anyone gets hurt. “It’s alright. Iris, this is Lisa, Len’s sister and Barry’s aunt. Lisa, this is Iris West, Barry’s best friend.”

Lisa nods. “Barry talks about you, he really cares for you.”

Iris nods back. “And Barry mentioned you, it’s nice to finally have a face to the name.”

Lisa shifts and glances at the screen behind them. “Why are they in the sewer?”

Caitlin glances back. “Uh, they’re looking for an enhanced, super-gorilla that has telepathy and mind control.”
Lisa nods with wide eyes. “Somehow, that doesn’t even rank as the top five most shocking things I’ve learned this week.”

“Yup, it’s just a regular Tuesday afternoon for us.” Caitlin jokes.

Lisa pulls up a chair to watch with them and listen as Joe talks about being terrified of regular gorillas, let alone supernatural ones. Len chimes in that he would prefer a metashark over a metagorilla any day.

“Careful what you wish for, you might just jinx us.” Barry jokes.

Len scoffs. “Please, if there is a metashark walking around, then I’ll become a vegetarian for a month.”

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Down in the sewers, everyone jumps when they hear a loud clank down the tunnel.

“What was that?” Cisco asks, moving his flashlight all around.

The light lands on a rat scurrying along a pipe. “Guess it’s just a rodent of usual size.”

Cisco punches him in the arm, but the bruise is totally worth that joke. Len leaves a flare and they walk a couple more steps only to stop again by Cisco. “Whoa. Hey, guys, look at this.” The wall has childlike scrawls of grodd all over it. “Incredible.”

“Looks like we’re in the right place.” Barry says as they continue walking. The further they go, the more complex the writing gets. ‘Grodd’ leads into things like ‘Father’, then basic math gets more and more complex until Len can’t understand it.

“What is this?” Joe asks.

“Grodd. He’s evolving.” Barry answers. “He’s getting smarter.”
They enter an open clearing that leads to different tunnels when they hear a growl. They all turn around and hold up the tranq guns they were forced to bring. Len would much prefer his cold gun right about now. Hell, he’d settle for a regular gun. The water ripples toward them and Cisco makes some quip about *Jurassic Park* but Len’s too focused to listen to what exactly he said.

They hear more growling and then movement above them. “So if he’s getting smarter, think he’s getting bigger, too?” Joe asks.

The rumbling stops and that makes Len even more nervous. “Maybe it was just a truck passing over?”

They hear another growl, louder this time, and the water at the end of the tunnel splashes. Barry shoots a tranq, then drops the gun out of nowhere and grasps at his head.

“Barry!” Len and Joe yell out at the same time.

Barry flies back, hits the wall, and lands on a cement slab. He doesn’t move, knocked out cold. Len and Joe start firing their own weapons down the tunnel while Cisco kneels by Barry, trying to get him to wake up.

Cisco and Joe are yelling at each other, and Len’s about to yell at the both of them, when something grabs him and Joe from above and pulls them up. They both scream and that’s the last thing Len remembers before everything goes black.

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Len wakes up first. He’s leaning against the wall of the sewer and there is a grate under him. Joe’s laying next to him, still out cold, so Len takes the time to look around. He hears running water coming from somewhere. He can’t narrow it down any further than that because of the echo all around them. He listens for the gorilla, but luckily doesn’t hear him anywhere nearby. Hopefully Cisco and Barry were able to get out okay. He leans his head back, only to regret it instantly. Hissing, he puts his hand up and feels the bump on the back of his head. He’s going to have a headache for quite a bit. He sees a yellow hardhat across the way and winces at the whole on the top and blood staining it. Doesn’t look like those workers that went missing three months ago are coming home.
He hears a groan next to him and watches as Joe sits up slowly, taking in his surrounds, the same as Len did.

They both jump as a shadow moves across the room and he’s shocked when Joe puts an arm across his chest, bodily defending him. With his free hand, he reaches inside his jacket and pulls out a gun, luckily a real one this time.

Even with both hands holding the gun, it’s still shaky and it only gets worse when they hear distant thumping of footsteps grow closer. As a shadow of a gorilla moves across a light down one of the tunnels, Joe’s hand shakes as he draws the gun toward himself.

“Wha- What are you going to me?”

Len feels his heart drop as a giant gorilla comes to a stop in front of them. He grabs Joe’s arm and tries to pull the gun away, but his arm stays still. If anything, it gets closer to Joe’s head. “Stop doing this! Stop right now!” Len yells frantically.

“Cisco, help! Help me!” Joe yells.

“No help here.” Len hears, but doesn’t see Grodd’s mouth move.

“I can- I can hear you in my head.” Joe says shakily. So he’s not the only one that hears that voice. “You are telepathic.”

Len gulps as Joe starts to beg. Grodd bares his teeth and Len looks him right in the eyes. “Please stop this… Please.” Grodd makes Joe cock the gun and Len panics, tugging at Joe’s arm. “I’ll do anything, just stop!”

Grodd raises his hand slowly, then the gun goes flying out of Joe’s hand, skitting across the room. Len let’s out the breath he was holding and loosens his grip on Joe’s arm. “Thank you.” He tells the gorilla.

“Not for either of you. Father hate gun.”
“Father, do you mean Wells? Is Wells your father?” Joe asks, physically shaking still. Despite that, he still has Len half behind his shoulder, trying to keep him as shielded as possible. “Where is he?”

Grodd steps toward them. “Not here.”

Grodd sniffs and Joe gets an idea, pulling something else out. “Wait, wait. Here, is this what you want?” He holds out the banana that he took from Cisco earlier. “You can have it. It's yours, take it.”

Grodd roars at them, and Joe pushes Len back even further. Len isn’t too proud to admit he is terrified at this moment and squeezes his eyes shut, tightening his grip on Joe’s arm. He tries to make himself as small as possible behind Joe.

“Grodd hate banana.”

With that, Grodd backs off and walks away, leaving them alone. Joe shuffles away from Len a little and leans back against the wall. “Are you okay?” Joe asks him.

Len nods, trying to get himself to stop shaking. “Yeah- yeah, I’m fine.” He stutters. “I think I understand your fear of gorillas now.”

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Barry has his S.T.A.R. Labs sweats on under his dad’s jacket while Caitlin has him hooked up to a machine to check his brain pattern live. He can only nod to what she’s saying as he huddles deeper in the jacket. If he takes deep enough breaths, it still smells like his dad. It’s the only thing keeping him from completely breaking down.

God, if only he was fast enough, both Joe and his dad would be standing here right now. The familiar weight of Iris settles next to him on the cot and clings to him, while Lisa paces back and forth, yelling about something, but it all just sounds garbled at the moment.

He checks back into the conversation when Iris yells back, “Hey, you aren’t the only one that lost someone. First I lost my boyfriend Eddie, now I’ve lost my dad. And Len is our friend, we care about him too.”
Cisco steps between the two, making sure the fight doesn’t escalate. “Whoa, hey, I promise we’ll find them. That tranq dart that Barry shot Grodd with also had a tracker in it. As soon as it activates—”

Barry stands up abruptly, ripping the wires off his head. “No, Cisco, we can’t wait for that. I will search every inch of that sewer if I have to, but I can’t just sit here and do nothing when Joe and my dad are out there somewhere.”

“And what are you going to do if Grodd takes over your mind the same way he did with Eiling?” Caitlin asks.”

Barry sputters, trying to think of a response, when Lisa steps up. “You guys are suppose to be geniuses, build him something. Some type of blocker thing.”

Cisco chokes, shaking his head. “I don’t know, maybe if we had Dr. Wells, but on our own…” Cisco trails off.

“Bullshit. From what Barry told me, you guys have been building him and Lenny things this whole time, so find a way to do it now.” Lisa storms out.

Caitlin gives him a kind smile. “We’ll figure something out.”

Barry nods. “Fast.”

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Barry finds Lisa heading for the elevator and calls out for her to wait. She stops and spins around. “Do you two have a death wish? Why do you both keep putting yourselves in the middle of all this shit? He’s always getting on my case about being safe, but then he always turns around and runs head first into danger without a thought about his own safety.”

Barry shakes his head. “Aunt Lisa, please listen—”

“No, I’m done listening. Lenny isn’t a, a _metahuman_ like you, he doesn’t have powers like you, he’s _not you._”
Barry waits to make sure she’s done. “You’re right, he’s not me. And this isn’t his fault, none of this is his fault. The only person to blame here is Wells, and fighting back and forth like this isn’t going to bring Joe or Dad back. The only way they’re gonna get back here safe is if we all work together.” Barry pauses, but Lisa doesn’t say anything back. “I’m gonna go check to see how Cisco and Caitlin are doing.” With that, Barry leaves Lisa alone outside the elevator.

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Grodd’s been leaving them alone, but staying close by to keep an eye on them. Neither of them talk, they’re both not in the talking mood, but Len hasn’t let go of the grip he has on Joe’s arm.

They both tense when out of nowhere steam starts coming out of the pipes. Grodd rears back and snarls, then runs off in a fit of rage. The steam isn’t hot, but it sure pissed the gorilla off.

“I hope Barry knows what he’s doing.” Joe whispers.

“Me too.” Len replies.

They feel a push of air, like one you would feel in the subway before a car comes and then the pounding footsteps of Grodd running. All of that stops at once when they hear Grodd roar again.

“C’mon, Barry, you got this, Kid.” Len mutters.

After a moment of silence, they hear distant fighting, then something crashing through a wall. They don’t hear any fighting after that, and Len fears the worst, when Barry comes speeding in.

“Dad, Joe?”

Barry bends down and wraps an arm around each of them. “Please, get us out of here.” Joe begs.

Barry’s pulls back and presses a hand to his comm. “I’m bringing them home.”
Len’s too overwhelmed to speak, so he just takes Barry’s hand and squeezes as hard as he can.

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While Caitlin is checking over Joe and his dad, Barry heads down to the pipeline after looking at Eiling’s brain scan. No matter how much Barry hates the guy, he’s not a metahuman and needs to be let go.

After talking with the dick, finding out he doesn’t regret torturing Grodd, and that he knows Barry is the Flash, Barry is really wishing he would have let his dad ice him. He instantly feels bad after thinking it, but he doesn’t regret it.

Barry takes the slow route back upstairs to find Len and Joe both stuck in cots and Cisco sending a barrage of questions their way. Talk about a captive audience.

“What was his liar like? Did he eat the banana? Does he like King Kong, or is he more of a Planet of the Apes kind of ape?”

“Uh, terrifying, no, and I didn’t ask.” Joe answers.

Barry walks up, and Lisa leaves Len’s side and pulls Barry into a hug. “You did an amazing job.” She whispers in his ear.

Barry hugs her back. “Thanks, but I didn’t do it alone. You were the one that convinced Caitlin and Cisco to build that headset.” Barry pulls back and looks to Iris, Cisco, and Caitlin. “Hey, is it cool if we have a moment alone?”

They nod, and Cisco pats him on the back as he leaves.

Lisa has an arm wrapped around him and they head to Len’s bed. “Guess this makes me the damsel in distress. I have a whole new appreciation for Princess Peach.” He jokes.

Barry takes his hand, knowing Len only jokes like this when he was really worried. But if it was for himself or Barry, Barry’s not too sure, but he has a feeling it was a mix of the two. “You know, if
you and Joe really wanted more bonding time together, you could have just said something. You didn’t need to go to such lengths to get it.” Barry jokes back.

