Not So Familiar Faces

by FayeWildwood

Summary

Leonard Snart didn't like not knowing things or not understanding things. He didn't like it when things didn't go according to planned. Like when he planned on dying only to be stitched back together and spat back out. And it wasn't just that, but it was the new powers, it was the strange faces and even stranger costumes that greeted him. And yet, that red suit- that was a constant and a relief... even if it wasn't a familiar face behind it.

(Wow, that was a shitty summary. Basically Len doesn't die from the Oculus. Instead it spits him out into another Earth, the DCMU universe with Ezra Miller as the Flash.)

Notes

Because I really don't know when to quit writing ColdFlash fiction, here's another story. Inspired by BlackBat09's work. Enjoy!

• Inspired by Expect the Plan to Go Off the Rails by BlackBat09
Stitched Piece by Piece

Being stitched back together was exactly as painful as it sounded. Like millions of little needs stabbing into him, pulling threads tight and tying off knots to hold him together. He wasn't sure who was doing it, or what, exactly... but god he wished they'd stop. Hadn't he gone through enough? First his dad, then the stupid Legends- and hadn't that been a terrible mistake- then dying for them? For Mick. And Blowing up wasn't the best feeling in the world either, he decided. In fact, he wasn't quite sure which was worse, being split into a million little pieces and scattered through the time stream, or being plucked and prodded at and surgically put back together.

And it felt like it took lifetimes, eons even, before he felt whole again. If he could even call it that.

And a moment later, he was blinking blue eyes back into existence. Literally.

One second all he could see was the wicked blue of the time stream, the next he was staring at a massive plane inside a hangar. An underground hangar judging by the uneven stone walls. Honestly it looked like someone had taken a darker version of Star Labs and shoved it into a cave. Weird.

He couldn't focus on that though, there was something else he needed to do... something tugging at the back of his mind like the whispering wind... if he could only remember.

Behind you.

He moved just in time, turning at just the right angle to miss the glinting silver that flicked by him. His mind was still groggy, his limbs heavy and it almost hurt to breathe. Worse, he didn't recognize anything, especially not the man dressed like a bat that was throwing fucking bat knives at him. He dodged each one easily, if a bit jerky. He found it easy to predict which way they'd go, which hand they'd be coming from, but his movements were sluggish and just dodging three had him more exhausted than he ever remembered feeling.

Behind the bat was a woman, beautiful in her own right and exotic. She was wearing a simple pant suit, but he knew better than to underestimate her.

And behind her, eyes wide and staring, mouth hanging open a bit in confusion, was that familiar red suit. It looked a bit different, more battle hardened and armored, but the scarlet colour was unmistakable. He couldn't help the soft whimper that left his lips, or the way he stumbled over a few steps and reached his hands out towards the only thing that he could wrap his mind around. Later he'd blame his weakness on the fact that he'd literally just come back from the dead, blame his open emotions on the fact that he never thought he'd see that suit again or the face behind it. Later he'd curse himself for letting his guard down enough for the woman to get her glowing lasso around his outstretched hands, curse himself for not dodging the blow she landed to his face. But none of it seemed to matter because his eyes didn't leave that gold lightning bolt on the boy's chest.

"Uh- why is he staring at me like that? Ask him why he's staring at me like that! Is that a thing people do? I'm creeped out guys-"

The voice almost knocked him out of the sludge he was trudging through, almost woke him up enough to know that something was different, something was wrong... but he couldn't- he couldn't focus. Dammit, he just needed to focus. He needed-

"Barry-"
The voices were soft and hushed when Len woke next. There was something soft under him and his hands were tied down to it, as were his feet. Not ideal, but hey, at least his brain seemed a bit more in tuned with his body now as he tugged a bit, trying to determine how tight the cuffs actually were. They weren't metal, which meant he couldn't pick them, but he'd gotten out of worse situations.

"I don't know, Diana! He-"

"Barry," a female voice interrupted, and he wondered if it was the same woman he vaguely remembered seeing earlier.

"I haven't told anyone! I don't know how Bruce found out but-"

"Barry he's awake."

Well there goes his cover. Someone squeaked and Len found it easy to muster up a smirk as he opened his eyes. The woman from before was standing at the edge of the hospital cot he was strapped to, arms crossed over her shoulders and lasso dangling loosely from her fingertips. The kid next to her however was unfamiliar to him. He was tall and lanky with floppy black hair and a jawline to cut steel, and he wore a hoodie two sizes too big and fidgeted like he couldn't bare to stand still for so long. They stared at him, one with narrowed eyes- Diana he assumed- and the other with wide, if a bit confused, eyes. He didn't see Barry anywhere, but that didn't mean he wasn't around.

"Glad of you to join us," Diana said, a heavy accent lilting her tongue. "Now explain who you are. How did you get in here?"

Len clenched his jaw and shook his head, testing his binds once more before taking the chance to look around. He was in a smaller room, but it was still obviously in the cave system he remembered manifesting in. It held a few hospital cots and various- expensive- medical equipment. Again he was struck with the familiarity of Star Labs. "I think I'd rather know who you are," he drawled, forcing himself to keep his cool. "You want answers? I'll give them to the speedster."

The boy behind Diana shifted, head tilting sideways in a move that was all too familiar yet at the same time... not. "Uh, okay," he said awkwardly. "Who are you and how did you get in here?"

"I'm confused," Jawline said, and when Len looked down at him there was a cute pout on the boy's face. "Is this some weird thing people do? I'm not very good with people, or you know- interrogation tactics. Is this an interrogation thing where you pretend to agree to talk to me and then not? Because like, I've seen that on tv shows and it's usually done when the person you want to talk to isn't in the room, so really I'm not sure where you're going with this. Feel free to clue me in."

Len narrowed his eyes, not missing the huff of exasperation from Diana at the boy's fast babbling. "And just who are you?"

The question was posed with a nervousness that Len found adorable, but he rolled his eyes and stared up at the ceiling, not answering. If Barry wanted to talk, he'd just have to come in here and do it himself. Len could wait, he was patient enough and the speedster knew it. And Len knew the kid wasn't going to wait around for very long.

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They both blinked at him then, even the woman's eyes pulling that confusion into them.

The kid's mouth dropped open, like he was going to say something, but it snapped shut again and
clenched so tight that Len wondered if his teeth ground at the tension. After a moment of thought, the kid tilted his head again and said slowly, as if to make sure Len would understand. "I'm Barry Allen?"

"That supposed to be a question, kid?" Len snorted, but the intense looks he got had him tensing. "This a joke? I've known Allen for years, and you kid are certainly not him."

"I-I most certainly am!" He argued, flustered and frustrated. His fists clenched at his sides, like a child holding back a tantrum, but it was a move he recognized from a much earlier Flash. A still young Flash, an insecure and unsure one just growing into his suit. "I should be asking who you are! I mean- I did ask who you are! How do you know who I am? Or my name at least when I've never seen you before in my life?"

No... there was no way. Len's brain worked through the possibilities, the explanations that could tell him what the hell was going on. He'd heard talk of alternate timelines, even other earth's. He almost remembered glimpses of things from his time in the Oculus- ice coming out of his hands, a lover who's skin shone like a ray of sunshine, his sister lying dead at his feet. He shook the thoughts from his mind and frowned. That couldn't be right though. Even if it was a different time or a different Earth- Barry should look the same. He should recognize the freckles and the eyes and the ticks and- but he didn't. He didn't want to admit it, didn't want to know that his life was gone, dead like he thought he'd been. But the suit, the heroics... the way the kid- Barry- shifted from foot to foot. It might be a different face, but it was the same Barry Allen. Maybe not as hardened and mature as his speedster, but he-

"Prove it."

"I- you want me to prove it? Prove that I'm Barry Allen? How am I supposed to do that?"

"Here, if it will make him more cooperative," the woman said, holding up her golden lasso. She wrapped it around 'Barry's' wrist and nodded to him. "You will answer the man's questions honestly."

Len wasn't sure what that was supposed to prove, but he went with it, narrowing his eyes at them both as he rattled his brain for questions that only Barry would know. He started off easy, though anyone with Google could know the answer to this one. "Who killed your mom?"

The shock in Barry's eyes was instant, but his mouth moved like he couldn't help himself. "A man in yellow. I don't know who it is."

So he hadn't learned that yet, hadn't gotten to that point in his heroics... interesting. And the kid didn't say anything about his dad being accused of it. Len recognized the hard stubbornness in his eyes, the insistence that his father was innocent despite all evidence saying otherwise. He noticed the slight tick in Diana's fingers at the question. She didn't know his backstory either then. He wondered how long these heroes had been working together, how copacetic they were. "How did you get your powers?"

"I was struck by lightning."

