# When Ice And Lightning Align

Summary

For some, the best things in life come unexpectedly. The crisis is over, the red skies have vanished, and it's a new world. A new Earth full of chances to fix past mistakes and realize that great opportunities are right in front of you. Barry Allen intends to explore it from a place of uncertainty, without future articles telling him how to live his life. And this new direction might just lead to some unrealized romance with a certain doctor and her frosty side. With new threats and old foes with new looks making themselves known, the only way to navigate this new Earth is together.
"Don't even bother coming home tonight!" Iris West exclaimed, storming off with her bag and coat in such a manner that pissed Barry Allen off so much more than it really should have. Maybe it was the fact that he had bought the loft, yet he was the one that was kicked out or maybe it was the status of relationship, he didn't care enough to figure it out.

Once she left Barry breathed in deeply and ran his fingers through his hair, attempting to calm himself down. He finally let the tears out, letting the wet beads of hatred and sadness pour down his face as he let a ragged breath escape. Every breath that passes, he can't help but remember each second as it happened. What led to where he was sitting right now, alone in the Cortex. Everything is so vivid in his mind.

He doesn't notice Caitlin step into the cortex, or the way she tears up from seeing him so broken and defeated. Seeing him like this feels so raw. It almost feels like she should look away, like she's intruding on something so deeply human and personal that it's almost wrong to watch. But she can't leave him alone like this. She can't leave him to pick up his pieces all by himself.

He opens his eyes ever so slowly, blinking as white and dark spots start forming shapes, there's a ringing in his ears, an ache in his body, an itch in his throat. He sighed deeply, running a hand over his face before stopping to pinch the bridge of his nose, releasing an exhausted breath. That's when he notices the woman standing in front of him with tears running down her cheeks and onto her sweater. In the next moment, she is tightly hugging him. "It's okay." She speaks, but it was almost as if she was trying to convince herself of that fact instead of him.

He smiles as he thinks back to one of the several great memories over the last few years. Him and Caitlin cooking and laughing together, simply enjoying their company. How terrible he was at making an apple pie and just how perfect she was at it. That was a good memory, and he would never forget it. Just like that night at the karaoke bar. Great moments forever etched into the canvas that is his mind. He will always remember the same wonderful person who gets him in a way no one else does, who is always there for him, who makes him a better hero, a better person. "I'm okay, Cait." Barry whispers against her hair, tightening the hug and letting the smile on his face grow. "I'm okay."

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It was strange no doubt. A brand new world full of possibilities and surprises waiting to be discovered. As he turned the corner, papers blowing in the wake of his speed, he came to a stop in the cortex of Star Labs. He needed a break, he needed to breathe. On this new Earth, his and Iris' marriage was deteriorating quickly.

And even after revealing the past to her, the way things used to be before this new Earth Prime, it just wasn't the same between them. To be honest, Barry felt this even before Crisis.

He knew he should feel worse, feel like he couldn't live without her but he didn't feel like that. He felt weirdly liberated. He was perplexed by his own feelings and the sounds of grunts broke him out of his trance. He stepped into the speed lab, and saw Frost slashing at a dummy. "Frost? Are you alright?" Barry asked warryingly.

Frost stopped, taking a breather before giving a simple nod at the speedster. He saw her progressively get angrier and angrier as she continued her beatdown on the training dummy before she lost her balance and a shard of ice flew directly at Barry, which of course he was quick to
dodge.

Frost immediately apologized, but Barry saw something was wrong. The tears started to poke from her eyes as she sat down on the ground. He moved closer to her, sitting across from her on the cool concrete ground. "Frost, I want to let you know you and Cait can always talk to me. Is everything okay?" She avoided his eyes for a moment but as he continued to stare at her with concern, she couldn't put on the cold act anymore.

"No, its not!" She answered awfully loudly, and she hated that she made him flinch. She didn't want the one person that truly understood her besides Caitlin to leave her alone. "I can't stop thinking about every awful thing ive done. Helping Savitar, trying to kill you and leaving the team for so long and helping Amunet! I'm a terrible person Barry, how can I make up for all that I've done?" She spoke.

Barry simply raised his hand on set if on her jean clad knee, smiling. "Where are you right now?" He asked rhetorically. "Not in a cell." He pointed out matter-of-factly. "Frost you've come so far. If I'm honest a lot of it was my fault. By me creating Flashpoint I gave Caitlin powers, then she was pressured to use her abilities she was so scared of because I was in trouble. Then I was so distant from everyone on the team because of Iris and trying to prevent her death, Frost, I dont blame you or Cait for what you did, it was my fault."

"Barry, you can't he so hard on yourself. If anyone else had the powers you had, they would change something in their past in an instant." She spoke for her and Caitlin. "The only reason I trusted Savitar was because I was scared and he had a face I could trust. I helped him do so many terrible things to you and the team because I trusted his face. I can't ever forget that."

"Frost, you have become one of the greatest heroes I know. You've changed your life, you decided that you decided your fate, no one else. You are a hero, now and forever." Barry smiled, he went to move his hand away, but Frost intertwined her fingers with Barry's. "And a badass one at that." He added cheekily, and they both shared a laugh.

"I'm scared Barry." She admitted, and she hated how small her voice sounded, but if she was going to be weak in front of anyone, it was going to be Barry. "Everything has changed. This new Earth is so different, new villains, old ones with new abilities, how are we gonna fight this?"

"Together." He said. "But you're wrong, one thing hasn't changed." Frost looked towards him with questioning eyes. "I'm still here, and I'll help you every step of the way." Frost smiled, wiping away a tear that had escaped her eye.

"Thank you Barry." She said, and the two moved in for a hug. She sighed into the movement, letting the speedster wrap his arms around her figure.

The day after, they had to put a stop to a burning building, which proved harder than expected. Frost had put out the fire easily, but Barry was having trouble getting the civilians out and that was before attempting to find the one that had started the fire. But before he could even attempt to apprehend the man, the building collapsed on him. Frost hurdled through the debris, searching for his limp body that she eventually found.

The tears never stopped as they traveled back to Star Labs, finally laying him down against the medical bed. "Barry listen to me. You have to wake up!" Frost said, dropping her head. "I can't lose you."
Hey, hope you enjoyed the first chapter of my new story, please comment you're thoughts and any ideas you might have for future chapters. Thanks for reading!
Barry awoke with a start, taking in his surroundings as he swung his feet off the bed and rose to a sitting position. He noticed he was no longer in his Flash suit that was covered in ash but instead a black Star Labs shirt and a pair of sweatpants. He looked around Star Labs, but it was completely empty, devoid of any life.

There was no sign of Caitlin, Frost or anyone on the team as he cautiously stepped forward. As he was about to enter the cortex the room’s walls bent and twisted like a carnival funhouse, shifting the area into another room, one he was all too familiar with, his childhood home. In the center of the room stood Caitlin cradling a baby probably a few months old in her arms. "Shh, Shh, daddy will be home soon." The Speed Force mirage of Caitlin cooed, gently swaying back and forth.

"Caitlin, what's going on?" Barry inquired to no answer, the mirage just continued to sing soothingly to the child with a loving smile plastered on her features. "Cait?"

"It could've been yours. All of it." A voice came from behind and Barry swiveled around, seeing another mirage only this one was in the form of Ronnie Raymond.

"Ronnie?"

"Caitlin, that baby in her arms... You could've had it all." The speedforce entity declared, slowly circling the speedster. "You had feelings for her Barry, but you just couldn't shake your childhood crush and now look at you, a failing marriage, an unhappy life, Barry Allen living in misery."

Barry let his head sink to the ground.

"I thought I loved Iris, but honestly it hasn't been the same since I came back from the speedforce." Barry raised his gaze to Caitlin after a few moments and admired the way she sang softly to the infant.

"You still can." Barry turned to the Speed Force illusion and furrowed his eyebrows. "It's not too late Barry, you can still have it."

"What do you mean?" The Scarlet Speedster asked.

"Run, Barry, Run!" His voice came as if across a great distance and echoed around the speedforce.

Barry turned and began running, the crackle of orange lightning filling the illusion and when he finally stopped running, he was deep inside a forest, watching as Frost stood in front of Savitar.

"Frost!" Barry called out to no avail and watched as the time remnant of himself revealed his identity to her.