Len smirks. “You know me, go big or go home.”

Joe, who Barry forgot was in the room, chuckles. “This was nothin’. Wait until we get into another fight about which sport is better, football or hockey.”

“You mean the one where you have the wrong opinion that football is better, when really hockey has way more action and that it takes actually skill to compete in.” Len teases.

Barry hopes they aren’t going to be stuck in this room for too long together, or they’re going to tear each other to pieces. He squeezes Len’s hand one more time, tells him he loves him, and gives the two siblings some time together as he goes over to sit with Joe. Lisa takes his spot on the edge of Len’s bed, and Barry tries to listen in on their conversation, but gets distracted by Joe, who’s picking at his dad’s old jacket. Barry forgot he had put it back on.

“This sure looks familiar, you plannin’ on turnin’ to a life of crime?”

“Yup. Dad, Uncle Mick, and I are gonna start robbing banks. We’re gonna call ourselves the Rogues, and Hartley is our evil Cisco.” Barry jokes.

“Well, as long as no one gets hurt and you all have fun.” Joe plays along.

Barry laughs. “You’re a cop, you shouldn’t be condoning this.”

Joe pouts. “Don’t tell me what to do.” Joe starts laughing too, only to groan and hold his ribs. “Ow, note to self, laughing hurts. But seriously, that looks good on you, makes you look older. If you wear it to work, the others might even stop calling you Baby-face Allen.”

Barry straightens out the leather jacket. “You think?”

Joe shakes his head. “Nah, you still look like a teenager, you just look like you raided your dad’s closet.”
“Which is exactly what he did.” Len calls from his side of the room. “He took my boots too, all because he wanted to ‘fit in’ at-”

“Okay, that’s enough talking for now! Come on, Aunt Lisa, we should let them get their rest. Night everyone, we all need a good night’s rest so we can continue looking for Wells and Eddie tomorrow.”

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Len watches as Barry pulls Lisa out of the room. After they leave, Joe turns his head his way. “Do I wanna know where Barry snuck off to?”

Len shakes his head. “No, you really don’t. Just know that he’s in trouble and I already changed the Netflix password.”

Joe chuckles, lightly enough so he doesn’t aggravate his ribs, and closes his eyes to sleep. Len does the same, thinking about the promise he made Lisa, to always tell her the truth, no matter how dangerous. He did mess up big time not telling her about Barry and himself, but he has a feeling Lisa will more than make up for it, one way or another. She did mention something about wanting a gun like his and Mick’s, only prettier. Cisco is bound to have his hands full.

He falls asleep quickly, listening to the soft snores next to him.

(He does wake up an hour later to an angry text message from Barry. The kid was excited to have the place to himself to relax and watch a movie with the bowl of popcorn he made, only to find that he’s locked out of Netflix. Len laughs so hard, he both hurts his ribs and wakes Joe up, but it was so worth it.)

Chapter End Notes

Lisa still didn’t get her gun, but next chapter for sure. We also have Hayward making a reappearance, Barry takes a little walk on the dark side, and Mick just wants to go home and take a nap.
It's late again. My bad. But hey, better late than never.

Only one more chapter after this, I can't believe we're already at the end. I made the series now, so after this ends I'll be adding things to that.

Two weeks. It’s been two weeks since Eddie went missing. Two weeks that Barry has been running himself ragged, trying to find any trace of where Eddie and Wells might be. Len himself has cashed in more favors than he cares to admit, seeing if anyone knows anything about where Wells might be hiding. Whatever plan Wells made, he didn’t get any outside help, meaning wherever he’s holed up, it’s way off the grid.

Len only half listens to Cisco’s discovery that Wells’s wheelchair was being used to make himself faster since that doesn’t help the current problem they have.

He gets pulled from his thoughts when an alarm starts going off. Cisco gets to the monitors first and starts shaking his head and groaning.

“Oh, this is bad, really bad. The particle accelerator got turned back on.”

“I thought that thing got blown up.” Joe says.

Cisco has his eyes firmly glued to the screen. “It was. Someone had to have rebuilt it.”

Barry looks up at Cisco. “Wells.”

“Even if he did rebuild it, how did Dr. Wells turn the particle accelerator back on?” Caitlin asks.

Len feels like hitting himself, it’s so obvious now. Barry turns to him as he realizes the same thing. “He’s here.” Barry says. “That’s why we couldn’t find him. He’s been inside S.T.A.R. Labs the whole time.”
Len and Joe pull their guns out of their holsters and head out with Barry. Cisco comes to follow too, only to run back and grab his orange soda.

Len takes the lead through the hallway with Joe and down to the particle accelerator. “Cisco, what’d you bring that orange soda for?” Joe asks in a whisper as they creep up towards the entryway of the particle accelerator.

“Whenever something happens with the Reverse-Flash, liquid floats in the air. You know, Barry’s fish tank, Wells’s champagne, Lance’s coffee. Remember that? If this does the same thing, we’ll know Wells is in there.”

Cisco takes a shaky breath and hesitates. “Do it.” Barry nods to him.

The door slides open and Cisco hangs back as Len peeks out with Barry and Joe. “Man. This is big.” Joe’s voice echos.

Len can’t help but agree, it’s bigger than any stadium he’s ever been in.

“Oh, God. Guys!” Cisco warns them as Len spots a red lightning trail in the distance heading for them.

Being closer to Barry, Len pushes him back against the wall, right as red lightning whizzes past them, not once slowing down. “Barry!” Len calls out, but it’s too late. Barry’s already off after Wells.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa. What do we do now?” Cisco asks frantically.

The sound of machinery whirs to life behind Len in the accelerator, and he spins around to find one of the pods lining up with their platform. “Prisoner release protocol activated.” A computer says as the pod door opens.

“Oh, no no no.” Cisco chants under his breath.
Mardon’s door opens and a gust of wind blows Len, Cisco, and Joe off the platform and down to the ground. Luckily, it wasn’t that far of a drop and Len was the first to scramble back to his feet. He climbs a ladder back to the platform, but by the time he makes it to the top, Mardon is already standing in the threshold of the doorway with a smirk and a ball of hail the size of a baseball.

“Too slow.” Mardon taunts as he chucks the hail at the door controls. Len makes a run for it, only to have the door slam shut in his face.

He punches the door in frustration. “Damn it!”

Joe and Cisco come running up behind him. “Cisco, get this door open!” Joe shouts.

“I’m trying, I’m trying!”

The door finally opens, and Len darts out, following the trail of water left by Mardon’s powers. They lead to the elevator bay, and Len rounds the corner with his gun up and ready to fire, only to find Mick and Iris standing over a knocked out Mardon and Caitlin leaning against the wall unharmed.

Len lowers his gun and sighs in relief as Joe shows up behind him. “Ya lose somethin’?” Mick asks, gesturing to Mardon.

“Just help us get him back to the pipeline before he wakes up.” Len points behind him.

Mick hauls Mardon over his shoulder and they make their way back to the pipeline. Cisco’s working on a computer and closes the cell after Mick sets Mardon down.

Cisco puts a hand on Caitlin’s arm. “You okay?”

Caitlin brushes a hand across her neck. Len can already see a bruise starting to form. “Yeah, I will be, thanks to Iris and Mick. If you guys hadn’t shown up when you did...”

Caitlin and Iris share a smile, and Mick wanders up to Len. “Why was Mardon out runnin’ around? Thought these cells were suppose ta keep metas in.”
“Wells. He must have used him as a distraction.”

Joe holds up a hand. “Shh, did you guys here that?”

They all stay silent. “Hear what?” Len asks after a beat.

“I just checked the cells, everyone’s accounted for.” Cisco says.

“No, no. Listen.”

They all step closer to the entrance of the pipeline, and sure enough, Len can vaguely hear the sound of muffled shouting.

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Joe and Iris return to the cortex with one of Eddie’s arms around each of their shoulders. He looks horrible, wearing the same clothes as the last time Len saw him two weeks ago and a little skinnier too. They sit him down and Caitlin gets to work checking his vitals and hooking him up with an IV that she had set up earlier.

Len and Mick have been standing off to the side with Cisco and out of the way. They were never very close with Eddie to begin with, and once Caitlin announced that his vitals were good and that he was just a little dehydrated, Len tried to zone out, only to spin around when Barry flashed in, out of breath.

“Wells got away.” Barry bends over and rests his hands on his knees. “He was too fast, he’s always too fast.” He looks up and spots Eddie on the gurney. “Eddie.”

Eddie gives a little wave, not much up for talking. “Yer late to the party, Cub. We found ‘im down in that, um, what’s-it-called?”

“Pipeline.” Len fills in.
Mick snaps his fingers. “Yeah, that thing.”

Barry walks past them and to Eddie. “I’m so sorry, I thought I looked everywhere for you.”

“Hey, it’s not your fault. Sometimes you just can’t see the clues, even if they’re right in front of you.” Eddie glances at Iris, and Len gets the feeling that he’s not just talking about his kidnapping anymore.

Iris picks up on the awkward wording too, and starts talking to Eddie, while Len goes and rubs the back of Barry’s neck. “We got him on the run, we have the upperhand and it’s only a matter of time until he’s caught.”

Barry relaxes a bit as they listen to Eddie’s side of everything. He tells them how Wells was working on some tube and that’s it, but Len gets the feeling he’s leaving some things out. He doesn’t push though, since Eddie seems to be struggling to even answer about that tube thing.

Eddie asks if he can go home, and Caitlin lets him as she takes out the IV and gives him strict instructions to get some rest.

Iris helps him out, leaving the rest in the middle of the cortex, trying to figure out what Wells’s plan could be.

A computer beeps again and Len groans. “What could it possibly be now?”

Cisco peaks at the computer. “Oh, no no no…” He runs out, despite Barry calling out for him.

Barry throws a hand up, put out. “What now?”

Cisco sets up a video chat with his phone so everyone in the cortex can see what he’s seeing down in Len’s least favorite place right now, the pipeline. The tube Eddie was talking about is down there and being used to charge the particle accelerator. Since it’s from the future, Cisco doesn’t want to touch or cut the wrong thing and risk it blowing up, so all he can say is that they have thirty-six hours before the particle accelerator is at full power.
Len pinches the bridge of his nose. “Barry, go get Hartley and bring him here. Tell him I don’t care what he’s doing, it can’t be more important than what we have going on.”

Hartley wasn’t too happy being whisked to S.T.A.R. Labs without any warning, but he quickly got over it when Cisco explained everything that’s happened. The two nerds put their heads together and try to figure out what to do next.

Len heads over to where Barry is sitting and plops down next to him. “I can hear you thinking across the room. Wanna talk about it?”

Barry shakes his head. “Not particularly.”

Len claps him on the shoulder, knowing the feeling. “Well, if you change your mind, I’m right here.”

They sit in silence, listening to the others talk about the fate of the metahumans in the pipeline.

“What happened to rehabilitating them and letting them go? Len was able to do that with Shawna.” Joe complains.

Len props his head against his hand. “The ones in the pipeline are way more dangerous than Shawna’s teleporting trick. Plus, she was more criminal adjacent, just hooked up with the wrong guy.”

“What are we gonna do then?” Cisco questions. “We leave them in there, they die. But if we let them go, they destroy Central City.”

“We’re gonna move them.” Barry speaks at last.

“Move them where? Iron Heights can’t handle metahumans.” Joe points out.
“You’re right, but Lian Yu can.”