Len nodded. That's what he'd been told as well, though not the whole story. But again it was an easy question. He needed something that only Barry would be able to answer, something he wouldn't have told anyone else. Which was difficult because while they could be considered allies sometimes, they weren't really friends. Len didn't know much about Barry's life before the accelerator explosion, and anything he might have asked about secret identities and hero work might not work since this Flash seemed so early into his career. And he couldn't go based on his own memories because this
Barry wouldn't have lived them.

"Ever seen shark week, Barry?" Eyebrows pulled down low over brown eyes and his head tilted a bit. *Cute*. The question wouldn't prove anything really, but it came out of his mouth before he could even think of stopping it, and he went on because it'd at least give him time to think of something that might better prove who the kid was. "Me? I can't get enough of it. Tell me, you happen to know the temperature water can get before a shark falls asleep?"

"Well- I mean..." the kid paused and frowned. "Not sure what this has to do with me proving I'm me, but it's 53.6 degrees Fahrenheit." They were all silent for a long moment and though Len still couldn't be sure, he managed to relax enough. "Does tha-"

"One more thing," he interrupted, eyes narrowing at the kid. "I'm a bit parched. Mind fetching me a hot chocolate from Jitters? Mini marshmallows included."

Barry frowned but an understanding dawned on his face a moment later and a small smile cracked through that confused exterior. In a flash and a flicker of almost familiar lightning, he was gone. Leaving Len alone with a strange woman and her lasso fluttering to the ground. He should have felt relieved at the sight of the lightning, but instead it only unsettled his stomach more. He could see Barry run off in the opposite direction, he could tell he was running faster than the human eye could possibly see... but Len *could* see it. He could see every movement as if the kid was running in slow motion, and yet he was gone in a blink of an eye. It wasn't possible, and yet it'd happened. His lightning too- Len's Flash had yellow lightning, this one had blue. It wasn't comforting, but still, the fact that this world had a Flash at all was probably a good sign. As long as they weren't evil.

"Are you going to tell us who you are?"

"I'm afraid it's a long story," Len mumbled, exhaustion settling over him once more. Honestly, he hoped this sludge wasn't going to be a constant problem because he'd only just woken up. He wasn't sure he could handle being so tired all the time. It made him feel... old. Ancient even. And maybe he was. He had no way of knowing just how long he'd been in the time stream, especially since it worked on a different dimension than normal time. "Might want to wait until I've had my drink," Len said softly, letting his eyes flutter closed.

"At least give us your name."

"Leonard Snart."
Len managed to convince the band of heroes to let him shower and change before going into his explanation. But really it was more of an excuse to get away from the kid and come up with a plausible back story. While they were superpowered and might believe the truth, he wasn't sure if he wanted to tell it. Something settled low in his gut that made him feel uncomfortable at letting anyone that close to his- whatever the hell the Oculus did to him. Then again, if anyone could help him figure out exactly what it did, it'd be Barry and his little band of heroes.

By the time he stepped out of the shower, there was a pile of sweats and a WayneTech sweater on the counter as well as a steaming cup of hot cocoa, piled high with mini marshmallows.

It almost brought a smile to his face.

He took it in his hands, letting the warmth seep into his bones for a few seconds before turning and making his way back to the medical room he'd been stuck in. It was... a lot more full than he left it in. The bat was back, full costume despite Barry and Diana not being in costume, and beside him stood a- Len might call him attractive if he were into huge masses of muscles- man with long brown hair and silver eyes. He too was out of costume, doning a regular hoodie and jeans instead. Beside him stood what looked like someone who just stepped out of a terminator movie, red eyes glowing and staring at Leonard like he was trying to see into his soul. He didn't like it.

And then there was the weirdo in the front, dressed in red and blue, floating a few inches off the ground and massive arms crossed over his chest. The S on his chest was almost familiar, like something Len remembered seeing in a dream, but he couldn't quite place it.

The sight of them all there had him snorting a laugh into his cocoa and the flying man raised his eyebrows. Len waved a hand at them all and rolled his eyes. "Are all heroes here on steroids? No offense Bartholomew," he said quickly, sending the kid a wink that had him blushing as red as his suit. Len decided he liked that look on the kid.
"I-it's Barry, please."

Len hummed, face pinching up for barely a second before he shook his head. "Not yet. Gotta get used to that name with that face."

"What does that mean?" Flying man asked, moving his hands to his hips and Len really had to stifle his laughter this time. "Who are you and how did you get in here? Barry says you just showed up out of nowhere in a blast of blue light. This base is hidden and off the grid, so how did you manage to get in here undetected when we're miles underground?"

**Miles underground?** Well that was interesting. He'd have to remember that for his escape later if the heroes decided they didn't like his story. He still hadn't completely decided what he was going to tell them, but some of the truth would have to do at least. "I didn't appear out of nowhere," he argued, then backtracked. "Look, I don't know how I got here. Last thing I know, I was holding down the button on the- on a bomb," he said, deciding last minute not to mention the Oculus, "waiting for my team to get out. Next I know, I'm waking up here in all kinds of pain." Pain that was back now, shooting through his head like an arrow. Something tugged at his attention but he couldn't focus on it, couldn't draw it closer. It was like his brain was trying to tell him something, something important...

"But you knew me," the kid said with a frown. "Why do you know me? And how do you know me behind the suit?"

Len didn't reply right away, instead sizing up the team around him. His fingers tapped against the cup in his hands and he frowned. "Listen kid, I might know you- sort of- but I don't know them," he said honestly, nodding a head towards the rest of the group. "I'm not about to spout my whole origin story to a bunch of hero types I don't know. And honestly? I'm not sure you'll like my answer."

"Well that sounds ominous," Barry grumbled, clearly frustrated that Len was avoiding his questions. "Look," Len continued with a sigh. "It's all rather complicated, and to be honest, I'm not sure I understand it all myself. I've been... around, and this is not nearly the weirdest thing I've seen, but it's definitely the most... concerning I suppose you could say."

The woman stepped forward with a stern smile on his face, one that had Len reminding himself not to underestimate her. "Perhaps we should start simple then. I am called Wonder Woman, though you may call me Diana if you like since you've already heard Barry say my name." She gestured to each member of the group behind her after Len shook her hand- and damn she had a good grip- and introduced each one. "This is Batman from Gotham City, Superman from Metropolis, Cyborg, and Aquaman. You have already met the Flash it would appear."

The rogue hummed and nodded in greeting to the others. He didn't bother extending his hand for a shake to anyone else, and most of them didn't seem to want one anyway. They all watched him with suspicion and caution. **Good,** he thought, **at least they're smart.** "Well I'm Leonard Snart," he said easily. "The nerds named me Captain Cold, but I usually go by Cold."

"What nerds?" Barry asked, face perking up a bit at the new information. "Your nerds," he replied before he thought better of it. **Damn,** this Barry wouldn't know that if he didn't have his own crew yet. "Well... my Flash's nerds, I guess."

The flying man- Superman- frowned deep at that. "What do you mean, your Flash?"

Len opened his mouth to say something but Barry's eyes widened so far and his mouth dropped open
that he paused. "Woah," the speedster gasped, practically bouncing on his feet. "Please tell me you're from the future. Oh please, please, please tell me you're from the future! Is it cool? Are there like, floating cities and aliens all over the place? I mean there's sort of already aliens I guess, but do we like, master warp speed and traverse the galaxy like in Star Trek?" He took a few steps closer and Len could smell the ozone on him, so familiar and intoxicating he had to stop himself from reaching forward. "I've watched every episode of every season of every edition! Is there Star Trek in the future? Does it transcend time? Or are JJ Abrams versions considered classics now? Can-

"Kid stop, you're killing me here," Len groaned, rolling his eyes at the excitement, though it had a small smile tugging at his lips. "I'm not from the future. Well..." his head tilted a bit as he thought about it. "Technically, I am from the future seeing as you haven't met me yet, and I've traveled to the future plenty of times..." thinking about that only made his head hurt worse and he shook the ideas away easily. "That's not the point. I'm not from the future like you're thinking I am."

The Bat grabbed Barry's shoulder and pulled him back a few steps, eyes glaring behind his mask-interesting. He was protective of the kid, though not as much as Robin Hood was of his Barry. The group was still new, Len could tell by the way they held themselves. They stood as a united front, all of them ready to take on the world, but they didn't stand together. His Barry stood with his friends like he was protecting them, all of them did. He and his archer stood back to back against the world, ready to stop any attack that might come towards the other. His Barry would do anything for his friends, his family. This group though... they were infants compared to the people he knew. They were untrained, untrusting. They would fight alongside each other, but they wouldn't fight for each other. The Bat might protect Barry, but only because he was young and naive, not because he liked him. It didn't sit well with Len.

"Why don't you tell us where you are from then," the Bat ordered, his voice a few octaves lower than what Len assumed it normally sounded like. "You talk like a criminal."