The ground began to shake and twist, morphing into yet another environment: The karaoke bar from years ago that held amazing memories. "Barry Allen! Come on up!" Caitlin exclaimed drunkenly.

Barry looked around confusingly, he was now wearing the outfit he had on that night and he turned as soon as speedforce 'Ronnie' appeared again. "You know, she wasn't completely drunk that night right? No, up there is Caitlin Snow with enough judgement Barry. She let loose with you, that something she never did when her and Ronnie were in public."

Barry turned back to look up at Caitlin again as she continued to chant his name, unable and unwilling to stop the smile that grows across his face. "What am I supposed to do?"
"Join her."

Barry obliged after a moment of thought, running up onto the stage and smiling at Caitlin before his surroundings shifted again, this time to the morning at Star Labs after the night at the karaoke bar. "Summer loving..."

"That I do remember." The memory is as fresh in his mind as the day it happens but the next part he doesn't recall.

"Cait, I want to tell you something. last night, when that girl gave me her number and you wanted me to call her I was disappointed." Caitlin turned to Barry puzzlingly. "I was disappointed because I wanted the opposite... I guess I wanted you to be jealous?"

"What is this?" He asked the Speedforce. "This never happened."

"No it didn't, but it could've. Barry, these are the thoughts you had in your head at that very moment. These are the words you longed to tell her Barry, but you didn't. Why?"

"I guess... I thought the feelings weren't mutual. I was confused. For so long I thought I wanted nothing more than Iris, but then I met her and everything shifted. But I couldn't do that to her, she had found out Ronnie was alive. She had hope that she could be with him again and I couldn't try and take that away."

"The paragon of love unable to express his own feelings. Ironic." The mirage spoke. "Barry you missed several opportunities to tell her how you truly felt. That moment you saw her at Mercury Labs after not speaking to her for six months, after Zolomun let her go, after you had rescued her from her decent into darkness, moment after moment where you could have told her, and your fear got the best of you. Barry Allen, your time is running out, you won't have forever to tell her."

"I-" Barry looked at the mirage of Caitlin once again before dropping his head to the ground. "I don't deserve her. I don't deserve anything." The scarlet speedster spoke, but his thoughts ran wild. There was no way she even felt the same way.

"You've saved them time and time again. Have you forgotten how they fought for you when you were about to sacrifice yourself to the Dominators? How Caitlin and the rest of your family, not Iris, wanted and had hope to bring you back from the speedforce? All the relieved faces Caitlin and Frost make every time you save them or they realize you have returned from a mission? Wake up Barry. Wake up to the truth."

With that, the speedsters eyes finally flutter open and Frost is right by his side as he wakes up. It's a pleasing first thing to see to say the least, knowing she'll always be there for him. "You're okay! Me and Caity were so worried." She said, leaning down and wrapping her arms around the man tightly.

The scarlet speedster groaned, coaxing Frost to release her grip. Barry groaned as he rubbed his forehead, before focusing on her. "I don't feel okay. My head is killing me."

He sees the worry flash across Frost's face before he focuses on the figure standing behind her. She turns to see where his eyes are set, but doesn't see anyone. "Barry, what's wrong?"

Barry is perplexed as how she fails to notice the fact that H.R Wells, a dead man, is watching Barry closely. "Nothing, I'm fine." Barry smiles but feels uneasy as H.R begins walking back and forth with a sly smirk on his face before the figure disappears completely behind Frost. He rises to a
sitting position, swinging his legs off the medical bed and letting out a sigh. Frost takes a seat next to him, letting the silver locks fade away as Caitlin resumes control. She is startled when Barry suddenly hugs her, but she accepts the gesture, and enjoys his presence. "Thank you, both of you, for everything you've done for me." Barry whispers into her hair, and Caitlin tightens the hug while the two bask in their comfort.
Leonard Snart awakens to an alarming sight, especially if you remember falling asleep inside of a damp and dingy prison cell that dampens you metahuman abilities. His vision is obscured by a cloth bag wrapped tightly around his head with a hole cut so he can breathe, and just as he begins to struggle against his restraints, the cloth is ripped off and the light of the room blinds him.

When his vision finally returns, he shares two things on common with the other man in the room. One, he is confused as hell. Two, he is a metahuman. The large man in front of him cuts off the rope around his wrists and throws them to the ground before scaling the steps and scowling down at the two metas.

They want to know who brought them here and why, and they're about to get their answer. "Leonard Snart and Mark Mardon, it's a pleasure to meet you both!" The charming and charismatic voice booms throughout the warehouse, a slight echo accompanying it as it bounces off the walls.

"Who the hell are you!" Mark Mardon calls out in a bored tone, which upsets the man a great deal. A man in a sleek black suit with a golden pattern steps out of the shadows, and they see a black skull mask obscuring his true features. "Hey, aren't you that Black Mask guy from Gotham City?" Mardon shouts.

"Yes, but I've grown bored with that city, I want a new playground." He says, leaning against the rail, looking down at the two metahumans, surrounded by his heavily armed men. "And I want you two to be my right hand men, you can finally get your revenge on this city. On the-

"Why the hell would we want to be your pets doing all your dirty work?" Mardon says, and in the very next moment his head explodes, sending chunks of flesh on everyone as his lifeless body hits the ground with a thud.

"Would anyone else like to interrupt me?" Sionis questions, and as the room remains silent he begins his journey down the staircase. "For years you have been mistreated. Called monsters, mistakes, constantly thwarted by this cities 'hero', the Scarlet Speedster. I'm offering you closure, a means to an end. An opportunity to kill the Flash. What do you say Snart?"

Leonard Snart eyes the man carefully before giving a smug smirk. "I'm sorry, but I don't trust anyone that doesn't have the decency to show their face to me. So either take that stupid thing off, or I'm gone."

Sionis laughs a very boisterous laugh, before he sets his eyes on the man. "I'm sorry Leonard, but I can't, it is melted to my skin permanently. And I guess this is an important note, but you don't have a choice!" A look of confusion and concern crosses over his face. "You have had a bomb planted inside of your head, just like the unfortunate Weather Wizard here. So... I'd suggest you follow." The man looks down at the bloody mess on the walls and floor and the looks at one of his men. "Eww! Get this cleaned up!" He turns to Captain Cold, his eyes showing the smirk his face cannot. "Follow me."

He follows Roman Sionis into a room and Snart stands idly as the man pours a drink, handing it to him and taking a seat. "Who is the Flash?" He inquires after a few moments.

Captain Cold smirks and takes a big gulp of the alcoholic beverage before he sets it down on the table. "I don't know."
"Don't bullshit me Snart, I know about the little agreement you made with him. A little birdy told me everything about you." He pulls out the trigger to his bomb and sets it on the table, making sure the danger is apparent. "I know everything about you Leonard, even how your sister died. Him and his team killed her so why protect him?"

Tense silence passes between the two before the meta finally rises his eyeline. "Barry Allen."

Snart sees his eyes widen from behind the mask that is melted to his skin, before he laughs. "Who the hell is that?"

"Forensic scientist at the CCPD."

"You're serious?" Black Mask questions and by Snart's expression, he knows he is. "Well, why don't I learn a little about this Barry Allen."

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Iris was deep in thought, typing away at her computer as the doorknob to her office began to rattle before it stopped completely. Someone had tried to open the door, leaving Iris questioning who it was. Maybe it was Barry coming to talk things out?

The doorknob began to freeze up, with the entire door soon following until it all shattered. Captain Cold entered the room from where the door used to be. "Your heart's so cold, Iris West-Allen. Let's put you on ice!" Captain Cold aimed his hands at Iris and blasted towards her, not because he wanted to kill her, but because he wanted to have a little fun with her before he had to get down to business.

She leaped out of her seat, narrowly dodging the ice stream coming from his hands. "I want vengeance on the Flash for taking away my sister and you're gonna help me get it!" He shot another stream of ice, keeping her trapped against the wall. "The cold burns doesn't it? If you want to live, you're going to come with me on a little ride, and were gonna get Flash to come out and play. Sound good?" He chuckled as he formed a block of ice around his hand and used it to knock her unconscious.