Cisco and Caitlin react instantly to that, but Len is in the same boat as Joe and Hartley, having no idea what, or where, Lian Yu is. Joe saves them the trouble by asking, “What the hell’s a Lian Yu?”

“Lian Yu is the island where Oliver was stranded for five years. A.R.G.U.S. built a covert military prison on it.” Hartley perks up at the mention of Queen. He’s one of his celebrity crushes that only got magnified when Barry told him Oliver Queen is the Arrow.

“It’s where we sent Captain Boomerang.” Cisco chimed in. Len missed the fight with him, since it was when Barry went down to Starling to help the Arrow out some time after the whole Bivolo fiasco. He had an invite to go help too, but he declined since at the time him and Queen only barely tolerated each other.

“Oliver keeps his worst criminals there. They won’t be able to escape, and more importantly, they won’t be able to hurt anybody.” Barry makes his case.

Joe doesn’t look too convinced, and Len doesn’t blame him, he’s not really liking this plan either. “So we ship them from one illegal black site to another.” Joe summarizes.

Barry shrugs and leans back, fiddling with his hands. “Yeah, I guess so. Yes.”

“Okay, how do we move them to Oliver’s own private Alcatraz?” Joe asks again.

“I’ll call him, maybe he can help with transport.” Barry says as he stands up, fishing his phone out of his pocket. “And, Cisco, if we do this, no one can get loose.”

Cisco nods. “I might have a way of getting them out safely.” Cisco heads out with Caitlin and Hartley.

“Bar, this is insane.” Joe finally says. Len could tell he was holding back in front of the others.

Len gets up himself. “I have to agree with Joe on this one. When I was joking about you going dark side, I meant a couple robberies where no one got hurt. Not for you to jump straight to human
smuggling and unlawful imprisonment. These are *serious* federal crimes, not to mention breaking the Geneva Convention.”

“Dad, if we don’t move these people, they’re gonna *die*. We won’t keep them at Lian Yu indefinitely, just until we have everything with Wells figured out. This is the only way to keep them safe.” Len’s not convinced, but he can tell Joe is itching to jump in, so he stays quiet.

“You don’t think that if we start bussing supervillians through downtown, nobody’s gonna notice.”

“Oh, they’ll notice. That’s where you come in.”

Barry pats Joe on the shoulder and heads out to make his call.

Len runs a hand down his face. “It’s pretty bad when the *criminal* of the group has to point out how illegal this all is.”

Joe snorts. “He’s *your* kid.”

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The next day, Len’s making some calls of his own to see if they can get any other extra backup while they move the metahumans. He’s pacing back and forth as Mick watches him from the kitchen.

“I’m sorry, Lenny, I really wish I could be there to help, but with everything happening with Oliver and that virus in Starling, I just don’t see any way for me to slip away. If I have extra time, I’ll try and head up, but-”

Len sighs and rubs his forehead. “No, it’s fine, Raymond. We’ll just have to figure something else out. Thanks anyway, and be careful out there, I heard rumours of *actual* assassins running around Starling.”

“Don’t I know it.” Ray mutters. “I will, and same to you. About the being careful, not the assassins bit. I’m pretty sure Central doesn’t have any assassins, although it might, assassins are suppose to
“Goodbye, Raymond.” Len cuts him off with a small smile. At the rate Ray was going, he wouldn’t be done talking for another ten minutes.

“Right, sorry. Anyway, good luck.”

“You, too.” Len hangs up and chucks his phone at the couch. “Shit!”

“Yer boyfriend fall through?” Mick asks.

Len’s too stressed to even bother correcting him. “Yes.” He hisses. “Something about assassins and a deadly virus about to be released in Starling.”

A gust of wind signals Barry’s arrival. “Any luck with Ray?”

“No, how about you and Joe?”

Barry sighs and runs a hand through his hair. “That’s a no on both ends. Oliver’s stuck in some place called Nanda Parbat. I got in touch with Lyla, Diggle’s wife, and she said that A.R.G.U.S. can fly them there from Ferris Airfields though, so at least we got that.”

“What about actually getting them to Ferris Air? Is Joe at least able to spare a couple officers?”

“Joe just said that we were lucky Singh’s on his honeymoon right now, or he would blow a casket at the idea of using cops to bus everyone.”

“So we’re right back where we started.” Len sighs.

“Not quite. I have an idea, but I don’t think you’re gonna like it.”
“The fact that you have to start with ‘I don’t think you’re gonna like it’ means I already don’t like it.”


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“You were right, I don’t like this.” Len has seen enough of Saints and Sinners lately, and it doesn’t help that they came here to get ask Hayward of all people for help.

He tries to walk away, but gets stopped by a hand grabbing his elbow. “Please, just wait. He’s the only other person with enough fire-power that also knows who we are.”

Len pulls his arm out of reach. “Which just means that we should keep our distance from him. If he knows we’re smuggling people, no matter the reasons, that will just be another thing he can hang over our heads.” Len whispers.

“I don’t care what he has over us! All that matters right now is if we don’t move these people, they are going to die. There is no going around that, and if saving them means working with Hayward, then we work with Hayward.”

Len closes his eyes for a moment. “Fine. We’ll do this your way, but if something goes wrong, I have the right to tell you I told you so.”

Barry nods, having calmed down some. “Okay.”

Barry leads the way inside and they find Hayward over at the pinball machines against the wall. He’s out of his normal getup of the trenchcoat, wearing a jean jacket instead, and his hair is turquoise this time. He gets a game over and spins around to face them, having seen them approaching in the reflection of the machine.

“Well, if it isn’t the Flash and Captain Cold. You trade in the red leather for black, Scarlet?”

Len stays quiet, letting Barry take the lead again. “We need to talk, Hayward.”

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Barry’s glad his dad lets him take the lead with Hayward. He admits, it would be easier to just let his dad take care of this, but it’s his plan and he needs to take responsibility and see it through.

The bar looks exactly the same in the middle of the day as opposed to in the night since there are no windows to let any light in. It’s a lot emptier this time around though - Hayward being the only one here - and even the bartender is different this time. Instead of Charlie, it’s a woman with dreadlocks and tattoos all up and down her arms. She looks at him funny, same as Charlie did, but her expression softens when she sees his dad beside him and she sends a nod Len’s way that he returns.

After greeting Hayward at the pinball machine (Barry notices that Hayward currently holds the high score) they head over to a table. Barry and Len on one side, and Hayward on the other.

Hayward crosses his hands on the table. “So, Barry, why do you go by Allen?”

Barry’s brow furrows, thrown by the question. “...Because it’s my name?”

Hayward leans back and taps his chin. “That’s strange, because when I did my research on you two - and let me tell you, I’m great at research - I found that your birth name, you know, the one you’re born with, is Bartholomew Henry Snart, son of one Leonard Wentworth Snart. So tell me, what’s it like working as a father-son team?”

Barry feels complete dread in the pit of his stomach and Len tenses beside him. “How did you find that out? I got rid of every copy of that name.” Barry’s never heard Len’s voice this tight before.

“Oh, it took some digging, but do you know the most glorious thing about the pre-digital age? Human error. All it took was one misfiling, and boom! I know your real name.” Hayward teases.

“Allen is my real name, too. Now we aren’t here to talk about me.” Barry takes back control of the conversation.

“Oh? And what are you here to talk to me about?”

“We need help.”
“With what?” Hayward shoots back.

“Transporting some people out of the city.”

“How many?”

“Four. Four very bad, very angry, people that have powers.”

Hayward tilts his head to the side. “Let me guess, I’m your last option. Why do you wanna move these people anyway?”

“They aren’t safe where they are, and if they aren’t moved they are going to die.” Barry answers honestly.

“Say, hypothetically, that I’m thinking about helping you two on your little quest. What’s in it for me?”

Barry knows Len isn’t going to like this, but he’s desperate right now. “What do you want? Name it, and I’ll get it for you.”

Like Barry thought, Len looks over at him sharply, but doesn’t say anything. He’s probably trying to not fight in front of Hayward, but Barry’s sure he’s going to be getting yelled at after they leave. “Anything, you say? That’s a pretty tempting offer, leaving me a blank check like that.”

“Within reason.” Barry clarifies. “Our rules still apply, no killing or hurting people.”

Hayward nods. “Of course, of course. You’ve left me with a lot to think about. Anything I want - within reason, like you said - would be really nice, I’m not gonna lie. But putting my neck out on the line and possibly making enemies with these powered up people, is it really worth anything you could get me?”

“Well?” Barry’s getting impatient, they don’t have time to be sitting around and talking in circles.
“I’ll think about it.” Hayward gets up, his chair scraping against the floor, loud in the quiet room. He pats Barry on the shoulder. “I didn’t say this before, but I like the new leather jacket, Red. Black’s a good color on you.”

Barry rolls his eyes as Hayward chuckles to the exit. As soon as the door slams shut, Barry groans. He wants to lay his head on the table, but thinks twice about it and flings his head back instead.

“Well, that could have gone worse. I think you should stick with being a CSI, because negotiations are not your forte.” Len states the obvious.

Barry gives him a flat stare.

“Since we’re here, wanna get some pickled eggs? They’re the best in the city.”

Barry shakes his head. “No time. The particle accelerator comes online in,” He glances at his watch. “Less than twenty hours. We need to meet Joe back at S.T.A.R. Labs.”

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“You what? What the hell were you two thinking going to Hayward for help!?” Joe complains.

“Don’t look at me, it was all his idea. I was just as much against it as you are.” Len defends himself.

“Then why didn’t you stop him?”

“You think I didn’t try? Once he digs his heels in, he’s like a dog with a bone.”

“He is right here and can speak for himself.” Barry cuts in. “Do you think I wanted to go to him? We already tried everyone else. You tried with CCPD, Dad tried Ray, I tried Oliver and even Ronnie and Dr. Stein. The particle accelerator goes online in-” Barry raises his voice.
“Sixteen hours.” Cisco fills in from where he’s working on the power dampeners with Caitlin.

“Sixteen hours, Joe.” Barry repeats. “I’m not willing to let the metas die, and we can’t let them escape either. So, like it or not, Hayward with both his heat and cold guns is the only one with experience fighting metas if Cisco’s transportation does not hold.”

“Then lucky for you, I’ve come to a decision about your little offer.” A voice comes from the entrance of the cortex.

Len and Joe pull out their guns and point them at Hayward, Len making sure to push Barry behind himself (much to Barry’s protest).

Hayward’s back in his signature black trench coat with his hands stuffed in the pockets. Joe and Len lower their guns, but don’t holster them. “Hello, detective, it’s a pleasure as always. Snart, Cisco, Caitlin.” He nods to each of them in turn and starts sauntering around like he owns the place. “I did a lot of thinking after your little visit and I finally thought of what I want. To be erased. My criminal records, schooling, fingerprints, dental records, DNA, family tree. Everything in this world, both physical and digital, that has my name on it, I want gone.” Hayward stops in front of the Flash suit.

Joe scoffs. “You must be crazy if you think that’s gonna happen.”

Barry walks around Len, keeping eye contact with Hayward. Len has a feeling Barry’s about to say something stupid, like agree to this dumb plan.

“I’ll do it.”

Joe’s shocked, but Len’s not. He saw how desperate Barry was in Saints. “You and me need to talk. Now.” Joe nudges Barry.

Len follows them to the other room, since someone needs to keeps a level head.