"Do I?" Len drawled, sipping his cocoa again. "Well I must be out of practice if you can tell. Don't worry," he said, waving a hand at the now tense heroes, "I've been reformed so to speak. Traveled with a bunch of do-gooders, saved the universe a few times, earned my hero card. Even died for them. I'm a bonafied good guy now."

Black-clad eyes narrowed again. "Saving a few people, dying for them, doesn't automatically make you a good guy."

"Spoken like a true black heart," he snarked back, reveling in the way the Bat clenched his jaw.

The silver eyed one, Aquaman they'd called him, laughed loudly, the sound echoing through the room like tidal waves against the shore. Len barely managed not to jump at the sound. "I like him! He's funnier than the rest of you grumps."

"Hey!" Barry pouted, and damn that was a good look on him.

Len just stopped himself from physically shaking the thought out of his head. This kid was too young for him, too innocent, to good. If he didn't have a chance with his own speedster, what made him think he had a chance with this one? "Alright here's the deal. I need to find a way home if I can, if only to tell my... team that I'm alive. To do that, I need the speedster's help," he said, gesturing to Barry who pointed at himself in confirmation. "So I give you my word that I won't do anything deplorable while I'm in your little badly lit and brightly coloured world while I'm here. In return, you help me get back to where I came from. Really it's a win-win for everyone involved. What'd'ya say tight pants?" he asked, turning towards Superman with a raised eyebrow.

"And your word is good enough?" he asked.
"Normally I'd say no," Len said honestly, shrugging his shoulders. "I'm a liar and a thief at heart, it's what I do and I'm good at it. But right now, my best bet is the heroes and the Oculus just so happened to drop me off at your doorstep. I'm not a 'fate' kind of guy, but I can see the picture when it's in front of me. So, yes. My word is good enough right now."

There was a long pause as the heroes shared glances, all of them seeming to look towards the woman once they'd finished their weird silent conversation—though Barry was just staring at Len like he was trying to work out a puzzle.

Diana took a step forward, pulling his attention away from the speedster and towards the golden rope in her hands. He'd seen it before when she wrapped it around Barry's hand, but no one had ever explained what it was. He raised an eyebrow at it and she smiled. "This is the Lasso of Truth. It came from the gods and was gifted to me by my people. You cannot lie when touching it." Len wasn't sure about that, but after a few moments of trying to determine the truth from her gaze, he held out a hand. Diana looped the coarse material around his wrist and the lasso brightened a bit. It singed at his bandaged wrist, growing hot but not yet burning—like a warning almost. "Have you come here to mean us any harm?"

"No," Len answered easily and quickly, the answer spilling from his mouth before he could even think about lying.

"Have you told us the truth thus far?"

"Omitted some things, but yeah, all truth."

She nodded, but before she could pull the rope off, the Bat stepped forward and asked, "what is the Oculus?"

That wasn't something he was willing to answer, but the second he decided that, the rope on his wrist grew too hot, too tight. It niggled at his mind like a puppet master does to strings. He clenched his jaw, hating the feeling of someone controlling him, hating the feeling of being a puppet again. Panic started building in his chest, growing loud and angry, clawing at his skin from the inside. He could feel his fingers wrap around the rope for purchase and his teeth groaned and his jaw creaked with how hard he was fighting the urge.

"What is the Oculus," he asked again.

"T-" Len couldn't breathe. His chest constricted and his eyes widened. He couldn't tell if it was part of the panic attack, if he was hallucinating, or if it was the lasso, but silver blue sparks danced around him like fire, licking up across his body and building with his panic. The seams that had been holding him together, stitch by stitch, were pulling and tugging, barely managing to keep his mind in tact. "There are no-

"He's going to blow," he heard Barry say from far away. "He's losing control! We need to contain him, we need to-"

The voice was cut off when a pair of strong arms wrapped around Len's back, pulling him close to a brick wall— or what felt like one. The flames were too hot, too bright... they singed his insides and the pain was almost too much to bear. Much longer and Len was afraid he'd fall apart, a marionette doll cut from it's strings. His control was gone and the pain took it's place.

"There are no strings on me!"
Double Cool

Chapter Summary

Barry and Len have a talk about powers and other dimensions.

When Len woke next, he found himself in a small cell, the back of it padded and the front made of glass - eerily similar to the ones in the Pipeline of his world. For a short moment he thought maybe, just maybe, he'd found his way home, but the eager face that greeted him when he turned his head proved otherwise.

"Batman told me I probably shouldn't talk to you yet since we don't know anything about you, but you're a meta! That's awesome! I mean, maybe not for you since you kind of... well explode, but hey, I don't know many metas that are on the side of the good guys!" His smile brightened so much that Len found himself returning the expression, though it was barely a twitch of the lips.

He was sore when he pushed himself into a sitting position, his skin tingling angrily and his head pounding like a thousand drums. "Yeah well, that's a new thing," Len grumbled, rubbing a hand over his face. "So don't get too excited." Silence followed and the rogue found himself itching with the need to fill it. He didn't need to look to know that the kid was staring at him, head cocked to the side, biting his lip as he debated what to say next. "Ask your question, Barry, I know you want to."

The speedster opened his mouth, closed it, then opened it again. "Your powers... I know you don't want to tell us what this Oculus thing is yet but- I mean did it give you your powers?"

Len thought about that. It was the most logical answer seeing as he didn't have any powers before he 'died' and the blue flames he'd seen before losing control were the same he saw in the time stream... so it would make sense. But honestly, Len still didn't know what his so called 'powers' were. One accidental explosion did not a conclusion make and it frustrated him. He didn't like not having answers. He didn't like unknowns. And yet- if anyone would be able to help him, it would be the Flash. "The Oculus was a machine," he said quietly, looking up at the ceiling and dropping his head back. The move made him look contemplative, like he was giving up maybe or simply trying to remember, when in all reality he was searching the corners for any sign of cameras, any sign that the others were listening to the conversation. He didn't trust the mysterious Batman at all, or the cyborg. Honestly he didn't trust any of them other than Barry, and maybe the woman. "It could control time," he continued, "I guess. Never really understood it much myself. All I know was that these people that built the machine, they were pulling our strings. Making us do things, changing out fates. Free will was no more, my choices weren't my own," he said sharply, anger boiling in the pit of his stomach as he remembered the time masters. He didn't mention the fact that the oculus meant everything he'd grown up with, everything his sister had grown up dealing with, had been pre-planned. Didn't mention that all the abuse and the torture they'd had to endure was because of someone else.

"So you destroyed it?" Barry asked quietly.

"So I destroyed it," Len confirmed. His eyes dropped from the ceiling after counting three cameras and a microphone, falling to the bandaged right hand that sat in his lap. "My idiot partner was going to do it instead to save his pretty boy, but I couldn't let him. I owed him too much to let him die by fire." Memories of Mick drinking beers and getting in fights fluttered through his mind- some new,
unfamiliar, and some old, nostalgic. He saw Mick getting tortured, saw Mick with a chip in his head, saw some new guy stopping Mick from burning his hands... saw Mick's father... He shook his head and frowned at the bandage again. "Thought I'd just die... not be spit out here- wherever here is. And now with some nifty new powers to play with."

He didn't sound excited, nor was he trying to. He didn't want powers, never had. His gun had always been good enough for him and even before then he was fine. He didn't like unknowns.

Barry tilted his head a bit and frowned. "So this Oculus, it deals with time. And you're sure you're not from the future?"

Len couldn't help but chuckle at the desperate hope in the kid's voice. "No kid, I'm not from your future. I'm from..." Phantom images of circles and lines drew across his memories and he contemplated them for a moment. "You- my Barry, explained it like different layers on top of each other. Infinite possibilities means infinite universes, different Earths. The one I'm from is called Earth-1, there are 51 others-" he wasn't sure where he came to that conclusion, as it wasn't something he remembered ever discussing with the flash, the the memory of Harrison Wells saying it was sharp and clear in his head. "Technically 52 others if you include Nazi Earth, which most don't."

Barry was gapping quietly like a fish from the other side of the glass, the look of utter shock and adoration on his face. It brought a small smile to Len's lips before he dashed it away. "You know another version of me! B-but you didn't recognize me out of the suit, how did you- I mean how?"

"You look different," Len shrugged. "And I don't mean you from the other universe looks different. I mean you specifically look different than the other universes. My Flash met a few of his counterparts and they looked just like him- tall, too skinny, bit lanky, floppy brown hair. You're the one that looks different. If it weren't for the suit and the name, I wouldn't have known." He thought about that for a moment before backtracking. "Well, you act like him, younger him at least. Same nervous ticks, some of the same traits, but you're more... innocent is the wrong word."

"Akward?" Barry supplied with a self-depreciating grin.

Len shrugged. "No offense kid, but yeah."