When she woke up, she was laying on the floor as Snart and Sionis looked down at her. "Wakey, wakey, eggs and bakey!" Sionis sung in a gravelly manner. In a sudden spark of movement, Sionis grabbed Iris by the back of her neck and holds a knife to her throat. "I've got the perfect bait to lure Flash into a trap and put an end to the Speedster once and for all. Now I will rule this city!" Iris gasps and tries to pull away, but the knife presses against the underside of her chin, a small trail of blood flowing onto the steel. Roman puts his mouth up towards her ear. "Play along or else..."

Snart clears his throat and keeps a firm gaze on both of the two. "Well, Roman, You have several hostages for our little friend. But there's one problem, I've done this whole hostage thing before, it doesn't work out too well. He just speeds in and out in seconds and takes us down like that!" He says with a snap of his fingers.

Iris grunts in pain as Sionis tightens his grip on her hair. "Shut the hell up!" Black Mask shouts, kicking the back of her knees so she falls to the ground, tightening his grip on her hair. "Don't worry Snart, I have everything I need to take care of our little speedster problem." He says and his tone becomes more serious with his next words. "I've always wanted to see a Snart beneath me. So you are gonna follow my orders, or you'll be dead just like you sister." Leonards clenches his fists, his knuckles turning white.

"You need to let me go! You won't like what's going to happen next!" Iris says through gritted
"Oh, I wouldn't like what happens. What's going to happen? Huh? What's going to happen? Nothing's going to happen bitch! Shut her up boys!" One of his men plants a strip of duct tape across her mouth and ties her to the chair next to the other hostages before taping the piece of paper to her chest. "Alright, its show time!"

Barry closes the final file on his desk and releases a yawn as he stretches. He stands and slips on his coat, heading to turn off the small tv in his lab. He flinches as he sees Eddie Thawne standing behind the television, the second phantom he's seen since his trip through the speedforce. "You might want to watch this Barry, its important." He says, and Barry looks down at the screen cautiously.

"All camera's pointed at me!" Sionis yelled, grabbing everyone's attention. "I'm sure everyone knows who I am, but if you do not allow me to introduce myself. I am Roman Sionis, but you can call me Black Mask." the news room was quiet, and Roman didn't like that. "Does anyone not know how to show a little damn respect? CLAP!" He screamed, slamming his fists on the conference table in quick succession.

"I'm not afraid of you!" He heard a man say from behind one of the cameras and he began laughing hysterically. Seems like they forgot to tape up one of the hostages.

He told his men to cut the man loose, and they did, leaving the man in silence as Roman spoke. "Wooo! Such a brave soul!" Roman began beckoning the man to come forward with his index finger. He grew angrier when the man simply sat in place. "I always say, if your going to run your mouth, make sure your fists can back it up. Now, get the hell over here!" The man finally stood and began walking over with a shake in each step. "Have a seat please, tell us your name." The man, who was in his early thirties took a seat and hooked a finger around his collar, stretching in a nervous manner. "Why so nervous? I just want to know your name."

"Michael." He said timidly.

"Michael, what, don't have a last name?" Sionis said as he propped his feet up on the desk.

"M-miller."

"Michael Miller, that's some damn good alliteration there Mikey!" He exclaimed. "Now, I want to know why you seem so terrified when you just said that you weren't afraid of me." Roman said, bringing his feet off the table and moving closer to the man.

Before Michael could say anything, a phone in the news room began to ring, and Roman gestured for one of his men to bring it to him. "Hello?" He said. "Mrs. Miller! What's that? Please let your husband go, you'll do anything?" Roman hung the phone up and turned his attention to one of the cameras. "I'm sorry, but I will not be disrespected by some middle aged moron who works in a damn news room!" He screamed before pulling a pistol from his suit pocket and pulling the trigger.

Every camera lense was coated in blood and the desk had chucks of flesh coated across it. "Ew!!" Sionis said in a sadistic yet delightful manner. "Will someone please clean Michael up?" He waved his hand dismissively at the body.

He slid the gun back into his pocket and sat back down, turning his gaze to the main camera in the
"This message is to the Flash, to CCPD, and to the citizens of Central City. I own you now, I own this city. Just in case you thought I wasn't serious Flash, I have a few souls to help me."

The camera pans over to the audience in the room, tied up with duct tape covering their mouths. Barry looks over every one of them, and is surprised when he sees Iris front and center, with a sign taped to her chest. 'Come and get me, Flash.'
Screams echo in the large ballroom as the masked men entered the area, waving their guns around. One of the security guards rushing in pays for his heroism with a nice gunshot to his torso. The hostages sit in a circle in the center of the ballroom floor, a bomb and power dampening device sitting in the middle of their circle.

"Hello people of Central City. How are you all doing? I love what you've done tonight. Bringing so many people here. And some of you might live to tell your grandchildren of the night that you met Roman Sionis!" Sionis puts a hand over his heart and smiles underneath his mask. "And now, Central City has made me their number one most wanted criminal. I'm truly touched."

Cries and whimpers follow as Sionis' men patrol the party. In a flash the armed men are tied up outside the party and the hostages are free. Roman raises his hand and lets a round of bullets whip into the air, eliciting screams from the partygoers.

The Flash stops in front of Black Mask, the man in a suit making a clicking sound with his tongue. "Finally! What took you so long? I thought I was going to grow older waiting for you. I mean, these are supposed to be the golden years, but it isn't so golden when you're number one speedster is a no-show."

Veering left and veering right gives Barry a good view of the room. Then, he sets his eyes on Sionis.

"Come at me, then. I'm ready for you. Right here, were not getting any younger, Barry." Barry freezes as the words leave Roman's mouth. He feels a sudden pulse through the marble floor, and he feels the electricity in his body fade away as it dampens his powers. "I had that handy little thing installed before the party. Oh yeah, I should warn you of this little thing."

Sionis pulls open his vest to reveal a black box. He straps it to his chest. "You see if my heart rate or blood pressure elevates, by a certain Scarlet Speedster grabbing me, then boom goes the ballroom! Because, I planted a bomb on the dance floor and up in the chandelier."

"You're bluffing." Sionis just smiles and Barry moves over to where the hostages used to be and gives a good overview of the two devices.

He sees more armed men grow closer, forming a circle around him. He grows nervous, but two streams of ice suddenly hit some of the men and Barry's attention heads to the direction of the blasts. The rest if then scatter like cockroaches as Frost casually walks over to Barry. "Meta dampener?" Barry nods, pointing to the floor.

Frost takes a knee, placing a hand on the floor and letting the Ice completely form over the weapons, letting the freezing temperatures seep into the bomb and meta-dampener on the floor. Barry feels the electricity flow through body once again, a new wave of energy echoing across his veins. "Thanks, now we need to take care if the one up there."

Barry quickly moves Frost out of the way when he sees a group of icicles heading straight for them. He turns his head, watching as Leonard Snart cackles with sinister delight. "Hey Barry, big day isnt it?" He forms an ice axe in onehand, swinging it towards the heroes. Frost counters with an icicle, the two weapons shattering onto the floor upon impact.

"Snart?" Barry says questioningly. "What the hell are you doing here, you're supposed to be dead."
"I bet you'd like that Flash, but I'm going to kill you first." He says circling Barry and Frost, a smirk on his face. "I will make sure you stay awake long enough to feel every single cut against your skin, your death will be excruciating."

Lightning fills Barry's eyes as Snart forms an ice mace in his hand, swinging the weapon back and forth as the two heroes surround him. Frost moves in first, prompting Snart to block her hit and thus opens himself up for Barry to strike.

The scarlet speedster delivers a slew of punches in quick succession before he dodges the tip on a swinging icicle. "Listen to me Snart, I dont know why you're doing this, but this isnt you! You're a good guy." As soon as he finishes his sentence, Barry receives an icy fist to the face, blood begins dripping from his nose. Then, smart delivers a heasbutt to Frost, knocking her to the ground. As Barry looks over he sees Snart harshly kick Frost in the ribs as he walks over to talk him.

"How could you forget her so easily?! How could you forget the blood on your hands!" Snart says, freezing Barry's legs in place. "I will finally have vengeance for my sister!" He says as he raises an icicle in the air, but his revenge is cut short as Frost nails him with a blast of ice. Barry shakes off the shock of everything and vibrates through the ice. "I'm not going down that easily!" Snart screams and sends Barry flying onto an overlooking balcony in the ballroom with a huge blast of ice.