“Oh! And make sure you get every document, unlike Daddy-dearest, Bartholomew Henry Snart.” Hayward taunts, no doubt with a smirk on his face.
Len keeps Barry from turning around and pulls his into the treadmill room with Joe.

“First off, how the hell does he know about you two?” Joe points out where Hayward is in the cortex.

Len sighs and leans against the door with his arms crossed. “Turns out I missed a copy of Barry’s birth certificate. It got misfiled and Hayward was able to find it when he was looking into us.”

Barry climbs up on the treadmill. “How he knows doesn’t matter, Joe.” Barry says, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

“Fine, you wanna get into this, what the hell’s wrong with you? You can’t just go erase Hayward’s criminal record.”

“Yeah, I can. And I’ll do whatever I have to do.” Barry says defiantly.

“Barr, there’s gotta be a better way to do this.”

Barry throws his hands out. “Okay, what is it, Joe? Tell me what it is and I’ll do it. We’re running out of time!”

“Calm down, Kid. Yelling isn’t going to help anything. I think Joe is just worried about working with this psycho, it isn’t like you.” Len stays in his place against the door.

Barry’s starting to get restless. “What I am is the guy who’s not fast enough to stop Wells. He hasn’t just been one step ahead, he’s been a thousand. I can’t catch him. I can’t beat him. What I can do is save those people down there. Wells turned them into what they are, and I’m pretty sure he does not care if they live or die. I do.” Barry sighs and heads out.

“His heart’s in the right place, Joe. You have to give the kid that.” Len pauses. “He isn’t like me.”

That gets Joe’s attention. “What’re you talkin’ about? You’re not that same cold-hearted bastard you pretended to be back in October.”
“That’s nice of you to say, but we both know I wasn’t pretending. Barry cares.”

“And you do too, otherwise you wouldn’t be here. And you wouldn’t have called in all those favors to find Eddie, a guy you supposedly dislike.” Joe chuckles at Len’s face. He must not being hiding his shock as well as he thought he was. “Don’t look so surprised, with all the ruckus you were causing, a blind man could see you were lookin’ for someone.” Joe puts a hand on Len’s shoulder. “You’re a good kid too, you need to start giving yourself more credit.”

Joe heads out, off to keep an eye on Hayward as he’s in the lab.

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While Barry was out completing Hayward’s terms, Len was stuck on babysitting duty to make sure Hayward didn’t get into any trouble. Of course, because Len has the worst luck in the world, that’s when Lisa and Mick decided to show up.

Lisa glues herself to Cisco’s side, and Len isn’t comfortable with how close those two have been getting. He especially isn’t comfortable with the gun he spies in a holster on her thigh.

“Francisco Ramon, I know you didn’t make a weapon for my sister.”

Cisco jumps at his tone and looks like he’s going to pee his pants. “I, uh, um…”

Lisa comes to his rescue. “C’mon, Lenny, a girl’s gotta defend herself.” She pouts at him. “You’re the one that taught me that, remember?”

He ignores Hayward’s quiet, “She’s your sister?” from the other side of the room.

“I taught you how to shoot a normal gun, and only if it’s a last resort, not some type of, whatever he made.” Len waves his hand at the sleek black and gold gun.

Lisa pulls the gun out, admiring it. “I asked him to make me something pretty and toxic, like me.
And he did not disappoint.”

Before Len could make another comment, Mick interrupts him. “Wait, I know you, yer that punk kid Snart had me fight.”

“And you’re that sewer rat with the flamethrower.” Hayward quips back.

Mick makes a move forward in anger, but stops when Len holds a hand up. “Mick, calm down. For the time, he’s on our side. Then once we have these metas moved, he’ll be on his way.”

Mick grumbles, but back downs anyway. Len really wants this day to be over.

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After Hayward took great glee in burning all his files out in the alleyway, everyone came back into the cortex to make a plan. Joe, Caitlin, Cisco, and Hartley stood on one side of the room, Barry and Hayward on the other side, and then Len, Mick, and Lisa against a wall between the two groups.

“How’s the head, Cisco?” Hayward breaks the silence.

Cisco rubs the back of his head. “I can still feel the bump, so thanks for that.”

“He hurt you?” Hartley exclaims.

Hayward rolls his eyes. “Calm down, Foureyes, I only gave your little boyfriend a small tap. Nothing permanent.”

“He is not my boyfriend!” Both Hartley and Cisco yell.

“Right, Cisco’s with the Snart sister. Hey, wouldn’t that make you Barry’s uncle. That sure makes things awkward.”
“No! I mean, well technically, but I’m not- You-” Cisco throws his hands up. “I’m gonna go work on the truck.” He decides and walks off.

That seems to bring the meeting to an end and everyone splits up, going their own way.

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Cisco calls everyone out to the parking garage where a truck is parked and ready to go. Len spots Hayward inside the truck looking around and whistles for his attention.

“Hey, get outta there.”

Hayward makes his way over and plops down on the edge. “Just admiring the tech. I gotta admit, it’s not bad. Same with the truck.”

“It’s my uncle’s.” Cisco comes around the corner with Joe. “His company hauls frozen food cross-country.” Len had assumed it was someone’s in his family since it has ‘Ramon Shipping’ painted across the side of it. “Okay, so Hartley and I retrofitted the cooling system with the wheelchair’s power source to create an energy dampener.”

“Which means what, exactly?” Joe asks.

“Basically, the back of this rig is being flooded with so much power, that it’s effectively creating a transient pulse strong enough to disrupt the metahumans powers. That way we can get them to the airport and on the plane without them getting fresh on us.”

Joe still looks confused. “Like when you drive under power lines while on the phone and it cuts off your call.” Hartley elaborates.

“One problem, technically we need somebody with a Class A Commercial Driver's Licence to drive this.” Cisco points at the semi.

Lisa shrugs. “I can drive it.” Len smirks at Cisco, and everyone else for that matter, shocked faces. “What? I have a Class A CDL.”
“Seriously?” Hayward asks, looking her up and down.

“We can’t all be geniuses.” She says as she flips her hair.

Len knows Lisa’s just showing off now, driving in her heels. She always has to show up the boys.

They got the metas loaded into the back of the truck with no problem. Cisco released some gas into all of the cells that should give the four of them a nice, long nap. By the time they wake up, they’ll be halfway to the China Sea.

Len and Hayward are going to drive in the front of the truck on their bikes with Joe leading in his car and Barry using his speed to block all the roads and get any obstacles out of the way so Lisa never has to stop the truck, and Mick’s on his own bike taking up the rear. Caitlin’s in the car with Joe, and Hartley and Cisco are in the truck’s cab with Lisa. Len could only imagine how terrible this ride is going to be for her, being stuck in an enclosed space with Cisco and Hartley. They still get on like oil and water.

Len can’t help but shake the feeling that this is all too easy. They make it to Ferris Airfield without any trouble, and now everyone is just standing around in full costume as they wait for A.R.G.U.S. to show up.

Mick yawns after they’ve been standing around for a couple minutes. “Can’t believe ya dragged me out here in the middle of the night, Snart. I thought this woulda been done by now.”

Hayward looks out at the sky. “Your A.R.G.U.S. friends aren’t very prompt, Barry. That’s probably why I’m not sitting in a jail cell right now.”

Len fights down a grin when he hears Joe mutter, “I’ll show you a jail cell.” from behind him.

Caitlin points up at the sky. “There it is!”
Len hears the sound of propellers in the distance, and he finally lets himself relax some.

Cisco and Hartley come scrambling out of the truck. “We have a problem!” They say together.

Len hates it when he’s right. He heads over and peeks over Cisco’s shoulder at the tablet. “The damper’s fluctuating. The rig’s losing power. We don’t know why.” Cisco says out of breath.

“Can you do something?” Barry asks.

“We’re trying!”

The two are poking at the screen when lightning strikes in the distance.

“Oh, God.” Caitlin’s staring out at the sky, and everyone turns to watch helplessly as lightning hits the plane, setting it on fire. It cruises over their heads and crashes in a ball of fire across the field.

Before they get a chance to react, the back of the semi bursts open. “Trips cancelled!” Mardon announces.

Deathbolt jumps down and everyone is standing in a standstill, until the Darbinyan calls out, “Take your last breath!” And he turns into a cloud of green smoke.

Len wasn’t around yet when Barry fought this guy, and since he was in the pipeline by the time he showed up, he’s never seen his powers before. Barry had told him all about how toxic the smoke is though, so he knows not to get near it.

Chaos erupts as Joe and Len usher Cisco, Caitlin, and Hartley to cover behind Joe’s car. Len loses track of Mick and Hayward, and he saw Barry zip off somewhere to lead the Darbinyan away.

Hartley slips his gauntlets on and starts firing sonic blasts at the different metas. Len peeks around the back of the car when all the attention is on Joe, who’s firing his gun by the hood. He’s relieved when he sees Mick opening the door to the truck and pulling Lisa to safety. Now the only one not accounted for is Hayward. Little weasel probably ran off in the disarray.
Len gets distracted when Joe yells for Caitlin to get down. Her eyes turn a very familiar shade of red, before she spins around on Cisco with pure rage on her face. She pushes Cisco down to the ground. “You locked Ronnie in the pipeline and you killed Ronnie!” Cisco holds his arms up to protect himself from Caitlin’s onslaught of punches.

“Hartley, hold her back!” Len orders.

Len looks up in time to see Barry finish off with the Darbinyan and starting to zigzag to avoid Deathbolt, only to get hit with a bolt of lightning from Mardon.

“Finish him, Simmons.” Mardon says, taking control of the group.

Barry’s still groaning on the ground and won’t move. “Get up, Kid!” Len calls from his spot.

Len can’t make it in time, Simmons is already powering up, he’s not going to make it…

When out of nowhere Simmons goes from red to frosty. He collapses on the ground, covered in ice. “How about we end tonight with a cat’s game? Who doesn’t like a good draw?” Hayward marches forward, his own cold gun in hand.

Bivolo’s eyes start to turn red. “You can try that all you want, Roy-boy, it won’t have any affect on me. See these glasses?” He taps on the frame of the welder-like glasses he wasn’t wearing before. “I had these babies made just for you in mind. They don’t let any of that pesky color in, so no color, no changing of my emotions.”

Bivolo’s eyes go back to normal. “Glad we’re all on the same page. Now, I know you’re all a little cabin feverish, maybe craving a snickers or something, so let’s all just go home, pretend like none of this never happened. Just one quick thing, to be polite, my name is Lucas Hayward-”

“I know who you are.” Mardon interrupts.

Hayward just smiles. “Good, it means you’ve been paying attention. Now, as I was saying, I just want all of you to remember who it was that made sure you didn’t get thrown on that plane bound for nowhere.”
Mardon shrugs. “You’re just letting us go?” He looks down at the body of Simmons. “Why’d you shoot that guy?”

“He owed me money.”

They continue talking and Len spots Mick and Lisa still in their hiding spot. They make eye contact with him and he shakes his head minutely. With Hayward making that deal with two powerful metas, there’s no way that Len, Lisa, and Mick could take the three of them on their own, not with Barry in the state he’s in. He still hasn’t even gotten up from the ground. They might have a chance with Hartley, but it’s taking both him and Joe holding Caitlin back and keeping her from hurting, or worse killing, Cisco. Looks like this is one fight that they’re just going to have to walk away from.