"Dude, that's so cool! So you're like, other me's villain?"

"Used to be before I joined the Legends, that's what they called themselves at least," he said with a roll of the eyes. "Started traveling through time, trying to save some idiot's wife and kid, stop some ancient Egyptian guy from destroying time... then got myself blown up. All in all? Not cool. Never should have joined the side of the heroes."

Barry's excited grin fell a bit and he gave Len one of those looks that he recognized from his own speedster, the one that searched deep under the persona of a thief, behind the scars and the cold exterior. The look that was always followed with, "there's good in you Snart."

"I dunno," Barry hummed, rolling his head a bit and rocking back on his butt. "You've got this... protective look in your eye. You've got family out there somewhere, siblings, kids, something like that. I'm not very good at people, but I know family. You've got that same look I get when I think about my dad." Len frowned at that. It wasn't much different than what he was used to hearing. "You may be a criminal, Leonard, but you're not as cold hearted as you seem. You've got a code, right?" The kid didn't give him time to answer, only pointed at him knowingly, grin wide and eyebrows wagging. "You do, I know it. I may not know you from over here, but you've got some
sort of code or you wouldn't be willing to work with us, wouldn't be willing to trust us."

"I don't trust them," Len replied quickly, sending a sharp look at the speedster. "I trust you."

That stopped the speedster short and his pretty brown eyes widened in wonder. "You- I mean... why? You don't even know me."

Len shrugged a bit and leaned back against the wall. "I trust Barry Allen. Doesn't matter what universe you're from, it's still you. Got a heart of gold behind that red leather." Barry opened his mouth and Len held up a hand to stop him. "Yeah, yeah, tri-polymer, I know." The speedster blinked in surprise and Len chuckled. "I told you, Scarlet. It's still you, even if there's a different face behind the mask."

He let out a breathy laugh and nodded. "Apparently so. Okay, okay, so backtracking a bit. Back to the important stuff. This Oculus from another universe gave you powers, any idea what they are?"

Len's face screwed up a bit and he frowned. "Nothing from yesterday really seemed to relate, but-" he chewed at the inside of his lip as he contemplated, digging the thumb of one hand into the palm of another. "There have been little things... memories I shouldn't have, things I know that I shouldn't. All up here," he said, motioning to his head. "And you."

"Me?" Barry squeaked, straightening a bit.

"You're... slow."

"I beg your pardon!"

Len chuckled at the offense and shook his head. "I mean to me, you're slow. When you sped out to get the hot chocolate, I could still... see you, but it was like you were moving in slow motion. Like that-" Len said quickly when Barry stood and rushed to the other side of the room, touched the wall, then sat back in the same spot. Lightning flickered around him, bouncing off the walls and crackling loud in Len's ears, but he knew to the human eye, nothing would have changed from the scene. "Just then, you touched the wall. I can see it."

"Double cool," Barry said in awe. "And you didn't have powers before? But you were on a team of time travelling heroes."
The rogue shrugged, remembering back to his team. It felt like only a few days since he'd seen them, but at the same time, his time in the Oculus had seemed like decades. "Most of us didn't actually have any powers, only a few. I was brought on because they needed a thief, and I've got- had a fancy gun. So no, I didn't have powers before I came here."

"D'you think you're going to blow up again?" Barry asked innocently. Len raised his eyebrow again and the kid just grinned. "Because if you are, I can't let you out. But if you think you're pretty in control right now, I'll give you a tour!"

"As long as the princess keeps her magic rope away from me, I think I'll be fine."

Which was how Leonard Snart found himself following around one very fast-talking Barry Allen as he gave him a tour of what they decided to cleverly call, The Bat Cave.
Len's Decisions

Chapter Summary

Len observes the league and makes an executive decision.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a lot of inner dialogue type stuff, so be prepared for that! :) Also, I am not a boxer, nor have I ever thrown a real punch in my life, so this and the next chapter are going to be either very vague on the details of the training, or I'm making shit up out of my ass, so be prepared for that too. Thanks guys!

Watching this 'Justice League' as they called themselves both amused and infuriated Len. It'd been nearly a week since he'd shown up and not only was Barry and Diana the only ones willing to work on getting him back home, but he also started noticing little things about the dynamics of this so called team.

It was clear that the Bat was in charge, even if Superman was the front runner, the face that everyone associated with the team. Superman was also an alien, Len had come to learn from Barry a few days after his tour. An alien who was worshiped like a God, who had died and the entire world mourned. The **entire world**. He still made Len uncomfortable though he didn't show it. The Bat- or Bruce Wayne as he'd finally pried from Barry after arguing that there was no bat in his world so the information was useless to him anyway- was a grade A douche. He seemed to only care about three people: himself, his butler, and Superman. He had some sort of mentor thing with Barry in the sense that he pulled the kid into the league, but further than that he'd never so much as tried training the kid. Which was completely ridiculous considering the fact that Barry- in his own words- pretty much just pushed people and saved people. He had no fighting skills whatsoever and yet he was surrounded by beefed up fighters.

Diana seemed to be the only one that actually cared about Barry at all on the team. The others- the cyborg and the merman- were barely seen on the base unless they were needed. The cyborg was another grade A dick and while Len sympathized with his situation, it still annoyed him. The merman was funny, the most laid back of them all other than Barry, but Len still didn't trust him completely either.

And this Barry... his Barry was naive when he started out too, young and unbroken. He had darkness in his past but he was ever the optimist, trying to help rather than stop. Then the longer he spent in the suit, the harder it was for him to see the brightness. He grew more mature yes, but also darker in a way. He'd lost so much, so many. He held the deaths of too many people on his shoulders and it showed.

This Barry though, he was so clean. The thing with his mother still happened, his dad was still in jail, but he hadn't lost friends yet, his team. He still held hope in those big brown eyes and it drew Len towards him like a beacon. He smiled like the fucking sun and he stumbled through encounters like
an infant just learning to converse. It was adorable. And Len found him the most real member of the team. Barry didn't do well with people, that much was obvious. He spoke too fast and too smart, often having to dumb things down for the group and it was clear he didn't like having to slow down.

Len wondered if that's why he liked hanging out with the rogue so much, because as they discovered, he didn't need to slow down when talking to Len. The Oculus powers he'd been given seemed to work not only with Barry's running speed, but with his... everything speed. He could be talking so fast that the other's couldn't even hear him, and yet Len could understand every word. It was calming too, the almost familiarity of the situation. He liked Barry's voice, liked listening to him drone on and on about science and things he liked. And the kid in turn didn't seem to care that Len didn't talk much. They balanced each other out well and it was his only saving grace for not going crazy with boredom as the tight pants wouldn't let him out of the cave.

Which left Len to doing what he did best, observing and snooping. He couldn't do much actual sneaking around with someone watching him at all times, but he did enough with his eyes to pick up a few things. It also gave him a bit of practice with his powers.

Bruce Wayne came from old money, he knew that much, and he had enough of it just lying around that he could afford to build big fancy toys and secret caves without anyone noticing any of it gone. His butler came with the family, his loyalty couldn't be explained any other way- a friend of the father's maybe, or grandfather, maybe even a war buddy. Both Diana and Superman had day jobs, though he'd yet to determine much about what they could be. He wasn't allowed access to the computers to look into their non-hero lives, so he could only guess. Diana smelt of dust and old books when she drifted close to him and he could catch glimpses of ancient times- roman battles and beauties captured in stone. An archaeologist perhaps? Maybe a librarian. Superman was different. He didn't have any outward tells that might suggest what he did for a living other than his clothes. He dressed like an office worker, but there was no sign of office work in his hands. When Len got close enough to him he only saw fires and destruction, things he didn't care to see so he decided to avoid the alien.

He tried to learn everything he could about the team, filed it away in a secret safe in the darkest corner of his mind because they might not care to admit it, but they were dangerous. The alien had taken out the entire team without so much as blinking from a story Barry told him. The Bat went around fucking branding criminals during his night job. The cyborg couldn't control his body or powers any better than Len could and that idea alone was terrifying. Not to mention the fact that they all pretty much treated Barry like shit.

So yeah, it all came back to Barry. He was the only familiar face- well... you know what I mean. He was Len's constant right now, his rock. So what if his attention always came back to the speedster and how he was treated. It frustrated and annoyed him. The kid was constantly running around asking how he could help, asking if Bruce could show him a few moves, wanting to have beers with Arthur the merman. Yet it seemed none of them ever had time for the kid unless they needed something done extraordinarily fast, or if they needed civilians out of the way. Which was not okay.

"Barry," Len called out once the kid returned with coffees for everyone and a cocoa for him. He watched patiently as the speedster dropped a jitters cup off at each of the members of the league beforeskidding to a stop in front of the rogue.