Frost creates a huge slide made of ice and Barry leaps off the balcony, sliding down the structure and turning 180, chucking a bolt of lightning at Snart which puts him down for good. Barry flashes to get a pair of meta cuffs and returns to slap them on Snart. "I've waited so long, I can wait a little longer." Captain Cold whispers as the police stuff him into a car and began their journey to Iron Heights.

"Damn what a good show!" Barry hears Sionis laugh. He had stayed here this whole time when he could've escaped? This is all just a sadistic game to him. Frost freezes the chandelier of the ball room before hitting it with a ball of ice, letting it crash against the floor. "I might have bluffed about the two bombs!" Barry turns to look at the gas that starts filling the ballroom as it pours out of the chandelier.

In a flash, Barry sets the last person outside before he returns to the ballroom as it fills up with gas and looks it over. Barry runs around and shuts the windows to prevent further spreading. "Okay, let's see, the composition of this means that the only way to stop the further spread of a chemical is to...

"You have to freeze it!" Barry turns around and Frost walks over to him with her arms swinging alongside her, eliciting a smirk from the scarlet speedster. Her hands rise up and the air fills with icy mist and then spreads to cool the chemicals to a level where they no longer able to contaminate anybody.

The helicopter begins to rise up off of the rooftop with some of Roman's men on the roof. They point their guns in wait. A crimson figure shoots out and disarms the men in a blink of an eye. Barry punches them out and secures them to make sure they cannot get back up and cause him any trouble.

"Oh, you just won't give up, will you?" Black Mask dangles Iris out of the helicopter after finishing strapping a vest onto her for a little added trouble. "All I have to do is pull the pin and I paint the town red with her blood. And I'll do it too. You know that...

One second, Iris is in Sionis' hands and the next second, she is ripped from his grip. Iris collapses
down on the roof with the vest lying dismantled next to her. Now, Flash gains the necessary momentum and rushes up. He lands the helicopter and pulls Black Mask out of it in a blink of an eye. Roman skids all the way across the rooftop.

As Barry moves closer Roman pulls a gun out of his coat from pure instinct and before he can fire the first bullet, The Flash snatches it out of his hand and delivers a punch. Barry pulls him up and slams him against a wall before running him down to the ground right into the waiting arms of the Central City Police Department. "Fun's over, Sionis."

Barry speeds back to the rooftop, helping Iris off the ground. she immediately goes to capture his lips but Barry pulls away instantly. "But I- I thought...?" She stammers.

He shakes his head. "We're done." Barry says simply as he flashes her to the street before giving Frost a lift back to Star Labs. As they cone to a stop in the Cortex Barry yanks his cowl down, letting out a heavy breath as he sits down. White locks fade away as Caitlin assumes control and takes a seat next to Barry.

"Are you okay?" He hears her ask suddenly, and he jerks his head to meet her concerned eyes.

"What do you mean?" He squints his eyes at her in confusion. Caitlin reaches over and runs her fingers through his beard to show her point. "Oh, I- I just haven't really give it much though. I haven't cared enough to shave it."

"Oh, Its just weird seeing you like this, so disheveled." She stops abruptly, pulling her hand away. "Sorry, I probably sound like an asshole." Barry smirks.

"No, you re right, it is weird. I'll probably shave it soon." He leans back in the chair, sweeping a hand through his hair to try and tame it. A phone breaks through their conversation, and Caitlin pulls it out to see a text from Joe.

"Its Sionis, he escaped from police custody and has Joe as a hostage, he-" Barry's gone before she even finishes the sentence, searching the entire city. He stops as he sees a police car smashed into the side of an abandoned warehouse.

He steps inside, and he feels his speed leave his system once again as he drops to the ground. Sionis is here. "You like that?" Sionis smirks as Barry catches his breath. "Y'know Barry, at first it was just business, but now its personal!" Sionis tells the scarlet speedster as he presses the knife against Joe's throat, blood beginning to run down the serrated steel. "I want to see your face as I slit his throat, so take off that mask now!"

Barry obliges, pulling down the cowl of his costume and slowly putting his hands up. "Listen Joe, everything is going to be okay."

"Enough of the sentimental bullshit!" Sionis says. "On the ground Allen, I want you to beg me to spare his life." He points to the concrete with his gun while his other hand holds the knife around Joe's throat tightly.

Barry stood in shock for a moment before he fell to his knees, hands on his head. "Please, let him go."

Roman let a long dramatic sigh. "Louder! More emotion! I mean this is the man who raised you as if you were his son for christ sake."

"Let him go, I'm the one you want Sionis!" Barry says even louder.
"C'mon Barry. Cry, scream, I wanna hear some goddamn begging!"

"Let him go you sadistic maniac!" Barry screamed, rising to his feet.

"There it is, the fire in your eyes! Thats what I've wanted to see." Roman announces. "But it's too little, too late."

Barry squinted his eyes at the man, but he saw the true intent in his eyes and Barry began running as fast as he could without his powers, knocking the knife out of his hand and delivering a few punches to his mask covered face.

Joe's body dropped to the ground and Barry kneels over him in worry. He smiles as he sees Joe is unscathed. Barry then feels a gun press against his skull and he closes his eyes. "I just want you to know Barry, I'll kill them all slowly, but you won't have to endure watching that, because you'll already be dead."

Barry whips around so fast Sionis questions if he somehow regained his powers but he hears the sound of a gunshot, sees a flash of white, and he feels the weight of himself hitting the concrete.

When he opens his eyes, he sees Barry standing above him. Sionis looks down, feeling the bullet wound in his abdomen, and the blood begins to flow onto the ground. Barry crouches down, watching the man closely. "It's over Roman, you are never hurting anyone ever again."

Sionis cuts through the pain with a hardy chuckle. "This isn't over Barry."

Barry stands as he hears the police sirens become louder and louder in the distance and he looks over at Joe before pulling his cowl back over his face and taking a few steps back.

He helps Joe up, leading him over to the ambulance and making sure hes alright. He stays a little while to make sure that Roman makes it to Iron Heights and after that he's gone with a trail lightning following. Joe was alright, Snart and Sionis were in Iron Heights and J'onn J'onzz helped wipe all the ballroom attendants memory of his secret identity. There was just one thing he needed to do: make sure Caitlin and Frost were alright.

Lightning fills Star Labs as Barry comes to a halt in the Cortex, smiling as he sees Caitlin has fallen asleep. He couldn't blame her, it had been a very long and stressful day but he can't let her sleep here for the night. After flashing out of his suit and into normal clothes he lifts her into his arms and flashes her to her apartment, setting her on the bed gently. "Thank you Barry." She says as he turns to run.

He turns back and smiles at her. "No problem Cait." Caitlin intertwined her fingers with his and stares up at him, a smile gracing her lips. The air was palpable, and the two were inching ever closer to each other every moment. Without hesitation, Caitlin places her hand on Barry's neck and brings him down the rest of the way on top of her, their lips moving in a steady rhythm.

They have to stop a few moments later for air, but Caitlin takes the time to begin unbuttoning his shirt. "Are you sure?" Barry asks uncertainly, and Caitlin answers him with a searing kiss. That's all he needed as he returns the motion with vigor, cupping her face in his hands. She can't help but smile into the kiss, she is filled with an overwhelming amount of love and adoration, and she knows without a doubt: She is in love with Barry Allen.
The clamorous sound of an alarm stirs the scarlet speedster from his peaceful sleep. He groggily opens his eyes, blinking away the blurriness before he smiles as he sees the sleeping figure next him, bundled up in the blankets. She's so beautiful, so peaceful, so... Perfect.

He reaches over and turns off the alarm before it can begin ringing again. He carefully removes the covers and gets out of the bed, a smile plastered across his face as last night vividly replays inside of his head. He speeds around the room, getting dressed in a second. As he finishes slipping on his shoes he leans over the bed, placing a kiss on Caitlin's forehead. "You're in love with her aren't you?" He hears 'H.R Wells' say behind him.