The two metas part ways, and Hayward saunters over to Barry. Even from here, Len could hear their conversation. “You sabotaged the truck, didn’t you?” Barry spits out. Len figures he must have done it when he was climbing around the back, ‘admiring it’ as he said. Hayward crouches down next to Barry, cold gun hanging loosely in his hands. “Why did you let them escape?”

Hayward pulls off the glasses/goggles he had been wearing. “Because now they all owe me.” He tilts his head to the side. “And they will be a lot more useful with me, than over in the North China Sea.”

“You gave me your word.”

Hayward laughs. “And I fulfilled every word of it. I got all of them here to the airport and I kept your little family here safe, even killed that guy before he could get to you. Who you’re really mad at is yourself. This is on you, Barry.”

“Then why don’t you just kill me?”

Hayward gets up. “Well, I guess you owe me one now too.” He starts walking over to his bike, and Cisco and Len run out to Barry. “Good luck with everything, I’d hate to see all this be for nothing.” He starts up his bike and rides off.

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Barry vanishes as soon as they get back to S.T.A.R. Labs, and Joe waits a little while before going off to find and talk to him. He offers if Len wants to go, but he declines. If both him and Joe go off to confront him about how stupid this was, then it will only intimidate him more and make him retreat even more. Barry needs a light touch right now, and Len’s never been great at navigating feelings and emotions on a good day.

Instead, he makes sure everyone is okay physically. That’s something he’s always been very good at.

Luckily, it’s all just scrapes and bruises. One of Hartley’s gauntlets broke in the fight, and Mick’s heat gun is in pretty bad shape, but it’s all just things. Caitlin’s back to normal, embarrassed, but better. Cisco’s helping Mick fix his gun, and Hartley’s working on his gauntlet.

A computer starts beeping and everyone freezes. Cisco’s the first to a computer and turns the intercom on. “Guys, the particle accelerator is fully charged and online. Whatever Wells needs it for, it’s ready.”

Joe and Barry make it upstairs in record time, and they turn on the cameras for outside. Wells is walking down the street, not even bothering to use his speed. Wells is talking, but there is no sound. Joe’s trying to talk Barry out of going after him, but Len could tell by the look on Barry’s face that he already has his mind made up. Len might as well be there at his son’s side.

“If you’re gonna go, I’m coming with.”

Barry only nods and the next thing Len knows, he’s outside, Wells right in front of them.

“Well, I heard you prison transfer didn’t go so well, I’m so sorry.”

“All a part of your plan, I assume.” Barry says.

“Actually, that didn’t factor into my plan at all.” Len isn’t shocked in the least by that. “But I am impressed, you went to such great lengths to keep those people from harm. Ever the hero, huh, Barry?”

“You’ve hurt enough people.”
“I know. You see me as the villain, but, Barry, if you were to look back, look back carefully at everything I’ve done, every wheel that I’ve set in motion, you would realize I have only done what I had to. Nothing more, nothing less.”

“Cut the bullshit, Wells. No one is buying what you’re selling.” Len pipes up.

Wells shakes his head and chuckles. “You know, Len. Growing up, hearing all the tales of the Flash and how his greatest foe was the Rogues, you were always my favorite. Just a normal guy, able to go up against a man with the powers of a god with only a cold gun, it was inspirational. Now I truly understand how cold he had to be, constantly fighting, never holding anything back, against his own son.”

“That’s not me.” Len calls back.

Barry and Len hear sounds behind them and they turn to see Firestorm landing. He walks over to stand beside Barry.

“Wow, you brought yourself a friend.” Wells taunts.

A familiar whirring sounds and Len grins when Ray lands and walks over beside him. “I have friends too.” Len replies.

“Hey, Lenny, told you I’d find time.” Ray whispers.

“I’ve never been so happy to see your sorry face, Raymond.”

They hear an arrow land, and Oliver comes zipping down from a roof. He has a buzz cut now, and is wearing a black outfit instead of his usual green. “Welcome, Mr. Queen, Dr. Palmer.”

“Hope we’re not too late.” Queen says.

Barry smiles. “You’re just in time.” He drops to smile and addresses Wells. “I don’t care how fast you are, you can’t fight all five of us at the same time.”
“Oh, I can’t? Trust me, this? This is gonna be fun.”

Wells holds out a ring with a lightning bolt on it, and everyone gets ready. A suit materializes out of the ring, and Wells is off. Him and Barry start going in circles at top speed, making it so no one can get a clear shot of Wells without also hitting Barry.

“Move, Barry!” Queen yells.

“Kid, get out of the way!” Len adds. His cold gun would be great against Wells, but it would be a recipe for disaster if Barry got hit too.

The ball of lightning stops when Wells throws Barry against a chain-link fence, and then tosses him into the S.T.A.R. Labs sign. During this time, Firestorm and Ray flew into the air.

As soon as Barry was out of the way, Queen and Len shot at Wells, each getting him in a leg. Wells gets Ronnie and Stein out of the way first by creating a wind vortex with his arm and blowing him away. Barry runs after him, leaving Len, Queen, and Ray alone with Wells.

Wells vibrates his leg, shattering the ice encased leg, but when he pulls out the arrow he pauses as if something is wrong.

“Nanites, courtesy of Ray Palmer.” Queen fills in.

“I made them to deliver a high-frequency pulse that disables your speed.” Ray explains.

Wells tosses the arrow on the ground with a grin, and starts after Queen anyway. At least now everything will be at normal speed.

Even without his speed, Wells is able to hold his own in hand-to-hand with both Len and Queen. Ray, having little to no fighting experience, stays in the air, ready to shoot Wells with his photon cannons in case something goes wrong.
Wells turns the tides when he phases the nanites out of his body and gets his speed back. He gets Len out of the way by doing the same thing to him that he did to Ronnie, all while dodging Ray shooting at him. Ray quits firing and goes after Len, getting him before he slams into the side of S.T.A.R. Labs. It was all a part of Wells’s plan, since now he has the advantage over Queen, pinning him to the ground.

He starts vibrating his hand over Queen’s heart. “The history books say you live to be eighty-six years old, Mr. Queen. Well, I guess the history books are wrong.”

Barry makes it back just in time to push Wells off Queen, slamming him into a dumpster. “That’s the spirit!” Wells cheers.

Barry and Wells speed to the roof. They see Firestorm flying up in the distance, and Len nudges Ray. “Go, Raymond. Follow Firestorm’s lead.”

Ray nods, squeezing Len’s shoulder, before flying up.

Len stands up after catching his breath and runs over to Queen, right when Wells comes crashing down from the roof and smashes onto a car. Len about to fire his cold gun, when Queen shoots another arrow straight in Wells’s back, causing him to collapse, knocked out cold.

Barry comes running up at the same time that Ray and Firestorm land, everyone standing around Wells.

“Thanks, fellas.” Barry says, out of breath.

Firestorm nods. “No problem.”

“Nice haircut.” Barry jokes with Queen. “I see we’ve abandoned our traditional green.”

“Trying something different. Look, I might need a favor from you.”

“Wherever, whenever.”
Ray takes off his helmet, grinning. He holds out his arms to Len. “C’mon, Lenny, you know you want to.”

Len squints at him. “You’re not gonna try and kiss me again, are you?”

“You kissed him? I thought you were still with Felicity last time you were here.” Queen exclaims.

“On the cheek, calm down. Now, you know I’m going to hug you either way, you owe me for flying up here.”

Len sighs and rolls his eyes. “Fine, whatever. Get over here you giant Labrador.” Len lets Ray hug him, and if he hugs back and holds on for a little longer than necessary, then that’s only for him to know. After they pull back, Ray puts the helmet back on.

“Sorry to fight and fly, but I really need to get to Nanda Parbat. Others are counting on me there.”

“I get it, I’m not your only friend anymore.” Len teases.

“But you’re still my best friend. No offense, Oliver.”

Queen rolls his eyes. “Didn’t you have somewhere to be, Ray?” He asks, getting impatient.

“I have to say, this is all getting a little too mushy for me, Raymond. Why don’t you listen to Queen and run along now.” Len gestures with his head to Queen.

Ray smiles, and Len gets this bad feeling in his chest, similar to how he felt when they were doing the meta transfer.

But he pushes it down and settles to give Ray a small smile back. “You better not die out there, or I’ll kill you myself.”
Ray shakes his head. “Bye, Lenny.” Ray flies into the air, and Len watches as he becomes a small dot in the distance.

“Bye, Raymond.” He whispers.

He turns back around to find Queen and Firestorm gone, and Barry standing over Wells. “We got you.” Barry says, reassuring himself more than anything. This has been a long time in the making, but it's finally here. They finally got the Man in Yellow.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not sure if Ray and Felicity were broken up by this time, but for the sake of this story let's say they already broke up by now.
Fast Enough

Chapter Notes

I know this is late, but since it's the last chapter I wanted to take my time on it and make sure it was just right. I'm pretty happy with how it turned out and hope everyone else enjoys it as well.

I can't believe this is done. This is the first multi-chapter fic I've ever finished and I'm so proud of it. It's so sad to see it end and I never could have gotten it all done if it wasn't for all of your comments and kudos that you left as we went on this journey together. I just want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for sticking with this, so thank you.

BUT do not worry, there will be other parts! If anyone had noticed, earlier in the week I made this into a series, and I'll be adding other parts to it as I go. Right now, I have a short one-shot planned that is going to take place between season 1 and 2. It's going to deal with how the fallout of the singularity affected Barry, other characters reactions to the singularity (like Singh) that I was able to fit into his chapter, Len finding out Ray's building blowing up and his reaction to his friend's 'death', and Len taking Barry to meet his biological mother, which will bring its own heap of surprises, for Len and Barry both.

It might be a little while, since I haven't even started it yet. And I also want to work on my other unfinished works (many/all of them being coldatom fics if anyone wants to check them out) and also I want to participate in coldflash week, which is in the beginning of October.

I want to thank all of you again for supporting this and hope this chapter meets all of your expectations.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hours after the fight, everything at S.T.A.R. Labs is tense. Nobody knows what to do now that they have Wells captured in the pipeline. By an unspoken agreement, everyone is waiting for Barry to get back from Nanda Parbat. Queen waited a whole ten minutes before calling in that favor and having Barry go free his team from a group of assassins. Len still hates that his life has changed so drastically in the past year that he can say that his son with superspeed had to run across the globe and rescue another group of vigilantes from a secret society of ninja assassins with a straight face.

Mick and Lisa had headed home an hour ago, exhausted and not needed anymore. Stein and Ronnie had separated, and Ronnie has been glued to Caitlin’s side the whole time, the couple having missed each other. Stein had called his wife, but told her not to come to S.T.A.R. Labs, that he’ll come to her when everything has settled down.

Barry finally returns and changes out of his suit.
“So, how was the Legion of Assassins?” Len asks, feet up on a table.

“I’m pretty sure Oliver called them League of Assassins, and it was dope. They had the whole bad-guy dungeon aesthetic going, you would have appreciated it.”

“Guess I know where my next vacation spot will be.” Len muses.

“Anyway, how’s our prisoner doing?” Barry asks, getting down to business.

Cisco puts the security footage from Wells’s cell up on the large monitors. “He’s just been standing there, dude. At one point he asked for Big Belly Burger, but that’s it. We’ve been waiting on you, figuring you would want to talk to him first.”

“Thanks.” Barry says flatly, any traces of his good mood earlier completely gone now as he stares at his Flash suit.

Len brings his feet down and sits up straight. “Want me to go with you, Kid?”

Barry shakes his head. “No, it’s fine. This is something I need to do on my own.”