"Yes oh captain, my captain?" Barry cringed a bit and a beautiful blush dusted across his cheeks as he handed Len his cocoa. "Wow, cheesy much? Sorry, ignore I just said that and pretend- I mean.. yeah okay, anyway. Moving on. What's up?"

Len chuckled and rolled his eyes. "I assume the training room downstairs is open for everyone?"
The speedster blinked, head tilting to the side a bit. "You want to train? Are you- I mean Alfred said you've been doing great health wise, don't get me wrong, but are you sure? What do you even need to train for?"

"Not me, Scarlet, you." Barry frowned but scuttered along behind him as he started heading towards the training room. From what Barry had told him earlier, it was built to withstand the entire team, so the speedster should easily be able to work on his punches without breaking anything too bad.

"Me? Wait you want to train me? Really?"

The hope in the kids voice almost made Len turn around and head right back to punch the Bat in his smug face, but he kept going. From what he could tell of this Barry so far, he was alone in his heroeing. He had no team before the league, no mentor like his own speedster had. Which meant he didn't know exactly what he could do. Luckily, Len did.

"Yeah kid, you. I happen to have a nice deep knowledge of your powers as I've made it my business to know. So we are going to train you to do more than push people." Barry seemed more than willing and easily sped up to meet Lens pace, practically bouncing on his feet in excitement. "You ever even throw a punch?"

The kid frowned and thought for a moment, shaking his head. "Ah, no I don't think so. I mean I hit a kid in school once for messing with Iris, ended up breaking my hand, so-"

Snorting, Len marched straight to the medical cabinets in the room and grabbed some tape to wrap Barry's hands in. He motioned towards one of the benches and straddled it, facing the speedster. "Hands," he ordered. Barry's eyebrows pulled together in confusion, but held one out for Len to take. "Your hits can be dangerous," the rogue informed him as he started wrapping the speedsters hands like a boxers. Barry watched him intently, an odd seriousness in his expression that reminded Len of a child desperately trying to commit his lesson to memory. Cute. "With the speed you can put behind them, you could easily punch through a brick wall. My Flash, he had a villain made of metal, couldn't get a normal hit on him. Took a running start and knocked the guy unconscious, but he also shattered his entire arm because he didn't know what he was doing." Barry cringed and wiggled his fingers after Len finished one hand. "Too tight?"

He shook his head. "No, it feels good."

Len nodded and started on the next hand. "This keeps the damage minimal on and normal person, which is what we'll start at. I know I can see you at your fastest, but until I'm confident you aren't going to break yourself, we're doing this at my speed."

"You said you know a lot about my powers," Barry said as he flexed his other hand, testing the tightness. When Len nodded and stood, Barry followed. "Can I do other cool stuff, things you could teach me?"

"Oh kid, you have no idea."

Boxing Stances

Chapter Summary

Barry starts his training. Len and Diana have a heart to heart.

Chapter Notes

Okay! So please remember that I have no fighting experience so I'm pretty much bullshitting anything Len says about boxing. However, I did look up a short video on boxing stances, so there's that. Also, if you can't tell, I LOVE Diana, so she's definitely going to be a big part of Len's little life here. The other characters will start making more appearances as the story goes on, but I am focusing more on Len and Barry to start off with.

Thank you everyone for your wonderful comments!

Barry Allen in any universe was a constant in two things: a clutz and lanky as fuck. He was built like a runner obviously, and he still had muscle, but he was all skinny limbs and awkward movements. He was still a hair shorter than Len, so he could work around it, but it amused him that the kid was still just as uncoordinated here as he was back home.

There was a track inside the training room. Though Len would have liked to see Barry in the open, test his speed like that, the rest of the heroes didn't seem to trust him enough to let him outside yet, so an indoor track would have to do.

"Do not try to run at your absolute fastest," Len warned as they headed towards the track, Len with a stopwatch in hand. "Don't push yourself. I rather like having you here, and can't afford to have you popping between universes or fucking up time yet. So go at your normal speed and let me see where you're at." He could see the excitement in Barry's eyes at the small bit of information Len had leaked to him about running fast, but he didn't ask questions and Len was grateful for it. Though he was a child at heart, it was very clear the speedster wanted to be trained, that he was taking it seriously.

They stayed at the track until Barry had to stop and recharge. Len had jotted down all his times and speeds in a little notebook that Barry had provided and made small notes beside them about his observations. He didn't know much about Barry's speed himself, was never there for any of his original training- because why would he have been?- but the kid was damn fast.

After watching Barry finish three large pizzas on his own, then the rest of Len's pizza, they moved over to the sandbags hanging from the ceiling. Len didn't step in front of them yet though, instead facing the speedster who was double checking his hands to make sure the wraps hadn't come off.

"First thing's first," Len said, holding up his hands. "Show me your fists."

"Oh! I know this one!" Barry said in excitement, holding his fists up, thumbs on the outside. "You'll break your thumbs if you keep them inside right?"
Len chuckled, readjusting his hands just a bit so the thumbs were on the bottom, tightening the fist a bit. "Yeah. Where'd you learn that?"

Barry blushed a bit and rubbed the back of his head. "Uh... Twilight? I read them a long time ago, don't judge me."

"I have a sister who likes trashy romance novels," Len told the kid, shrugging slightly. "I had to go out and buy her 50 Shades of Grey, so I'm not one to judge. Okay," he held up his own hands again, palms facing Barry. "Hit me." The speedster stopped a bit short and frowned to which Len rolled his eyes. "Not full power, just something small. I need to see how your form is and it's easier to feel if something's wrong than see it," he informed. He was training Barry the same way he'd trained Lisa all those years ago when she was a teenager fighting boys who got a little too grabby. Difference was, he knew Lisa would fight dirty, Barry would have to stick a little cleaner. After assuring him again that he wasn't going to hurt him, Barry threw a weak punch.

It wasn't bad in the grand scheme of things. Where neither Lisa nor Barry had started out with any actual form, Lisa had confidence backing her that Barry just didn't have. He had the power, sure, he was just too afraid to use it.

"Not bad," Len said honestly, pulling a beaming grin out of the speedster. And though he shouldn't really be noticing things like that, it made his jawline look down right delectable. Because seriously, the sharp angles of this Barry's face should be illegal. "Your form's a bit off, but for a beginner, it's not terrible." He distracted himself with changing Barry's stance- and if it was an excuse to get closer to him, to breathe in that ozone scent he was getting addicted to, well who had to know? He kicked the kid's feet apart a bit, lifted his elbows a little higher, and brought his fists in front of his hands. "You want to protect your face and keep your body ready for any attack. Shift one leg back, yeah like that."

Len took his place back in front of Barry and showed him a different stance, his whole body facing the kid, feet even but spaced. "These are basic boxing techniques, easiest to learn when learning to hit. Your stance is easier for smaller guys like you, fast guys. You've got your speed already, but if you ever lose it, that's the best stance for you." Barry nodded, eyebrows brought down in concentration like he was categorizing the differences between him and Len. "The way you are now, it's easier for you to back up, it's more defensive, whereas my stance is more offensive. I'm more likely to move forward like this and hit hard because it's easier to do from this position."

He pulled on a pair of guards for his hands and nodded to Barry. "Alright, now hit me again, but normal now- person normal," he quickly corrected when Barry opened his mouth to argue. "No speed, no powers, just here." Barry did as he was told and Len jolted back just a bit but widened his stance in response. The hit still lacked confidence, was pulled back a little, but honestly Len hadn't expected otherwise since Barry was always holding back. "Good, but always bring your hands back up," he said, tapping the hand that had fallen back to the speedster's side. Len showed him, bringing his own hands up to guard his face. "You always want to protect your face and your head. You can't think clearly with a concussion."

"Got it," Barry nodded.

They did that a few more times, Len adjusting and correcting as they went, before moving to the punching bags. This let Barry hit a little harder than he was with the rogue, as the bags were made to withstand Diana and Arthur at least- maybe Superman. They were set up in the ceiling so that when someone punched it hard enough, it would slide across the room easily, a pulley system bringing it back to it's original spot only moments later. It was actually a rather smart design and Len hoped it'd hold up for when he decided to test this Barry's full strength.
Len watched from a far for a while after the speedster had grasped the technique well enough to be left to his own devices. He picked everything up very quickly- which shouldn't surprise him as much as it did- but he was still a bit awkward with his feet and his stance. While the punches were good and grew stronger the more he did them, Barry had a hard time keeping his balance after the bag was moved or swung the wrong way. It'd be much harder for him to stand in a fist fight against an actual person- though that was training for a different day.

"You are training him, good."

Len didn't jump when Diana spoke from behind him. He'd heard her coming, felt her. The glimpses of ancient statues and glistening marble tugged in the back of his mind, so he wasn't surprised when she stepped up beside him, her normal pantsuit exchanged for a pair of work out clothes. Her hair was pulled up in a ponytail and her hands were wrapped just as Barry's were- though Len highly doubted she needed them like that. From what little Barry had told him, his team was mostly made up of Gods, or the equivalent of them at least.