He turned, silently walking past him until another figure appeared in front of the door, this time in the form of Eddie Thawne. Barry clenches his fists as the ghost of his past makes a clicking sound with his tongue. "I wouldn't get too attached, you never know what can happen to the loved ones of a hero." The ghost pointed to the bullet wound in his chest. "Like this. This was all for nothing, I just trying to be the hero like you but it doesn't work out for anybody else." Barry simply reaches through the phantom and opens the door, leaving Caitlin's apartment and heading to the police station.

Over an hour later Caitlin awakens, stretching with a yawn before a huge smile stretches across her features. She turns to snuggle with the man she thought was there but is disappointed when she finds an empty bed. She opened her eyes, gazing around the room for Barry before she realized he was gone.

She sat up, taming her hair with a brush from her nightstand before she noticed her phone light was blinking, signaling she had a notification. Caitlin tapped her finger on the notification, opening Barry's message.

Barry: Can I come over tonight? I need to tell you something important.

Caitlin: Of course!

Barry: See you soon. <3

Those three little words sent a line of excitement through Caitlin Snow as she sat in the silence of her bathroom. Caitlin's thoughts ran wild as she bit her lip nervously. What did he want to talk about? Her heart flutters as the memories of last night sweep through her mind like a powerful gust of wind. Her head jerks up at the sound of the door being pounded on, and she stopped chewing on her nail and set her phone down on the nightstand, moving to get dressed.

She smiles as she realizes Barry left button up shirt here, most likely on accident. She loves this shirt because it holds a great memory for her: Barry had rescued her from her darkness while wearing this shirt, and that is just another moment in a long list of why when she fell in love with Barry Allen.

She puts it on, buttoning it up and slipping on a pair of pants before she heads into the living room to answer the door. The thunderous sound of knocking filled the quiet air as clutched the handle, pulling it open to reveal an unsteady man. Her eyes widened as she sees that he has a bomb strapped to his chest. "Mr. Sionis sends his regards."

She moves quickly, bolting into the kitchen of her apartment and throwing her hands up, allowing
Frost to create a thick wall of ice so they can be protected. She hears the explosion seconds before it hits her and then it's all black as her apartment begins to crumble around her.

... "CAITLIN! FROST!" Barry continued to scream. He couldn't find her. The explosion at her apartment building was horrible and part of building had crumbled while the other half was still standing. There had been multiple other bombs that had gone off simultaneously, and he tried to push the thoughts away that she wasn't okay, that she might be gone. "CAIT!" Barry frantically turned when he heard a strange noise but he saw the girl the steel land behind him and begin helping him search through the rubble.

Barry was everywhere at once, using his powers to his advantage as he searched for her. He dropped to his knees as he saw a trail of blood leading through a passageway of large concrete structures obscuring his body from entering.

Kara was quick to rectify that though, using her krytonian strength to slide the concrete out of the way. Barry's Jean's were soaked in blood, and a crowd had started to form and they had probably seen him use his powers but Barry didn't care, he would get J'onn to erase their memory later, he just needed to find her.

He wasn't prepared for the sight that met him, Caitlin curled up on the floor, clutching her stomach, silent tears rolling down her face. Her heartbeat was dangerously slow. "Cait." He gasped as he bent down to scoop her up in his arms. He kissed her forehead and started to walk her out of the debris ridden landscape. "You're gonna be okay."

"Bar... Barry... If this is it... I love you. Always. You're the best thing that ever happened to me." Barry is speechless for a moment, but he simply doesn't allow her to think that way.

"Cait, this is not it. It's not. I can't lose you. Hold on." Barry lies her on the ground and applies compression to her abdomen wound.

The paramedics finally see Barry and Caitlin and they quickly rushed over. When the paramedics got there and started to attend to Caitlin's wounds Barry moved to sit at the top of her body, stabilising her neck with his knees, leaning his face over hers, whispering comforting words.

Cautlin reached her hand up and held on to him, tighter than he knew she was capable of. "Sionis," She whispered and he shut his eyes, letting the rage wash over him as he thought about that monster. He pushed it away though, he needed to be here for Cait and Frost. They stayed like that for awhile, Barry quietly singing to her, only interrupted when the medics announced that they were sedating her for the journey to the Hospital. As they put her in the ambulance, Barry refused to let her hand go unless he absolutely needed to. He didn't want her to feel alone. Maybe he was scared that if he left her alone ever again, he might not ever get to see her smile or hear her laugh. Losing her, well, was unimaginable. He couldn't live without her.

The doctors eventually forced him away and he immediately went for a run around the city, but it only made him more anxious. He flashes through the city, stopping inside the cell of Roman Sionis. "I see you got my present." The man cackled as he stared at the ceiling of his prison cell. Barry phased through the bars, grabbing him by his orange jumpsuit and slamming him into the wall. "What are you gonna do, kill me?"

Barry released his grip on the man, stepping a few feet back. "You're going to rot in here." He told the criminal before speeding away.
ONE WEEK LATER...

He ran his hand over his face and through his beard, taking a few deep breathes as he entered Star Labs.

He stood silently in front of the mannequin that held his old costume, collecting his thoughts and his sanity before he disconnects the emblem from the suit and moves it around in his hand like a stress reliever. Of course it doesn't help, but he continues to do it as he slides slides down the hallway wall.

Barry flipped the flash emblem over in his hand for what felt like the hundredth time. He had no idea how long he had been sitting silently in the cortex for. It could have been days, months, year, or even just a few hours. His sense of time felt disorganized, like it was non-existent.

The only thing he was focused on was the fact that Frost and Caitlin were currently in the hospital because of him. Their wounds were healing quickly due to their powers but they still hadn't woken up. What if they never woke up?

No. He couldn't even bring himself to think of that. Instead he continued to flip the emblem over in his hands. "Barry... Are you here?" Cisco called out into Star Labs, walking into the hallway to see Barry sitting against the wall with his head against the wall. "Barry, it was not your fault."

"Dont even try to say it was not my fault, Cisco. I'm supposed to be the hero! I'm supposed to save people! I was supposed to protect her!" Barry exclaimed standing and throwing his hands over his face. "Instead..."

"How were supposed to protect her when you didnt even know it was going to happen?" The engineer inquired.

"It should've been me, not her. It's my fault, nobody else. I'm the hero, and because of that the people I love get hurt. It's my Responsibility to protect the ones I love... and I cant even do that! Now she probably won't ever wake up again because I should've.... I should've...."

"Okay Barry, listen to me. The last thing she needs right now is you to blame yourself. Do you want to help her? Go to her and remind her she still has something to live for on this world. Let her know there are people that still love and need her." Barry raises his head, letting the lightning fill his eyes before hes gone in an instant, a crackle of lightning is all that signals his departure.
Barry stepped into the room, an uneasy feeling washing over his body as he looked over the unconscious woman. "Cait..." He whispered as he grazed his fingertips against hers. He set the bouquet of flowers down on the edge of her bed and pulled a chair up next to the bed.

"All of this is your fault." He hears a voice call to him before he can take a seat and he swivels, seeing 'Ronnie Raymond' standing in the corner of the room. Barry tried not to think about it, about all the most grim parts of what had happened. About how the only reason she got hurt was because Sionis knew who he was. But every time he did think about it, it felt like the weight of it would crush him. So he kept running, like he always had. But no matter how much he ran, it felt like the darkness was swallowing the light, draining his spirit until there wasn't going to be anything left. But he couldn't ignore it, not when all the people he had failed over the years constantly reminded him of his failures.

"Leave me alone." Barry says, slamming his eyes shut and collecting his thoughts. He waits a few moments and when he doesn't hear them he lets his shoulders release the tension they've built up. Then, he reopens his eyes and 'Ronnie' is still there, but so is 'H.R', 'Eddie' and 'Oliver Queen', all staring at him silently, scrutinizing him with every movement of their eyes.

"Run Barry, Run." He hears a whisper, and he recognizes the voice straight away. That man that ruined so much of his life, he couldn't possibly be the cause of this too. How could one man cause so much damage to a person? Barry speeds off, landing at the docks of the city, leaning over the railing.

He can't seem to find his breath as he watches the waves crash back and forth, and he hears the pitter patter of footsteps but he assumes it's just another soul wanting to look at the beautiful sight. "Such a pleasure to see the great Barry Allen suffering." He heard another phantom say in Harrison Wells' voice. Even with that voice, he knew it was him. Only Thawne could speak in that tone. He looks behind him, and sees 'Harry Wells', only he knows it's just a disguise. He knows his mannerisms, how he talks in a calm whisper that gets under his skin.