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Everyone listens in as Barry talks with Wells. Len hates how calm he is, like he’s just playing some game with Barry the whole time. This guy is psychotic, the way he’s proud of himself for killing Nora just to break Barry, and his hatred of future Barry.

What really makes Len pissed is when he starts to tempt Barry, offering him the chance to go back in time and save his mother. How he’s trying to be the hero in Barry’s eyes by solving the problem he caused in the first place, all so he could go home.

“...You can reunite the Allen family.” Wells finishes his pitch and waits for Barry’s response.
Barry shakes his head. “No.” In a fit of anger, Barry pounds the glass dividing the two. “I wanna kill you right now.” Barry growls. Len believes him, he’s seen that kind of anger in the mirror.

Wells doesn’t even flinch. “I know that rage. I used to feel that rage every time I looked upon you. And now, somehow, I know what Joe, Len, and Henry feel, when they look on you with pride. With love.”

Len stands abruptly. “That’s it. Barry’s done talking to him.”

No one tries to stop him as he marches downstairs to the pipeline.

After exiting the elevator, he rounds the corner only to run right into Barry himself. Len grabs him by the shoulders. “Whoa there, Kid. Slow down a minute.”

Barry’s face is twisted up in anger still and he shakes his head. “I meant what I said in there. I hate him so much, I don’t care what he offers me, I just wanna kill him like he killed my mother.”

Len pulls him into a hug and Barry buries his face in Len’s shoulder. “I know, I know.” Len whispers into the top of his head. “I’d be lying if I said I didn’t feel the same way. But we need him to confess, it’s the only way to get Henry out of that jail cell.”

“It’s not the only way.” Barry mutters into his shoulder. He takes a deep breath and pulls back. “I could go back in time, prevent him from killing Mom in the first place, then Dad would never go to jail. I’d get to grow up with a normal life.”

Len brushes Barry’s hair back. “I think if that’s something you’re serious about, we should go upstairs and talk it out with everyone, weigh all the pros and cons. Okay?”

Barry nods and they do just that. Up in the cortex, Len hangs back, sitting behind the console next to Hartley, as Barry broaches the subject with everyone. Caitlin feels it’s obvious that Barry should do it, but Stein is more sceptical. Len agrees with him that this might not be the best idea, but he doesn’t say it aloud, since it’s for more of a selfish reason.

One of his first thoughts about this is that he wouldn’t get to be reunited with Barry. Len only challenged Barry in the beginning because he thought the kid was the Man in Lightning and was responsible for killing Nora. If she never dies, and Barry doesn’t become the Flash, there would be
no reason for them to seek one another out.

He knows he has no right to Barry since he gave him up, but he’s still his kid. A dark little voice in his head wants to keep everything the same, and have Barry stay by his side. He’s so much happier since Barry came back into his life and he doesn’t want to lose that happiness, lose the chance to see the wonderful young man his son has become.

He barely listens as Stein goes on about parallel universes, until he gets to the part on how, if Barry did go back and change everything, then he wouldn’t remember this current life. That nobody would remember this life.

Barry glances at Joe, and then Len behind him. “So if I go back and save my mom, my dad doesn’t go to prison. I never go to live with Joe and Iris. I never get to meet my other dad, or get Hartley as a brother.”

“You might never meet me, or Caitlin, or Ronnie.” Cisco adds.

“Truth is, there is no real way of knowing what your life will be.” Stein summarizes.

Barry looks back at Joe. “There’s no choice here, Barry. You have to do this. You gotta change the past.” He grabs his coat off the railing and leaves everyone stunned. Barry’s the first to recover and runs after Joe.

With Barry and Joe gone, everyone’s attention shifts to Len, which he’s not comfortable with. To get the eyes off him, he gets up and heads to the treadmill room.

After he sits on the edge of the treadmill, the door opens and closes with a small click. He glances over and rolls his eyes when he see Stein standing near the observation window, giving him some space.

A couple moments later, Stein still doesn’t say anything, waiting for Len to talk first. He sighs and stretches his legs out. Len learned long ago that the only person more stubborn than him is Stein. “May I help you?”

“You were very quiet back there. It seems in all the chaos of wondering how this could all affect Barry, no one stopped to wonder how changing the past could affect you.”
Len raises a brow, not expecting that. “Me? What do I have to do with this? The only thing saving Nora would change for me is the past six or seven months, Barry’s entire life would change. He’d get the life I wanted for him in the first place.” It hurts to say it out loud, but it’s true. Over fifteen years of changes for Barry far outweighs the less than a years change for him. He’d gladly sacrifice his happiness for Barry’s without a second thought, every time.

Stein just looks at Len like he said two plus two equals five. “Why did you sneak into my lectures all those years ago, Leonard?”

Len’s thrown. “...Because I dropped out of high school and didn’t have the time or money to go the legit way? What does this have to do with anything right now?”

Stein shakes his head and looks annoyed. “No, not the sneaking in part, why me and that lecture in particular?”

Now Len sees where Stein is going with this. “You were the leading expert in physics and you were giving a lecture on strange lightning phenomenon and how it could affect electronics.”

“Which, if Nora never gets killed by the Man in Lightning, you would have no reason to sneak into that lecture.” Stein explains, more gently now.

“If I never go to that lecture, then I never meet Raymond or you. But me never being in a couple of your classes can’t affect you too much in the long run. I’m only one person in the thousands of people that have attended your classes.”

“It was more than just a few classes. Even after that lecture ended up being a dead end, you stuck around for about a year.” Stein pauses and starts again. “When Ronald and I merge, I am still aware of everything going on. I may not be in the driver’s seat, as Cisco would say, but I can still hear and see. I saw how much you still mean to Dr. Palmer to this day, he thinks of you as a best friend.”

“So what you’re saying is, it’s not just my life that could change.”

“Without your impact on his life, he could be a completely different person.” Stein leaves Len alone after that, forcing him to think twice about his opinion on what Barry should do.
When it was just him, he had come to make peace with the fact that his life would be worse without Barry’s influence. But now that Ray is thrown into the mix too, he’s not so sure anymore. Losing his happy ending was fine, but worse case scenario, Ray might not create his own company. Before Len came into his life, he had no self confidence and little to no friends. He opened up so much with Len’s influence. He made other friends through Len and stood his ground more. He wouldn’t let others take advantage of him, including his terrible brother.

When Ray talked Len into going to some holiday parties at Casa de Palmer, Ray was shocked when Len didn’t ditch him for his brother like others had in the past. And Len wasn’t sure which twin was more shocked when he was able to tell the two apart - something even their parents struggle with from time to time - when Sydney tried to pretend to be Ray, something he always did to embarrass Ray.

Len definitely had more thinking to do.

With Len and Barry gone, and everyone else distracted, Hartley’s able to slip out of the cortex undetected. He starts out determined, heading straight downstairs, but then once he gets on the floor that the pipeline is on he loses his momentum.

He begins pacing in the hallway, trying to build up the courage again to confront Harrison. The man had used him to create his stupid particle accelerator, then threw him aside when he got in the way. He had completely ruined his life and destroyed his reputation, all for his own agenda.

Now that Harrison has shown his true colors to everyone and is trapped, Hartley wants to yell at him, curse him, hurt him, and maybe, if he’s being honest with himself, kill him like Barry wants to. He’s been wanting a chance like this for over a year, and now that he has it, he can’t make himself walk in there.

Hartley starts to walk back to the elevator bay, when the doors open and he comes face to face with Cisco. “You following me now, Cisquito?”

“No. Well, in this instant I am. It’s just, I saw you leave the cortex and when I checked the cameras I saw you pacing down here. I figured since Len and Barry are in their own funk right now, no one is able to come and check how you’re doing. Are you okay?”
Hartley’s caught off guard by Cisco’s simple act of kindness. It’s refreshing in a way, to have someone other than Len and Barry worrying about him. “I don’t know.” Hartley answers truthfully. “I know that what Harrison did to me is nothing compared to Barry, or even you in that other timeline, but I still hate him so much. After my parents disowned me, my career was all I had and he took it away from me.”

“Hey, he betrayed all of us. He did horrible things to all of us. Just because he hurt you in a different way doesn’t make it any less important. You were vulnerable after what your parents did and the things they said to you, and he took advantage of that. If anything, I think you’re one of the strongest people I know for being able to move on after everything he did. You have a great job now at Mercury Labs and you built your own family with Barry and Len.”

Hartley never thought of it that way. He doesn’t need to prove anything to Harrison. After being fired and the particle accelerator blowing up, all he obsessed about was getting revenge on Harrison for ruining his life. Then Len cornered him in that alley and changed his life for the better. He finally got the family that accepts him for all of him and a great job in a field he loves. Who knows what would have become of him if he had gone through with attacking his parents building and fighting the Flash, all he knows for certain is that his life wouldn’t be as good as it is now.

With his confidence back up, Hartley spins around without a word and goes up the ramp to the pipeline and opens the door, Harrison’s cell on the other side.

Harrison doesn’t look that shocked to see him, but Hartley cuts him off before he could get in his head like he did with Barry. “I don’t need you and I never did. I spent so much time and energy on wanting revenge on you, but now I realize I never needed it. I have an amazing life without you and all I’m going to think when I think of you now is how sad and pathetic you are. You had to come to me when I was at my lowest to get me to work with you, all because you weren’t able to kill some kid and got yourself stuck in the past. A kid who I’m proud to call my brother now and will always be better than you.”

Not giving Harrison the chance to talk back, he closes the door again. He closes his eyes and sighs in relieve.

“Feel better?” Cisco asks as he rounds the corner and walks up the ramp to stand next to him. Hartley’s glad Cisco stayed out of sight and let him do this on his own.

Hartley opens his eyes. “Tremendously. If you tell anyone about anything that was said down here, I’ll cut your hair in your sleep.”
Cisco smirks. “Guess we’re even, because if anyone finds out I was nice to you, I’ll tell them about that one time you fell asleep in the lab and-”

“Alright, I think I get the idea!” Hartley squints at him. “You promised to never speak of that again.”

“Just know that now we have mutually assured destruction. You ever even go near my hair with a pair of scissors and I’ll tell everyone.”

Hartley holds out his hand to shake. “Deal.”

He’s glad he has finally gotten his closure with Harrison, now he really can move on.

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After talking with Iris on the rooftop of Jitters, Barry is left with even more indecision. He heads to the roof of S.T.A.R. Labs and is relieved to find his dad up there, staring at Central City.

“I love this city at night.” Len says without turning around. Even if Barry didn’t use his speed to get up here, he still would have known it was him. If it wasn’t for the stories that Mick and Lisa told him about Len doing stuff like this as long as they’ve known him, Barry would have thought that Len was a metahuman too.

“I prefer it in the day myself.” Barry replies as he walks up next to him. “Makes it seem brighter.”

“Have you decided what you’re going to do?”

Barry was hoping they didn’t have to talk about this so soon. He sighs as he stuffs his hands in his pockets. “Joe, as you know, thinks I should do this, that I should get the chance to live with both my parents. I went to talk to my dad and he has the complete opposite opinion than Joe. He doesn’t want me to change, that if mom knew she wouldn’t want me to change for her either. With that, I went to Iris to see what she thinks I should do. She just wants me to follow my heart, to do what I need to do.”