"Hi Diana!" Barry grinned, waving at her from his side of the room. "Look, watch!" He turned back to his punching bag, got back in his stance and hit it with as much force as he could muster standing still. The bag went about halfway down it's track before sliding back. There was an innocent look of pride in the speedster's face when he turned back to them and Diana gave him a very motherly sounding 'very good' that had Len chuckling.

They both waited for Barry to turn back to his training before continuing the conversation. "He is very taken by you. I have not known Barry for very long, but he isn't... very good with people. He is good with you."

The rogue shrugged, not really knowing what to say in response. "I know how to deal with awkward," he answered slowly, watching Barry shift his form, trying to figure out some way to keep his balance better. His next hit was a bit stronger. "My Barry was awkward in the nerdy sense, but he was always good with people. I know a lot of people who aren't though. I've learned to live with weird, with awkward. And I know how to handle a Barry Allen, even if he's not the one I'm used to."

Diana nodded and shifted feet. Flickers of rolling green hills and glistening ocean waters came to Len's eyes but he pushed them away easily. "Thank you for training him. I will admit we should be doing it ourselves but Bruce is... well he is Bruce. I cannot explain him. We got very busy when Barry was brought onto the team and have had little time to do any sort of training with him or Victor. And Bruce, well he is not so well with people as one might think. He tends to forget about anything outside of this job. If Barry is useful rescuing civilians, then that is what Bruce has him doing."

"And if you all fall and he's the last one standing?" Len snarled, though the anger wasn't directed at the woman necessarily. He just didn't really like the way the Bat led his team. "Everyone needs to learn how to defend themselves. I've had times where my speedster lost his powers, but being the idiot he is, kept helping people anyway. You can't rely on the extra to always be there, that's why it's extra."

She hummed in response and nodded a bit. "You are very wise, Leonard Snart. While your situation is unfortunate and I am still wary of your history, I am glad you are here. You are good for him."

Again, Len wasn't sure what to say so he decided not to say anything, instead letting Diana go towards Barry, offering him a sparring partner that could hold her own. It was cute the way the speedster looked at Len with giddy eyes, asking for permission as if Len would dare to say no at all. The rogue went back to his notebook, jotting down things- in code of course- that he'd been learning.
and observing about the team, while also keeping track of Barry's progress. He kept a close eye on the other two occupants of the room as Diana showed Barry some other styles of fighting that were easy enough for a beginner.

That was another thing about Diana that Len had made sure to make a note of.

She was a warrior.

He hadn't figured out how yet, or where from, but he was sure she was a born fighter. The way she moved, held herself like she was marching across a battlefield, just screamed warrior. Not soldier, necessarily, something older maybe. He'd seen her very briefly in her little costume, the olden style armor that'd been painted up and modernized, the sword that she wielded like it was made especially for her. She was more comfortable in that armor than he ever saw her and it said something about who she was. He had no doubt that she valued honor and wisdom, no doubt that she valued honesty and friendship. Family was important to her and like Barry, she'd built a new little family with this league.

Lisa would like her, he was sure of it. Mick would be absolutely smitten with her- he liked women who could beat him in a fight or out drink him.

He'd have to grill Barry about her back story later. Or ask her. She was straightforward, didn't cut around edges and didn't bother with niceties if she didn't need to and Len respected that. She didn't hide things or hold secrets- not ones that he thought would be so important at least. She wasn't shifty like the Bat, or painfully avoiding of their past like the merman. She was open and would answer questions when asked of her, but didn't offer up information besides that.

If there was anyone other than Barry that Len felt like he might end up trusting at some point during his- hopefully brief- stay, it'd be her.
**Frosty Realizations**

Chapter Summary

Barry runs into someone Len recognizes and gets hurt in the process.

"I made a new friend last week," Barry said into the two way phone, a smile brightening over his face as he thought of Leonard. "He's uh- I met him through work and he's been helping me with... work stuff. But he's really cool and we hang out a lot now. We had a JJ Abrams Star Trek marathon yesterday after work and it was great!"

Henry Allen raised his eyebrows knowingly, but his lips twitched a bit in threat of a smile. "A new friend? What kind of work stuff?"

Barry blushed and shrugged. "He's teaching me self defense," Barry said a bit proudly, puffing his chest out with a smile. "Apparently lab geeks need to know it too and you know how clumsy I am. But he's really patient and stuff. He's teaching me boxing because it fits well with skinny guys on the defensive I guess." The lie hurt a bit to say, but it wasn't like Barry could tell his dad the truth and most of that was true. "His name is Len, bit of a hard ass sometimes but I think he's just a big fat softy on the inside you know?"

Henry chuckled and rolled his eyes a bit. "Let me take a guess here. He's got at least two tattoos, a motorcycle, and older than you, yeah?" Barry sputtered a bit and Henry's chuckle turned into full blown laughter. "Sorry kid, but you've got a type, always have. It's not going to cause problems at work will it? That you like this guy?"

"I-I don't- I never said I-" The speedster pouted, but really he couldn't deny it. Len had been training him for the past few days now and it was honestly the best part of his day. Ever since Len showed up actually, Barry was drawn to him. He was easy to talk to, didn't seem to mind when Barry spoke to fast or dominated a conversation. And he didn't make Barry feel awkward when he had to backtrack and explain something because Len didn't understand it. Plus he was kind of hot. Okay so yeah, Barry had a big fat gay crush on the guy. "It's not going to come to anything," he said quietly, smile on his face though it was a bit sad and didn't reach his eyes. "He's only here temporarily and I don't think he likes me like that. Besides, I think he's got someone at home anyway. He's just a good friend, and for the record, I don't know if he has any tattoos."

That much was true too. Len trained with him every once in a while, but he rarely took off the long sleeved Henley he wore. When they weren't training, he was always wearing the Wayne Tech sweater they'd given him the first day he was there. He hadn't seen any more than the man's forearms when he rolled the sleeves up. Barry didn't like to pry though and a man like Leonard Snart, a criminal who'd been blown up, probably had his fair share of scars he didn't want showing.

"Mmhmm, sure," Henry continued. "Well be careful, okay? You tend to fall hard for the bad boys that only end up breaking your heart." There was a softness in his dad's eyes that showed he cared, showed he just wanted Barry happy, but it churned in the speedster's stomach that he had to see it between a plane of glass.

"Course dad, I'll be fine. Besides he-"
Barry's words were cut off when his watch beeped— a new wayne tech watch that Bruce had given him upon joining the team. A little icon on the screen blinked, a message from the Bat saying there was trouble downtown. The speedster groaned and shot his father an apologetic smile. "I gotta go. I'll be back in a few days yeah?"

"Of course, Bare. Go be a CSI," his dad said proudly.

Too bad that wasn't the job he was actually leaving for.

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"Bartholomew Henry Allen," Len growled into the comm system, having to reach over Alfred to do it. "Get your ass back here right now before I come out there to get it."

Diana was standing beside Len in the main computer room of the cave, already in her 'uniform' in case Barry needed help.

It was supposed to be an easy job downtown— easy enough for the speedster at least. The rest of the league was busy other than Diana and they had both decided that Barry could handle it on his own since downtown was on his way back from the prison. Problem was, Len didn't expect to see Killer Frost in all her glory through Barry's camera. And robbing a lab of all things, hair chopped short and ice spreading from her hands all the way up her shoulders and throat.

Len assumed since Barry hadn't met this Earth's Captain Cold yet, he didn't know about the fact that his speed slowed down in the cold.

"No it's okay! Batman has a villain like this! I can get her."

"Barry no!" But the kid was cocky and too damn good hearted for his own good. There were civilians in the lab and even Len knew that Frost didn't care who got hurt if they were in her way. He could feel the threat of the Oculus at the back of his mind, tugging at him. Images of snow storms and arctic winds, dead scientists and engines that didn't belong flooded through him before being over taken by images of snowflake necklaces and tight leather jackets, snow white curls and lips as blue as the sky. By the time he was finally able to push past the images, Barry was stumbling through a hall and Killer Frost was already gone.

"Mr. Allen, are you alright?" Alfred questioned and Len could feel Diana tensed beside him, worry radiating off her.

"I-I don't know," the speedster answered shakily. "I'm so c-cold..."

Len cursed and pushed his hand over the comm button again. "Barry, get back here as fast as you can. Push that adrenaline and get back here, now." He shoved away from the computers, turning to Alfred and Diana instead. "I need as many blankets as you can find, heated ones if your rich friend has one. And medical supplies if he's hurt."

"What's going on?" she questioned, frowning as Alfred rushed off to do as he was asked.