"I know it's you Thawne." Barry declares as he turns back to watch the crashing waves. "You've been every voice inside my head haven't you?" He lowers his head when he hears slow clapping behind him followed by a chuckle.

"I had you for awhile there, huh?" The illusion says, but this time he isn't disguised as a Wells or a person from his past, he's in his own body, and it feels weird to see Eobard's actual face after seeing Wells for so long. "I know, kind of odd without the Wells face, eh? Thought I'd discard it for a little while. Just us, face to face, sound good?"

"Why aren't you trying to kill me?" Barry cuts to the point.

He chuckles. "Soon." He says calmly as he looks out across the waves of water crashing into each other. "I want to enjoy this. Seeing you suffer just as much as everyone else has. Then I'll kill you, and your family." Barry scoffs at his brazen nature. "I'm playing a much bigger game here Barry, and you'll know what it is in due time."

"So your just a voice in my head? No body? What did crisis do you?"

"I wish I knew Flash, I wish I knew. A ll know is I have been stuck in your hell of a speedforce since the crisis on infinite earths, and now I finally have my means to escape." He speaks.
"I must be losing my mind." Barry muttered as he turned away, walking away from the water.

"Were all a little insane aren't we?" Thawne smirks. "How is Doctor Snow? Think she'll make it? Of course not that it's a bother to you, you've got your own problems." Barry brings his hands up to his hair, pulling at the strands before letting out an exhausted sigh. The corner of Thawne's lips form into a smirk. "I hate you so much."

"Why? Why do you hate me so much! Why did you do all of this to me, kill my mother, send my father to prison, torture me and my family, why!"

"I was young and fooled by the history books. You were my hero, my idol, much like Nora." He says. "I wanted to be just like the Flash, I became obsessed with you, I needed to be you! So I recreated the incident that turned you into the Flash, and it worked. In time, I came to realize you were a false hero, just a man who happened to be struck by lightning. I eventually created my own speed force, and became your greatest enemy, as Mr. Ramone coined it, The Reverse Flash! Rival to the savior of Central City. I became better than you."

Barry continued to stare forward into the distance, letting his words sink in. "How am I the savior of Central City?" He inquired quietly, his voice cracking at the words as he spoke them. "What the hell have I saved? I almost destroyed the city because I didn't want you to go back to the future. My mother and father died because I wasn't fast enough to save them. I can't protect my friends or family! Hell, I'm not even the fastest man alive! There's always some faster speedster out there waiting to wreak havoc on the city because of me! I have caused every bad thing that has ever happened to this city, I might as well just hang up the cowl."

The tension between them was thick, but they never met eyes, not once. The speedsters continued to stand in silence before Barry shifted uncomfortably. "Do you ever think about if things were different between us? If you didn't hate me."

"What's the point, what's done is done." Thawne says. "The past can't be changed without ruining everything else."

"When has that ever stopped you?" Barry criticizes.

He laughs before taking a few steps so he is standing in front of Barry, finally locking eyes with the man. "Because, I don't want to change this. I want to kill you and make you suffer, that's all this is. That's all this ever will be Barry. Hatred."

"Then I'll stop you." Barry scolds. "Like always."

"And if so, ill be back." Thawne snaps back. "Like always." He doesn't run off with a flash of crimson lightning, no he just disappears into thin air. Barry doesn't even make a move, he doesn't matter right now, there is someone far more important he needs to see.

Barry is at the hospital in a second, walking through the hallways until he enters her room. As he takes a seat, he takes Caitlin's hand into his own and holds it close to him. "I don't know if either of you can hear me, I don't know what's happening, but I want you both to know that I need you. I'm falling apart. I can't live without you... Please come back to me." He gently placed her hand down, unaware a spark of lightning travels from his index finger to her hand. As he sits back he notices her hand twitch slightly and he gazes in disbelief. He stands to his feet as her eyes flutter open. "Barry..." She called out in a low whisper as she tries to find her voice.
"Your awake." He whispers in disbelief, a giant smile growing across his face. "Your okay!" Barry exclaims and bends down to hug her tightly. "I was so worried." Caitlin rose to a sitting position and she feels a strange sensation run throughout her body but she shakes it off as Barry's eyes catch hers.

"I..." She trailed off, hesitant to say what say was about to. She looks over at the man once again, with his eyes filled with so much adoration and concern, and she thinks she might explode. "I love you." She finally says. It feels like a thousand tons if pressure is lifted off her chest. Barry is so shocked, his eyes widen, and his smile grows as Caitlin bites at her lip nervously.

"I love you too, Cait." Barry announces, and Caitlin let's out an anxious breath. Then, there is silence as the two search for the words they cannot seem to find. Barry looked up to her, taking another moment to muster up some courage before he started leaning his head down toward hers. Caitlin couldn't help but smile into the kiss as their lips moved passionately.

A few blissful days had passed since the confession at the hospital. Him and Iris were officially getting a divorce, Caitlin was safe, and he couldn't happier. But as he reveled in the current bliss of his life, the dread was still lurking in his back of his mind. This was the calm before the storm, and the storm was coming. He turned his frame to look at the figure looming in the dark corner of the cortex. Thawne smirked back at him as he leaned against the wall, a spark of crimson lightning flashing through his eyes.
Chapter 7

ONE MONTH LATER

Caitlin ran her hand over the emblem of Barry's suit, reliving the many memories the suit held over the years. She sighed, dropping her hand down by her side before taking a deep breath. She was worried about Barry. Today was the day him and Iris would officially get divorced. He had insisted that he didn't drag her into the boring altercation but she wanted to be with him to comfort him in this difficult time.

She can't help the smirk that stretches across her face as she feels a pair of arms snake around her waist, pulling her flush against his body. "How did it go?" She asks him, delicately intertwining her fingers with his as she leans her head back against his chest.

"Great." He said with a smile, planting a gentle kiss atop her hair as he hugger her a little tighter. "I decided to leave the loft to her because if not we were going to have fight over who deserved it and I didn't want anymore drama. I just need to pack my things up and find a place."

There were a few moments of silence as Caitlin bit her lip nervously. "You- you could stay with me." Caitlin muttered and she saw him lean back just enough to capture her full face in his eyesight. "Only if you want, obviously you don't have to if you don't want to. I could help you find a place to-" She stops as he spins her around and presses his lips against hers tenderly. "Is- Is that a yes?" She asked breathlessly, smiling at him as he simply chuckled and nodded contently.

"I love you Caitlin Snow." He whispered into her hair, placing another gentle kiss atop her head. She closed her eyes, basking in the sheer bliss of her life right now as she and him held each other tightly.

...

Barry walked through the hallway, heading towards the loft to gather all of his belongings and move out, it was finally over between him and Iris and he felt free, like he wasn't being suffocated anymore. Barry pulled the keys from his pocket, readying to unlock the door when he heard a strange noise coming from down the hall. He turned, walking towards the root of the sound before he heard an all too familiar voice. "Its all your fault." He hears 'H.R' behind him and he winces. "I died to save Iris, because you loved her! Now it doesn't even matter. I died for nothing!' "That was his choice dammit!" Barry screamed back at Thawne, the true villain behind it. "I didn't force him to sacrifice himself!" The words bounced off the walls, echoing in his ears like a chant. He turned back to the door marked Apartment Four and knocked a few times, waiting for a reply.

"Help!" He hears a woman scream as loud as she can, and he bursts through the door out of instinct, stopping when he sees the inside of the apartment looks exactly like his childhood household. "Barry Don't!" He stands shocked as his mother sits in the middle of a lightning storm, just like that night all those years ago.

He turns to look into the hallway behind him, and sees 'H.R' wave with his drumsticks before the door suddenly slams. Barry turns back around, seeing the water in the fish tank rise into the air. He moves quickly, attempting to pull his mother out of the storm only to be thrown into a walk by a streak of red lightning.

"Thawne." Barry spoke through gritted teeth before rising to his feet.
The Reverse-Flash was currently unmasked in front of him wearing his original face. In a flash of orange lightning, Barry had him pinned against the wall with his elbow on his neck. "Why must we always go through the same routine?" He grunted. "Now, if you could please..."