“And what is that?” Len’s been keeping up his poker face since this whole thing started and Barry,
Barry shrugs and kicks a pebble. “I don’t know. All I’ve ever wanted was for Mom to come back and to be able to hug her, just one more time. But on the other hand, I’ve had an amazing life. I had a great time growing up with Joe and Iris, and meeting and getting to live with you has been incredible. Can’t you just tell me what to do?”

Len sighs and turns to fully face Barry. “Not this time, Kiddo. This is something that only you can choose.” Barry’s eyes start to sting and Len wipes the tears away, causing Barry to lean into the hand that stays cupping his face. “Just remember, no matter what happens, I’ll always be your father.”

Barry buries his face in the crook of Len’s neck and holds on tight. “I love you, Dad.” His voice sounds muffled.

Barry feels Len hold him back just as tight. “I love you too, Kiddo. So much more than you’ll ever know.”

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Len couldn’t do it. No matter how much he wanted to tell Barry to stay, to not feed into this maniac’s plan, he just couldn’t get himself to say the words. He had planned on telling Barry everything that he was feeling, how he wanted everything to stay the same. His doubts on how changing the past might affect Ray, but he didn’t. Barry’s sacrificed enough in his young life and has always put others happiness ahead of his own, Len just wants his son to make this choice purely on what he wants. Even though he’ll never say it, Ray’s his best friend too and he cares a lot for him, but his son will always come first, no matter what.

The next morning, after Barry spoke with Wells, Stein began his calculations right away. It took a couple hours - all of which Len stayed glued to Barry’s side - but Stein got it all complete. He gathered everyone into the cortex to explain what exactly Barry had to do in order to open a portal. Len soaks in every word, listening intently about how Barry needs to reach the right speed in the pipeline, then have a hydrogen molecule released in the opposite direction that he’s running in, and when they collide a portal is suppose to open, letting Barry head to the past and Wells to the future.

Stein seems the most excited, and Len doesn’t blame him, the possibility of time travel has been practically his entire life’s work.
“...opening a gateway to time itself.” Stein finishes. “At which point I plan on saying something along the lines of ‘Eureka’ or possibly ‘Excelsior’. I’m uncommitted.” He shrugs.

Barry turns around and faces Cisco, who’s sitting at the console. If Len had to choose one word to describe him right now, it would be unimpressed. A blind man could see how against this plan he is. “What do you think?” Barry asks him.

“I’m leaning more towards ‘Excelsior’, ‘Eureka’ is such a cliche.” Len cuts in before Cisco could say anything.

Barry spares him a glare, then looking back at Cisco, who goes on to admit the plan has some merit, but then quickly, before Barry could continue on this stupid plan, begging him why he wants to do this in the first place. He clarifies that he understands the motivation behind it, but if all this risk is worth it.

Len has to bite his tongue from commenting on how fast Barry has to go - mach two, a speed he’s never reached - and how if he doesn’t reach that speed, he’ll be “A bug on a windshield.” as Joe said.

As Barry takes Cisco, Hartley, and Ronnie to a workshop to build a time machine (and seriously? He used to think building a time machine was awesome, now he just wishes it would go back into the sci-fi genre where it belongs), while Caitlin and Stein head off to work on something in another part of the building, leaving Len and Joe alone in the cortex.

“Okay, spit it out. I can hear the gears turning in your head from here.” Joe says as he pulls up a chair and sits down.

“Why are you actively encouraging him to do this? How are you able to just stand there and listen as they make a plan that has a very real possibility of getting Barry killed?”

“Probably for the same reason you haven’t said anything this whole time, Barry deserves the chance to grow up with a normal life, one without tragedy or heartache. How close am I to the mark?”

Len doesn’t say anything, giving Joe all the answer he needs to know that he was spot on.

Joe shifts in his seat and leans forward, sighing as he does so. “I’m not gonna lie to you, I’m
completely terrified about all of this, but when I look at Barry, I’m reminded of the little eleven year old boy that had to come live with me, all the pain he went through while he grieved for his mother, all the times I had to run to his room in the middle of the night because he was screaming himself hoarse from the nightmares of the Man in Yellow. If there’s is a chance that he can go back and make it so that he never has to live through any of that, I think he should take it. And you know just as well as I do that if either of us show even a hint that he shouldn’t be doing this, then he won’t. I don’t know about you, but—"

“You don’t want him to regret not doing this in the long run.” Len finishes and Joe simply nods. “I’m glad that out of all the people to watch over Barry, it was you. You’re a good man, Joe. For a cop.” Len adds the last bit with a grin.

“And you are a good father, Len. For a criminal.” Len ducks his head in embarrassment, still not used to this type of praise. Joe gets up and pats him on the shoulder. “C’mon, I don’t know about you, but I’m dyin’ to watch those kids build a time machine.” Joe pauses. “Ya know, it’s times like these I’m happy I get to say things like that with a straight face.”

Len follows him out of the cortex, relieved the subject changed to something a little lighter. “My inner geek has been freaking out ever since my life has become something out of a comic book. I bet Barry is faster than Quicksilver.”

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up the city and possibly the world.” Barry’s stopped pacing, now he’s just kicking at the treadmill with his foot. He sighs and looks to Joe. “You sure you want to look me in the eyes and tell me this is for the best?”

Joe fiddles with his hands. “I’d be lying if I told you I did.” Barry scoffs and sits on the edge of the treadmill. “Truth is, I don’t know what to think.”

“I thought you were the sure one. I- I was kinda banking on that when I made my decision the first time.”

Barry looks so completely devastated that Len takes a seat next to him, letting the kid lean against him. He doesn’t say anything, this conversation more for Joe and Barry, but he’ll still be here as support.

“I was faking it.” Joe admits. “Sometimes parents do that, most of the time, parents do that.” Joe pauses for a second to collect his thoughts. “Look, of course I’m scared. But I didn’t want you to not help your mother because you were worried about me.”

“Well, I’ll always worry about you, Joe, just like you’ll always worry about me. Sorry, but you can’t stop that.” Barry sighs and Len rubs his back. “Do you think I can do this? You think I can save my mom? I mean, do you think I’m fast enough?”

Joe doesn’t hesitate. “Yes. I know you are.”

“You know, I’ve- I’ve dreamed my whole life about… saving her, and freeing my dad, and… I never thought I would have to lose my other parents to do that.”

“Barry…”

“No, Joe. It’s true, it’s true. I’ve always been so focused on everything I lost that night, but I gained so much too.” Barry grips Len’s hand as he looks right at Joe. “You are just as much my father as Len and Henry. And I don’t think I can lose you.”

On a lighter note, everyone gathers out on the lawn of S.T.A.R. Labs for the marriage of Ronnie Raymond and Caitlin Snow. And it also looks like Iris and Eddie made up from their fight, since they are holding hands. Mick and Lisa had finally made it, and are standing awkwardly off to the side on account of not knowing Caitlin or Ronnie that well. Cisco was in charge of the music, playing some light pop song, while Stein reassures Ronnie that yes, the wedding will be legally binding, he really is a Rabbi and is able to make the wedding ‘legit’. Len cringed when he heard Stein say the word legit.

Len knows the best place to go and get a wedding dress for Caitlin and had Barry go ‘borrow’ one. (Joe wasn’t too thrilled that Len was encouraging Barry to take a page out of the ‘family business’ but didn’t say anything on account that Len will probably not see Barry again after today.)

Iris really had outdone herself helping Caitlin get ready, the simple jewelry and the small orange bouquet of flowers look beautiful.

The couple face each other in front of Stein, waiting for him to get started. “If it’s alright with everyone, I’d like to skip all the Hebrew.”

“And cheapen our identity? What would your father think, Professor Stein?” Len couldn’t help but say.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Leonard, would you like to come here and read all the Hebrew? Wait, that’s right, we don’t have all day to wait as you sound out each word like an elementary student.”

Stein’s words may be a little harsh, but they are completely true. Len’s only been to Temple a grand total of about ten times in his entire life. Most of them were when Dad was in prison and his mom was able to make time to take him, and only one time as an adult. After his mom died and Dad got together with Lisa’s mom, he never wanted to go back. But then when he had told Ray about it, he had managed to talk him into going just once more on the day of his mother’s birthday.

Len, if he’s being honest with himself, wanted to show off a little with Ray and went to Stein for help on brushing up on his Hebrew. That had gone over like a lead balloon. The only stuff that Len had remembered was the alphabet and pretty much had to start from scratch with everything else. They had spent hours in Stein’s office practicing, but Len was only able to read basic sentences by the end of it and Stein had just told him bluntly to stick with English.
“Then by all means, continue professor.” Len makes a sweeping gesture, and Len’s sure he hears something along the lines of “That’s what I thought.” but doesn’t comment.

“Anyway, as I was saying, I’ve learned a lot about merging one’s life with another this past year. Yet, for all the incredible advancements in science we’ve all been party to, the mystery that brings two people together through love is still the province of magic. Mr. Ramon, the rings please.”

Cisco frantically pulls the ‘rings’ out of his pocket and kneels down to let Caitlin and Ronnie pick them up out of the palm of his hand. Really, the rings are just two nuts that Hartley had found that fit both of them. They put the rings on each other’s fingers and Ronnie says, “I owe you a real ring.”

“We could have just had Barry grab them when he was getting the dress.” Len points out, only to get elbowed by Barry. “What? It’s true, you already committed a felony getting that dress, you might as well go big or go home.” Barry only elbows him again, so Len takes the hint and shuts up.

“It’s fine, I don’t need one anyway. I have everything and everyone that I could ever need, right here. And, if all the events of the past year have led us to this moment, it was worth it. I love you, Ronnie.”

“I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.”

“Stop telling me what to do.” Ronnie tells Stein before kissing Caitlin.

There’s clapping and Iris even raises the hand holding the bouquet up in joy. Len doesn’t miss the small looks Cisco and Lisa keep sending each other, but keeps his mouth shut about that too, not wanting to ruin the mood.

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Too soon, everyone is gathered outside the pipeline. Barry has his Flash suit on and is getting hugs from all his friends. Caitlin’s first, and then Cisco steps up to go over the plan one more time.

“Okay, there are going to be three yous back there; the you from the future that saved younger you from the Reverse-Flash, and now you you. Remember, wait until future you gets younger you out of
there, and then you can go save your mom.”

Barry nods with a smile. “Piece of cake.”

Cisco grips Barry’s arms. “May the speed force be with you.” Leave it to Cisco to make a nerd reference. Len’s going to miss that. Or not, if Barry changes the past correctly and Len never remembers meeting anyone here.

Barry steps up to Mick and Lisa next. “Uncle Mick, Aunt Lisa, I wish I could have spent more time with you. It was an honor meeting you two and getting to know you.”

Mick puts his big hand on Barry’s hair and messes it up. “Yer not too bad yerself, Cub. Fer a badge.”

“Come here, sweetie.” Lisa pulls Barry into a hug. “I hope we get to see each other again.” She whispers into his ear, but Len is close enough to overhear.

“Me too.” He whispers back and pulls away reluctantly.

Hartley is next, who’s trying to look like he’s not bothered by the whole thing. “What? I’m not gonna get a hug from my favorite little brother?” Barry asks with a grin.

Hartley tries to fight the grin that starts to grow on his face. “I’m your only brother, idiot.” He says fondly. He goes in for the hug anyway, and they whisper things to each other that Len can’t quite hear, but must be meaningful, judging by the tears that the two quickly wipe away like they were never there.

“Goodbye, Dad.” Barry says to Joe next, who looks like he’s fighting back tears.