"Barry's powers don't work well with the cold," Len grumbled, turning slightly when a weak flutter of air pushed into the room. He was moving before Barry had even come to a full stop, launching himself forward as the kid stumbled and lost his balance. Trickles of frost were still on his suit, though most of it had melted off in the heat from the speedster's powers. Still, Barry sagged like a bag of potatoes the second Len's arms were around him. Even through the suit and the layers the thief wore, he could feel the cold radiating off of the hero. Diana was at their side a second later, helping him lift Barry and between the two of them they managed to get him to the medical bay
rather quickly. "I told you not to confront her," Len growled, gently peeling the mask off the boy's face though he wanted to rip the damned suit off him completely.

Barry's lips were a pale purple, his teeth chattering and limbs shaking. Usually vibrating would warm him up, but as the cold was so directed on him and slowed him down, his shaking was more like a normal person's and Len couldn't help but worry that Frost had hit Barry a lot harder than Caitlin would have normally in his own Earth. Frost still had a conscience where he came from.

"S-sorry... s-s-she had, had a- god why am- why am I so c-cold?"

"Cold is the opposite of speed," Len told him, head shooting up once Alfred returned with a bundle of blankets. "We need to get him out of this suit and under as many blankets as possible. Regular ones first, then heated ones on the outside. We can't heat him up too fast, but if we can get him warm enough to start vibrating, his speed should be able to do the rest for us." The other two nodded and went to work on the speedster's suit, both knowing more about how to take it off than Len did. Instead, he focused on Barry, hands framing his face and skull, feeling for any sort of injury. His eyes were drooping, but Len patted his cheek. "Stay awake, Scarlet. Focus on me, yeah? Are you hurt anywhere?"

The kid gave a jerky sort of motion that might have been a shrug. "J-just need to warm u-up. I-I'll heal, I'll heal-"

"No you won't, you idiot. If you're injured anywhere, tell me now. The cold doesn't just slow down you speed, it slows down your metabolism and your healing too. You'll bleed out before you warm up."

Barry blinked, his tired mind working through the words a bit sluggishly but he nodded anyway. "M-my leg... she-she got my l-leg. Dunno how b-b-bad." A violent shiver wracked through him when the butler and hero finally managed to pry the suit all the way off. Barry was pale, too pale for Len's comfort and his fingers and toes were starting to turn blue.

"I don't understand," Diana frowned as she looked down at the boy. "He should be heating up already but it only looks like he's getting worse."

Len got to work on covering Barry with blankets in the order he'd told them while Alfred got to work on the kid's leg. It was nasty looking, the skin around the wound angry and black from the cold. The blood was sludgy, but not free flowing, which could be good or bad depending on how deep the wound was. "Frost's powers don't work like that," he told Diana as he turned on one of the heated blankets. "She doesn't make you cold like my-" he paused, shaking his head. "She doesn't make you cold, she sucks all the heat out of the air or what she touches. If she had just made Barry cold, he'd be recovering quicker, but she didn't. She sucked out his body heat, giving him nothing to use to recover."

Images of blue lips kissing the Flash- his Flash- flickered through his mind, ice caging around hands and shattering, explosions of frosted air blowing people back. It was frustrating because he saw the images, remembered things he shouldn't be able to remember, and yet he had no control over it. He couldn't reach into his own head and pull out images that he needed.

"You seem to know a lot about this Frost woman," Alfred commented when he'd finished cleaning and stitching Barry's wound. "And about the young Mister Allen's abilities."

Len didn't like the tone in the old man's voice, but he shrugged, putting a hand to the kid's forehead to feel his temperature. Still not warm enough, but hopefully getting better. He ran his fingers through Barry's hair before catching himself, just barely managing to not yank his hand away. "I
make it my business to know all there is to know about the Flash. We had a... game going before I got pulled into the shit show that was the Legends. As for Frost? I never met her, but... I know about her powers." He wasn't sure if the butler knew what he'd told Barry about the left over Oculus in his head. Even if he knew the others had over heard- or at least the Bat- none of them had brought it up, and he sure as hell wasn't going to yet. "On my Earth, Frost was a scientist who worked with the Flash. There was an accident with some dark matter that infected hundreds of people in the city and she got powers from it. It's how my Flash got his powers too. Speaking of kid," he said, turning down to find Barry's brown eyes blinking up at him, "remind me to talk to you about thermal threading."

"T-that'd be n-nice," the speedster chattered, a goofy blue smile on his face. "C-could do with- thermal threading."

Alfred frowned as he covered Barry's leg with the blankets and started attaching sensor's to the boy's chest, the vitals being displayed on a screen next to the bed. "Were you not the Flash's enemy? And he allowed you so much information about him?"

Len shrugged again. "Like I said, we had a game going. I knew his identity too. I had to know what the kid could take and what he couldn't, what his weaknesses were. We made each other better at what we do, it was a challenge."

"Being a better thief hardly seems like something to be proud of."

Anger flickered through Len's chest, but he pushed it down. "Says the man behind the comms of a vigilante out there branding people. I may not be a great person, I may steal because I enjoy it and I'm good at it, but I keep the damage to a minimum for the most part, especially after Barry." He didn't go into any more detail about that, instead glowering at the butler. "And I feel you should be more grateful at the moment because I'm the only one here who happens to know about Barry's abilities because none of you idiots have decided to learn, or even train him." His eyes flickered over to Diana with a look that she knew meant he wasn't talking about her, and she gave him a small smile in return. It sent a series of memories flickering behind his eyes- old war planes and battlefields, a lover's death and a mother's goodbye. He gritted his teeth and pushed the memories away just as a cold hand wrapped around his wrist. Len jolted, opening his eyes to look down at Barry.

He hadn't realized his fingers were still threaded through the boy's hair, tightening in his anger, and he quickly let go, though Barry's grip didn't let him pull away. Instead, the speedster smiled up at him and leaned his cheek against Len's hand. "I'm okay, Len... I'm ok-kay."

That expression on the kid's face sent Len's heart tumbling and falling through his chest, his stomach rolling with emotions he hadn't felt in too long. He knew what they were, of course he did, and he can't say it was really a surprise. Mick would have laughed at him if he were here, pointed out a long time ago that Barry was just his type. Though while he'd flirted with his own Flash, he had never been interested in him like that. Sure, Earth-1 Barry Allen was attractive, Len would have to be blind not to know that, but he'd never been interested in him like that.

This kid though, with his goofy grin and a jaw chiseled by the gods... this kid with brown eyes like age old whiskey who said his name like it rolled off his tongue perfectly... Len couldn't help the burning in his chest or the worry when he'd seen Barry stumbling into the room hurt. He hadn't felt love in a long time, if ever, and it almost hurt. Sure, his thing with Sarah might have turned into something eventually, but it was a gentle comradarie turned attraction, not an intense smack in the face like this was. This Barry might know that Len had a criminal past, but he'd never seen it. He'd never seen what Len could be, what he could do. It was a blank slate that the rogue was staring at in hope of something forming, in hope that-
Hope, he sneered in the back of his mind. Hope was something he couldn't afford...
Lightning Strikes Twice

Chapter Summary

Barry wakes up and talks to Len about his dad. Len has a breakdown.

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone! Thank you so much for your patience and wonderful comments! This chapter is going to be full of a lot of references and stuff, but I really wanted to kind of delve a bit deeper into Len's powers and bring in some new characters, so enjoy!

When Barry woke up next, he wasn't as cold as he remembered. He was a bit groggy, more sore than normal, but he was warmer, which was nice. He was still in the med room and the lights were dimmed down so he assumed it was probably nighttime, or the team had just been nice enough to turn them off for him.

It took the speedster a few moments after opening his eyes to realize he wasn't alone in the room. Len sat in an oversized armchair beside the cot, curled up in what looked like the most uncomfortable position ever, but there was a sort of peace to his face that Barry had never seen there since the thief had arrived. He didn't want to wake him, but he couldn't help that his eyes were drawn to the man.

Like he'd told his dad the day before, Len was handsome. Probably the most handsome man Barry had ever met. He had an almost rogueish look to him, but as he slept, Barry could see the softness in the lines on his face, see the weight being lifted off the man's shoulders. He was a lot older than Barry, though he didn't much look it, and the grey in his hair made him look more distinguished. He was toned under his layers of clothes, the speedster could tell by the way the shirt pulled against Len's arms and shoulders, just a tad too tight in some areas. And his hands... gods his hands. Barry had imagined one too many times those long, delicate fingers trailing down his chest or running through his hair like the day before. He had to hold back a shiver at the memory, and it had nothing to do with the cold.

He briefly wondered what it'd feel like to run a hand over the thief's hair. Was it soft or scratchy?

"Take a picture, Scarlet, I hear they last longer."