Barry slowly and carefully released his hold on Eobard but made sure he was ready if the speedster were to try anything. "What do you want?"

"Always asking the right questions, Flash!" He exclaimed, cackling in sinister delight. "When the anti-matter waves hit and erased me from existence, I ended up here in the Speedforce. I have been in this torturous dimension for god knows how long which brings me to answering your question: I want out of this hell."

"And then what? Terrorize my friends and family, along with lives of the innocent! No way in Hell, Thawne."

Eobard's smirk never left his face as he put on his mask and his eyes grew red with the Negative Speedforce. Then, with his distorted voice and crimson eyes, he stepped closer. "I wasn't asking."

Barry is struck in the jaw, making him stumble back and allow the Reverse Flash to strike a couple more blows and knee him in the gut, making Barry drop to the ground. As he lifts himself up, he sees the man in yellow slam the knife into his mother's heart, eliciting a scream from Barry. "Why do you keep bringing me back to this night!"

"This night changed everything Flash." Thawne said, taking another step towards the scarlet speedster. "Not only did it trap me in time for fourteen years, it forced me to realize that I needed you, and you needed me. But, the most important thing I want you to know is that because you saved your younger self, your mother died. Being selfish kills the ones you love."

"I hate you."

"Acknowledged." Thawne says as he crouches down in front of Barry.

Barry clenches his eyes shut and when he reopens him, he's still in the Allen household but Thawne is no longer in front of him, he is instead replaced by Zoom who is holding his father as he pleads to the speedster to spare his life.

Barry closes his eyes but he feels a hand suddenly go around his neck and his eyes widen in shock. "Your going to watch Barry, watch as you fail yet another person." Thawne spoke with a devious smirk.

Barry let's the tears fall as Zoom kills his father, and the past version of himself drops to his knees. Eobard ushers Barry down onto the ground and kicks him in the ribs as his body ripples with silent laughter. "Hunter really gave me a run for my money huh?" He joked. "Let me ask you one question Barry, do you think you can turn back time and save the ones you love?" The speedster questions, but Barry remains silent. "Answer the question!"

"No!" He screams, and he suddenly finds himself sitting on the ground in front of Apartment Four with the door slowly opening. He looked up to see a confused elderly man looking at him. Barry said his apologies and went to back to the loft to gather his belongings.

As he stumbled against the wall to stop himself from collapsing onto the ground, A swirl of energy erupts around him. He drops down to the ground with a sickening impact. Everything feels off to say the very least and it feels as if he can barely stay awake. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Thawne's illusion slowly walking towards him. "How does it feel Barry? How does it feel to..."
be out of control?" This very statement causes Barry's conscious to darken a few shades and let loose a scream as his Thawne takes full control of his body.
Chapter 8

Caitlin Snow perked up as she heard that familiar whoosh echo throughout Star Labs, but as she turned to face the Scarlet Speedster she found that he wasn't there. She furrowed her eyebrows, rising from her seat to see where he had gone. As she entered another room in Star Labs, she expected to find another empty area but was proven wrong when she found the man inside the Starchives, orange lightning shooting back and forth as he gathered materials to repair the time sphere.

She was filled with trepidation as she slowly made her way over. Something felt off about this. He had his back turned to her, so she spoke to grab his attention. "Barry?" She muttered out quietly, and he raised his head up a bit giving her confirmation that he'd heard her. "What are you doing?"

She asked, and he finally turned to face her.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you." He answered, and it seemed as if he was trying to keep his eyes out of her gaze. But she eventually managed to lock eyes with the man, and she saw something dark inside those orbs, something that wasn't Barry, it was something else entirely. "What's wrong, Doctor Snow?"

She stumbled backwards as the man edged closer to her, lightning crackling in his eyes. "Where is Barry?" She questioned, her eyes flashing white as the back of her legs hit the work station behind her.

"I'm right here Cait." The pretender mocked and Caitlin's locks turned white as Frost emerged to take control. Frost stood there with an irritated look on her face, her jaw growing tense as he began vibrating his hand. "I can't keep up the charade." He whispered out in an all too familiar tone that reminded her of someone, but she just couldn't place it. "I'm sorry Doctor Snow, but I want to go home, and you won't stop me."

"Thawne." She spoke with disgust for the man as it finally clicked in her brain. As he edged closer, Frost created two icicles but the need to defend herself dissipated when she saw him drop to the ground, Cisco Ramon standing in the doorway with a meta-human dampening gun held tightly in his arms.

... Half an hour later, the Reverse Flash stirred to consciousness inside a pipeline cell. The speedster laughed, his cackle bouncing off the walls as Cisco and Frost watched him closely. "Isn't it funny how I always manage to end up in here when I come to visit?" He spoke it like he was a family relative. He rose to his feet, using the walls to steady himself before addressing the two standing before him. "You have questions, ask them."

"Where is Barry?" Frost spoke through gritted teeth and Eobard continued to look at her with a cocky smile on his face. She stepped closer to the windowed front of the pipeline cell, staring at him with a burning gaze as she waited for him to break the excruciating silence.

"Do not worry, he's safe and sound in here." Eobard assured, gesturing to the body he was currently residing within. For now. "I'm just taking the wheel for a little while." He cleared his throat as he brought his hands up against the cell door, leaning forward. "I used Barry to help me escape his hell of a speedforce, and once I get out of here and get home, I'll find a way to get my body back. Then, I'll leave him to die."
Frost knew he enjoyed watching her anger and discomfort but she couldn't resist clenching her knuckles tightly, wanting nothing more than to shove an icicle through his heart, but if she did that, then Barry would be lost forever, so she took a deep breath before stepping back. "Why wouldn't you just use his speed to travel to the future, why rely on the time sphere?" Cisco inquired.

"You don't think I tried that?" Thawne rolled his eyes, reveling in his belief that he was so much smarter than the two of them. "I have access to his speed but I can't go fast enough to travel back to the future."

"Seems like a screw you from the speedforce." Frost said then simply closed the pipeline door as Thawne chewed his tongue in irritation, her and Cisco heading to the Cortex.

"That is freaky." Cisco muttered, feigning a series of chills to execute his point. "Even though its not really him, seeing Barry act evil is just something I never wanted to experience again, not after Savitar."

"There has to be a way to bring Barry back and get Thawne out of his body." Frost spoke, racking her brain to find a solution as she took a deep breath.

"Like what, an exorcism?" Cisco spoke absentmindedly, chuckling to himself. He only stopped his motions when he saw Frost eyeing him. "Really, are you serious?"

"Do you have any better ideas?" The icy woman questioned with a quirk of her eyebrows.

An hour later Caitlin was pacing back and forth as Cisco finished putting the final touches on the device he had constructed. She chewed on her nail nervously as she looked over the unconscious Barry Allen laid out on the gurney. "Relax, were going to get Barry back." Cisco said, but Caitlin continued chewing on her nail. "What we think of as Thawne is actually just a horde of negative tachyons that have somehow forced their way inside of Barry. So, we have to hit him with positive tachyons to force Thawne out. That's where this bad boy comes in!" He spoke in signature Ramon fashion, patting the device with his hand with a proud smile.

"What is it?" Caitlin asked inquisitively.

"The Positive Tachyon Emitter." Cisco explained, adjusting a few of the mechanics of the device. "And You," Cisco began, pointing to Cecile. "Are gonna be our Thawne detector. I need you to pyschically monitor Barry and tell me when we've rid him of Thawnes influence." He looked to Caitlin for conformation, turning on the machine after she gave a nod.

"Ahh!" Cecile gasped, clutching onto the gurney for support as she tried to find her balance. "Pain, grief, loss, shame, fear, guilt, it's like a hurricane in his mind, then I feel something else entirely clawing at the surface, like raw hatred." Caitlin looked over to Cisco, seeing the worry etched on his face.

"I don't understand, I've set the PTEs to full power but Thawne's influence is only growing stronger." Cisco explained. "If we don't figure out a solution soon then we might lose Barry forever." The engineer jumped in surprise as 'Barry' shot up with crimson eyes, his entire body vibrating so fast he was nothing but a blur. Caitlin quickly slapped a pair of meta dampening cuffs on him while Cisco gave him a very strong sedative to knock him out for a little while longer.