“Goodbye, Son.” Joe says as he hugs Barry.

Len’s next. Barry pulls him into a hug and Len rests his head on top of the other’s, getting one last deep breath of Barry’s scent. It was hard enough having to give away his son the first time, this time it hurts even more. “Remember what I said last night.” He whispers into Barry’s hair. “I’m so proud
of you and the man you’ve become, and I hope to get to see you again someday, with both Henry and Nora with us as well.” He feels Barry nod against him, and he give him one last squeeze before pulling away, letting his hands rest on Barry’s shoulders. “Love you, Kiddo.”

Barry smiles at him one last time. “Love you too, Dad.”

Len doesn’t listen to what Barry and Iris say to each other, more focused on just watching Barry and memorising every bit of him that he can.

All too soon, Cisco opens the door to the pipeline. Barry walks into it, and then Cisco closes the door behind him, cutting off Len’s vision of his son for the last time. Mick sticks close to his side, him being the only one there that also had to witness Len saying goodbye to Barry the first time and therefore knowing what he’s going through this time, and they all head upstairs to the cortex to monitor everything that happens in the pipeline.

Stein is behind the console speaking with Barry over the intercom as they walk in. Len hangs back with the other non-scientists to stay out of the way of the ones working. Stein spares Len a sad smile, before getting back to business, watching the red speck on the monitor that is suppose to be Barry running around the pipeline at top speed.

Ronnie says something about the structure holding as he looks over Caitlin’s shoulder, when they hear a faint boom and the building shakes. “What was that about the structure holding?” Len asks as he braces himself against the wall and looks around. “I’m no structural engineer, but buildings shouldn’t shake.”

“Is Barry okay?” Joe asks.

“Yeah,” Cisco says with a slight smile. “He just passed Mach Two.”

“I knew the kid could do it.” Len says with pride.

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Barry’s running, faster than he ever has before. It’s a blue blur all around him, and he starts to hear voices. Joe, telling a young Iris that Barry’s coming to live with them. Caitlin, pale, white hair and blue lips, as she blasts ice out of her hands. Len, but instead of the regular parka, he has on a short
sleeve blue and white vest that still has his fur hood. He also still has his goggles on, but instead of holding up the cold gun, he just has his hands up and Barry can see ice forming on the tips of his fingers. Then Barry hears Wells’s voice over all the images. “Barry, what you’re seeing is the Speed Force: your past, your present, your future all at once. So you need to focus on where you want to go.”

Barry sees himself in an Iron Heights uniform, talking to someone in the visitor's center while he has handcuffs on. “Think about that night. Think about your mother.” Wells says further. The next image is of Barry as a baby, wrapped up in a blanket and in a basket, as a blond woman is crying and leaving him on a doorstep. Barry’s never seen a picture of her, but from the little bits of descriptions that he was able to pull out of his dad, Barry’s guessing that that’s his biological mother.

Barry hears his other dad. Henry’s telling him goodnight, and Barry remembers it as the last time his parents tucked him in. Now he hears his younger self yelling for his mom and the image gets sharper as he sees his mom crying out for him to stay back as the two speedsters fight around her.

Barry focuses on that night, closes his eyes, and the next thing he knows, he’s in his childhood bedroom. The sounds of fighting downstairs fall to the background as he looks around the room, everything smaller than he remembers. His books are on his desk and the water is going side to side in his old fish tank. He gets pulled out of all the old memories of the room when he hears his younger self yelling downstairs. He heads down and cracks a door open to watch for a chance to save his mom. Right when there is one, his future self, having knocked the Reverse-Flash to the ground, in the bright red suit and white emblem, spots him and puts his hand up to tell him to stop. He looks right at him as he shakes his head. Then, he turns and Barry watches as he snatches up his younger self and gets him out of there, knocking out his dad in the process.

The Reverse-Flash has recovered by now and is standing right in front of Nora as she is on her knees crying. Barry can’t watch anymore and closes the door as she screams, leaning against the wall as he listens to the knife entering her flesh, then clatter to the ground.

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The timer is at fifty-eight seconds as Len and Joe head down with Cisco to the pipeline, both of them with their guns drawn. Len had the option to stay upstairs, but he couldn’t. He needs to be doing something, needs to keep his mind busy so he doesn’t need to think about the fact that he’s never going to see his son again. Making sure Cisco stays safe is the only thing keeping him from completely breaking down right now.

Wells has his Reverse-Flash suit on and is admiring the time ship (more like a bubble is Len’s opinion) that Cisco, Ronnie, and Hartley had built.
“It’s beautiful.” Wells says, not one hint of sarcasm. “Rip Hunter would be impressed. He built the first one of these. Interesting man.”

“Shut up and get in your bubble. We aren’t your buddies and aren’t here to have some chat with you.” Len gestures to the time ship with his cold gun.

A flash of light comes from the portal and a sliver metal helmet with lightning bolts on the side comes skidding to a stop beside them. “Now what the hell is that?” Joe asks.

Wells purses his lips together. “That’s my cue to leave.” He walks up to Cisco and Len tightens his grip on the trigger, just itching for the excuse to shoot him. “Thank you, Cisco.” He says sincerely.

Cisco holds his ground and squares his shoulders. “Don’t ever come back.” Len doesn’t bother to hide his proud smirk, glad that Cisco’s words seem to have gotten under Wells’s skin a bit. That, or he’s irritated that he couldn’t get one last scare in with Cisco.

Wells goes to the time ship and sits in the chair, giving them one last smile as the glass slides shut and the ship starts to hover in the air. Joe holsters his gun, but Len keeps his out, just has it pointed at the ground now. He could probably put it away now, now that there isn’t any reason for Wells to hurt them now that he has what he wants, but Len just flat out doesn’t trust the psycho.

They all take a couple steps back as Wells turns the ship towards the portal and starts to press the buttons on the arms of the chair. Stein’s voice comes over the comms, telling them they have thirty seconds.

Another bright light comes from the portal, and this time it looks like the form of a person is coming through. Len squints against the light and sees that the form is dressed in all red. Before Len could say anything, the figure punches through the glass of Wells’s ship at a superhuman speed, causing a blast that pushes Len, Cisco, and Joe off their feet, Len’s gun being knocked out of his hand and skittering across the ground somewhere.

There’s a ringing in Len’s ears as he struggles to get to his feet, and he watches as Barry and Wells are already standing. Wells throws a large chunk of glass that was on him and he faintly hears it shatter somewhere in the distance. “Why?!” Wells shouts. “You could have had the life you wanted. You could have had everything you ever wanted!”
Barry takes a deep breath as he straightens out and glances over at Len and Joe. “I already do.” He says with a smile.

Wells puts his cowl on. “Not for long.” He growls, voice that deep gravelly one that Barry once said is caused by vibrating the vocal cords.

Wells speeds at Barry and the two start fighting, so Len scrabbles around for his cold gun, not even wincing as the glass on the ground cuts up his hands as he makes a move to stand. Len spots his gun and goes to run for it, but his knee gives out and he crashes to the ground again. He must have twisted it when he crashed into the ground the first time. The portal above them closes and he watches Barry helplessly as Wells pins him against the wall, Barry’s cowl having fallen off some time during the fight.

“Just so we’re clear,” Wells growls as his fist is poised for another punch. “After I kill you, I’m going to kill them. And then I’m going to kill your father. I always win, Flash.”

Len jumps as a shot rings out and Wells drops Barry to the ground, backing up and his speed going in and out. Len spins his head around and sees Eddie holding a smoking gun and blood on his chest. Eddie drops to his knees as Joe runs up to him, calling his name.

“What did you do! What did you do!” Joe yells as he eases Eddie onto his back.

“No such thing as a coincidence.” Eddie mumbles, face pale and sweaty already.

Wells speed stops and Len can’t believe that Wells actually just called out for Cisco to help him. Barry gets to his feet, asking what’s going on, and Len has a faint idea on what just happened, but doesn’t want to say it. Cisco is helping Len up as he points at Eddie. “Eddie’s his ancestor. If Eddie dies, he’ll never be born, and…” Wells has his cowl down and they watch as Wells’s face morphes into that of a blond man’s. “He’s being erased from existence.”

“No, no! Eddie!” Iris comes running in, kneeling down next to Eddie. “Stay with me, okay? Stay with me!” Len has seen enough gunshot victims to know that Eddie isn’t going to last much longer.

“He was wrong, it turns out.” Eddie pauses, breath hitching. “I’m a hero after all.”

“You are, Eddie. You are my hero.” Iris cries.
“That’s all I ever wanted to be.” Eddie chokes out.

Cisco’s crying, whispering “no, no, no.” over and over again, and Len squeezes him with the arm that’s wrapped over his shoulders to help him stay standing.

Eddie goes still as his heart stops and that seems to send Cisco over the edge as he turns into his shoulder. Len looks away himself, wanting to give Iris some privacy. He watches as glowing cracks appear around Wells - or Eobard in this case - and little flecks of light crumble off him. “I’ve controlled your life for so long, Barry. How are you going to get along without me?” He says with a smirk.

His arm disappears first, then his legs. His scream echoes away as he disappears in the light, for good hopefully.

Before they have time to process all the chaos around them, a portal opens again and the building starts to shake. “I thought that was closed in time! Why is it open again?!” Len yells over the rumbling.

“I don’t know, but it’s not good!” Cisco yells back.

Barry flashes over to everyone. “Iris, we have to go.” Barry tells her firmly.

“I’m not leaving him!” She grips Eddie’s chest.

Parts of the building are breaking apart and being sucked into the wormhole. “We have to go now, honey. I’m sorry.” Joe pulls her to her feet.

Barry turns to Len and Cisco. “I can only take two at a time-”

“We get it, go!” Len cuts him off.

Barry leaves with Joe and Iris, getting them to safety first, as Len and Cisco huddle against the gust
pulling them toward the wormhole. They watch as Eddie’s body is sucked into the wormhole, and the next thing Len knows, him and Cisco are outside, gaping at the wormhole opening above S.T.A.R. Labs and starting to take some buildings in Central City with it.

Cisco is still holding Len up as he says, “So that’s what we didn’t want to happen.”

“Yes, thank you for that astute observation, Cisquito.” Hartley snarks.

“What’s it doing?!” Lisa asks over the wind.

“Feeding. The singularity won’t stop, not even after the Earth is gone.” Stein fills everyone in. “I’m afraid the accretion disc has already assembled.”

“What?!” Joe asks.

“The diffuse material that’s in orbital motion around the singularity!” Stein tries to explain, but only causes more confusion.

“What does that mean?!” Caitlin yells out.

“We have to disrupt the motion!” Barry explains. “Basically it’s just like a tornado, only upside down! And bigger! And scarier.”

Stein and Barry start talking more about the wormhole, but Len can’t keep up. What he does understand is that Barry’s about to do something extremely stupid. “Kid, I’ve already lost you once today! If you think you’re about to-”

“Dad, I’m sorry, but if I even have the slightest chance to stop this thing, then I have to try!” Barry puts his cowl on and nods at everyone, before flashing away, lightning streaking up a building toward the wormhole. The wind stings against Len’s face as he watches his son reach the wormhole by help of the debris and starts to run around the inside.
And that's a wrap, folks! Hope everyone enjoyed this story and will be sticking around for when it continues some time in October.

End Notes

Like I said, I'm going to try and update this every Monday. I'll be adding more characters as they appear. My tumblr is badwolfchild if you want to check it out.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!