Barry might have jumped if he wasn't still groggy, but his eyes raised from Len's hands to his face, seeing his eyes still closed. How long had he been awake, he wondered? Was he sleeping at all? In fact, Barry didn't even know where Len was sleeping in the base since he got here. The speedster spent a lot of time in the cave- and he means a LOT- but with work and his own secret hide out, he didn't tend to stay overnight here. In fact, whenever he was here, Len was already up and wandering about. Barry couldn't help but wonder if Len slept well while he was here.

He opened his mouth to ask, just as those beautiful blue eyes fluttered open to meet his. They looked tired, a bit foggy like he'd just woken up, but with Len you could never tell what was true and what
was what he wanted you to see. He was extremely good at hiding things.

"Barry?"

"Do you have any tattoos?"

Well... that wasn't what he wanted to ask, but his brain had blanked the second those blue orbs landed on him and he stuttered out the first thing that came to mind.

Len looked just as surprised at the question, but he quickly covered it with a smirk and a little roll of the eyes. "A few," he answered, shifting in the chair and stretching his arms high above his head. Unfortunately for Barry, the sweater he wore was way too big and didn't give him a peak at all of the man's stomach. Was it as toned as his arms? Was it average? Maybe slightly pudgy? "Why do you ask?"

Barry shrugged as much as he could under the mound of blankets and turned onto his side to face the man. "I told my dad I was getting self-defense training and he predicted that you have tattoos, a motorcycle, and are quote unquote 'a bad boy'."

It took a few seconds for Len's smirk to settle in and the speedster found himself blushing at the man. "You told your father about me?"

"A little bit," Barry answered a bit too quickly. "I try and tell him as much as I possibly can without letting him know I'm the Flash, you know? He gets all worried and stuff, especially since I had a habit of getting beat up in high school and I fall for the bad boys way too much. But you know, he's a dad so he's super protective." He shrugged again as he babbled and wrapped some blankets up in his fingers. It always hurt to talk about his dad, knowing he was locked away for something he didn't do. He also hated talking about it because no one believed him.

Len grunted as he pushed himself to his feet, waving at Barry's legs. "Blankets off, Scarlet. Lemme get a look at your leg and see how it's healing." They were silent for a while as Barry shucked the blankets and grimaced at the bloody wrap around his leg. He didn't remember it being that bad. He sat up and dangled over the edge so that Len could get a better look at it and start unwrapping it.

After a while, the rogue spoke.

"Doc Allen was good people. Got me into some tough situations a few times, but he... didn't belong in prison."

Barry tensed at that, back shooting ramrod straight at the new information. Len didn't talk much about his other life- other Flash, yeah, all the time, but his other life? He wouldn't so much as hint towards anything private. "You knew my dad?"

The thief nodded as he tossed the used bandages aside and took a look at Barry's leg. "Blankets off, Scarlet. Lemme get a look at your leg and see how it's healing." They were silent for a while as Barry shucked the blankets and grimaced at the bloody wrap around his leg. He didn't remember it being that bad. He sat up and dangled over the edge so that Len could get a better look at it and start unwrapping it.

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The thief nodded as he tossed the used bandages aside and took a look at Barry's leg. It wasn't completely healed yet, but it was close enough that he grabbed a few things to start taking the stitches out. "I was in Iron Heights more times than I can count. Been in and out of there since I was 14. Doc Allen was a lifer," he said with a bit of an apologetic tone. "Always on his best behavior, didn't pick fights, had a good relationship with the guards. But, being in there for so long, he was bound to get into trouble eventually. One of the Families didn't like that he was so quiet, figured he was planning something. They were new to the Heights, idiots most of them, didn't know the story of the Doc like the rest of us did." The thief shrugged as he pulled a few more stitches out. "Mick and I were doin' a few years for a small time robbery. I knew the Family, and I stuck my nose where it didn't belong. Took a knife to the shoulder. It was hell to heal, couldn't really use my arm for a few weeks, but the prison doc said if Allen had gotten hit instead like intended, he might not have made it."
It was pretty much the longest peak into the other man's life that Barry had ever gotten, and his wide brown eyes were staring at Len in an almost awe-like trance. He swallowed and shook his head. "You took a knife for my dad?"

The thief shot him a raised eyebrow before tugging out the last stitch. "Wasn't your dad, but yeah. Like I said, he was good people. He didn't deserve to be there."

A shock of energy wrecked through Barry's spine and with a flicker of lightning, he had Len's wrists wrapped between his fingers. The man looked calm- he'd seen the move coming- but his eyes had grown a bit guarded from the shock. "Y-you think my dad's innocent?"

Len's eyebrows drew together in confusion before something like understanding settled on his face. "No," he drawled slowly, still unsure of how to break the news to the kid. "I know he's innocent. Barry, my Barry, already caught the real killer." He forced himself not to tense when images of yellow suits and red lightning flickered behind his eyes, faces morphing into other faces and blurring red eyes staring through the darkness. He was shocked back into reality when Barry's fingers tightened on his wrists.

"Who is it? Who did it?" Barry asked, desperation in his voice and eyes wide at the prospect of a life long question being answered.

"Barry," he said calmly, forcing himself to take even breaths. He could feel the Oculus energy swimming inside him, like a predator prowling in a cage just waiting to be let out. "I'm going to need you to let go of me now."

'To me, you've been dead for centuries.'

'Death is never the end. And Lightning always strikes twice.'

"Len? Hey, are you okay? You're starting to- you're glowing again. Do I need to get you in the cell?" The red speedster asked, though his voice was far away. With a barely there nod, the thief could feel his stomach pitching and Barry's arms around him. A century later he was trapped behind a familiar glass and when he opened his eyes, all he could see was Barry and the blue flames surrounding them. "Len?"

The flames licked across his skin, starting at his hands where he'd last touched the Oculus, before spreading up his arms, his shoulders, his chest. They burned with energy, but they didn't hurt. It was more... overwhelming, too much noise in his head. Like the electricity from a lightning storm instead of the burn of a fire. "Who would have thought," he hissed, echoing the loudest voice in his head, "I have a legacy of my own. Centuries before I will even be born."

The speedster shifted, eyes glancing around him at the blue flames that licked across the glass between them. "Len? What's happening?"

"It's backwards. It's reverse. It's destiny." The scene shifted and the man shoved himself back against the wall, reaching up to grab at his head with his hands. There was too much, too many voices too many images trying to force their way into his head. Fighting for dominance, fighting for the first spot in line. "Are. You. Listening. To me, Barry? Class is in session!"

"What's going on? I heard the alarm go off for the cell- is that Snart?"

"Just- Just stay back. I don't think he's really aware that we're here right now," Barry said, addressing the new voice in the room. The flames flickered out, extending Len's senses and he could feel the others- the princess, the bat, the god... all lined up behind the speedster like a boy band. "Len? Can
you hear me? You're overloading again, you need to calm down."

The energy surged inside him and he found himself launching himself at the glass, slamming his hands on it and feeling it vibrate under the force. "I bet your parents taught you that you mean something," he sneered, eyes on Barry but the Bat was the one who tensed. "That you're here for a reason. My parents taught me a different lesson, dying in the gutter for no reason at all-" He flinched as the scenes changed too fast for him to keep up, even as he squeezed his eyes shut to try and focus. He wasn't used to being so out of control. "We know better now, don't we? Devils don't come from hell beneath us. No, they come from the sky- They understood that war is a god. A god that requires sacrifice- Maybe it's that Gotham City and me... we just have a bad history with freaks dressed like clowns- I can save today. You can save the world- I wish we had more time-"

"What is happening? How does he know these things?" Diana asked once Len's flames licked out towards her. They were seeping through the glass, through the cage he'd been trapped in. Like an animal, wild and dangerous.

Barry shook his head, jutting his arms out towards Len. "I don't know! I asked about my dad and he just- he started freaking out!"

"How do we stop it?" Superman asked.

Len turned on him then, the sneer on his face deepening and his fingers curling into fists, nails scraping against the glass. "Nobody cares about Clark Kent taking on the Batman- Martha, Martha, Martha- I'm known to be quite vexing-" He winced and reached up to hit the side of his temple with one of his hands. "Stupid Bats, you're ruining date night!"

"This is getting trippy," Barry said, frowning at him.

"Hello Barry, how was your trip- No, that's not right- what exactly are your intentions with my sister?"

"Sister!" Barry piped in, turning towards Bruce with a slightly hopeful look. "His sister! If we can find her- I mean, maybe he just needs an anchor? Something to focus on that's familiar? Her name is Lisa-"

Bruce nodded, typing away at the tablet in his hands. "Lisa Snart, small time thief. Victor says she's in a place called Saints and Sinners-" Barry was gone before the bat could even finish his sentence.

"Lisa was safe," Len sneered, punching the glass hard enough to make even Diana flinch. "Why did you do that? Lisa was safe!"

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