"What the hell just happened?!" Cecile exclaimed.

"Thawne just connected to his speedforce through Barry's body, he almost has full control." Cisco said, running a hand through his hair in order to tame it as he took a deep breath.
Cecile groaned in pain yet again as Barry's body thrashed violently. "I'm seeing flashes, pieces of memories I think. I see Nora, Crisis, and so much more."

"Thawne's created a personal hell for him, an amalgamation of Barry's most painful memories."
Caitlin said in remorse, running her fingers over Barry’s, jolting away when she feels lightning crackle between their fingers. She feels it again, that odd sensation throughout her whole body just like when she woke up at the hospital. "Wait!" Caitlin ran out of the room, returning moments later with several devices in her hand.

"The M.A.D 2.0!" Cisco said, understading where she was going with this. "We can use this to go inside of Barry's mind and help him force Thawne out."

They each attached a device to their forehead before taking a seat next to the gurney. Caitlin and Cisco each took one of Cecile's hand, readying for their journey into the Scarlet Speedster's mindscape. "Here we go," Cecile said before Cisco and Caitlin felt a wave of horrific emotions wash over them, presumably Barry's, and they found themselves standing inside a strange environment.

It looked like the hallway at Star Labs, but it had household items like a fish tank, furniture, and family photos of the Allen family. Caitlin then noticed the bloody knife and spilled wine glass on the ground as the two continued searching their odd surroundings. They eventually found themselves face to face with Eobard Thawne, Barry sitting on the ground behind him. "Would you look at us, team Flash back together again!" He clapped slowly, flashing a mischievous grin at Caitlin as Cisco hurried past him to attend to Barry.

"Barry, hey listen to me." Cisco said, patting the speedster as he continued to mutter 'it's all my fault' over and over again. "You have to snap out of this, if you don't you're gonna die!" Cisco pleaded, but the man continued muttering those four words repeatedly.

"I must say Doctor Snow, you've made me proud." Eobard said and her eyes flashed white in response. "You've grown so much as a person, and so has Frost." The Reverse Flash was circling her, and that toothy grin he had across his face made her want to punch him so badly. Lightning began crackling all over Caitlin's body as she clenched her fists, her body vibrating wildly. She looked at herself in shock and stumbled back as she tried to comprehend what was happening to her. "Would you look at that." Thawne whispered in curiosity.

"Cait, Barry's not responding to me." She heard Cisco call from behind her, and the lightning ceased, replaced by an overwhelming need to save Barry from that monster and his own personal demons.

"Hello Mr. Ramon." Thawne whispered and Cisco gulped as he stepped forward to face the Reverse Flash.

"Barry listen to me, you need to get up." She said softly, her head turning to look at the dark cavern where hundreds of voices were pouring out. Some of then were screaming, others were crying, some of them simply beckoned for him to come to them.

"I can't, it was all my fault, I can't." Barry whimpered as he held his face in his hands.

"Barry." She said again, and he hesitantly raised his gaze to meet hers, and she smiled reassuringly at him as he looked into those beautiful eyes of hers. Caitlin gently placed her hands on his cheeks, planting a gentle, searing kiss on his lips.
"What if I went with you?" She spoke softly, rising to her feet and extending her fingers to the Scarlet Speedster. Barry met her eyes with love and adoration as he took her hand and stood up.
This was it. The moment of truth. Lightning crackled between the two as they entered the cave together.

Thawne attempted to go after them, but was stopped by Cisco as he stood firmly in his place. Eobard began vibrating his hand, placing it right atop of his chest in response. "Do it." Cisco whispered, which surprised Thawne greatly. "You the Reverse Flash right? Cold blooded killer, you can ruin anybody's life?" Thawne's eyes widened as Cisco grabbed his vibrating hand, throwing it back against Eobard's chest. Eobard shook his head in doubt as Cisco continued. "You're nothing but a formless parasite, and you can't beat us. Were team Flash." He said proudly.

Barry's breath quickened as he continued around the dark cavern, eyeing the various bodies that lay scattered across the ground. "No, no!" He murmured but persevered as he felt Caitlin's grip on his hand tighten. As the couple continued they saw several memories: Ronnie and Eddie sacrificing themselves, his parents deaths, Oliver dying in his arms, his daughter Nora's death, so many deaths that he held himself responsible for and for no reason, eventually he dropped to the ground in anguish. "It's all my fault, I killed them. I couldn't save them, I'm not a hero."

Caitlin crouched down in front of him, gently cupping his cheek and bringing his eyeliner to hers. "Barry you are The Flash, you are a hero. But being a hero comes with complications. Number one being you can't save everybody." Caitlin spoke softly. "But Barry, these deaths are not your fault. Oliver, Ronnie and Eddie chose to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. Nora and your parents death is the fault of Thawne and Zoom. You can't carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. You need to take control of your guilt and fear and get rid of Thawne before it's too late." Barry took a deep breath before nodding and rising to face his fears.

Eobard stumbled back in disbelief as Barry and Caitlin emerged from the cavern, the two joining Cisco by his side. "I'm done kneeling to you, Thawne." Barry said and Eobard groaned in pain as crimson lightning began shooting sporadically around his body. "I've been a coward, running from my pain, letting you use it to break me down until I was weak enough for you to get what you wanted. I finally see that not all of this is my fault. Yes, I've got blood on my hands, but we all do. I've made my peace with that and you can't use it against me anymore. I don't know why you hate me so much, or why you've done everything you have done, but I'm done letting you control my guilt, I'm done letting you control my life. Our lives."

Caitlin and Cisco awaken back in the real world as the last of Thawne's negative tachyons left Barry's body. Barry sat up, taking in his surroundings as he stood up off the bed. He smiled as he, Caitlin and Cisco entangled themselves in a tight hug. "C'mon." Barry beckoned Celine to join and smiled as they held each other tightly. "Thank you, all of you, I couldn't have done it without you."

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Barry stood on the rooftop of Star Labs, looking across the nighttime landscape of Central City. He reached into his pocket, pulling out a small box and opening it to look over the diamond ring held securely. He smiled as he closed it and slid it back into his coat. He clutched onto the railing tightly as he felt a wave of lightning wash over him before lightning began crackling from his fingertips, forming into the shape of a person. "Hello Barry Allen." It said in a calming voice.

"What the hell?" He breathed out, looking over the shape as the lightning crackled and fizzed. "Who are you?"

"I am the speedforce." The figure spoke simply. "Barry Allen, today you conquered your misplaced guilt and learned to let the pain fall off your shoulders. You have taken yet another step into becoming the Speedster you were always destined to be, and for that, we have gifted you with a new ability." Barry looked around frantically as he heard the voice of his daughter call out to
him. "Relax, become one with the speedforce, let it flow through you, then you will understand your new ability."

Barry let loose a deep breath as he held his eyes closed, the lightning beginning to crackle between his fingers again. He jumped in surprise as he heard her voice call out yet again. "Dad..." He closed his eyes again, regaining his position from before as he repeated the process.

He let the lightning build in his hands before it began moving freely on its own, twisting and swaying until it took the shape of a woman. His daughter. "Nora? Is it- is it really you?" Barry said as tears began building in his eyes. He was in awe of the lightning figure that shined brightly in the darkness of the night.

"Yeah dad, it's me." Nora smiled, a beautiful giggle erupting from her lips. This was his daughter. The girl who had done whatever it took to meet and save her father yet still failed because of that monster Eobard Thawne who would no doubt return at some point in the future.

"How?" He found himself saying after a few moments of silence, his breath visible in the brisk night air.

"You did this. You brough me back by channeling the speed force. All speedsters go here when they die, and you summoned me. You can do this with any speedster." She informed her father. "It was my idea to give you this, it took some convincing before the speedforce agreed though." She said with a quirk on her shoulders and his smile grew bigger. She had done this for him, so they could talk, so they could see each other again.

Barry knew it might be too good to be true, but he leaned in for a hug, and was delightfully surprised as he was able to hold the shape of lightning tightly in his arms. Sure it felt strange, and he probably looked beyond ridiculous but he didn't care. "I love you Nora, so much"

"I love you too Dad." Nora said, the two released each other and the lightning began to fade. "Are you happy?" Nora suddenly questioned. "With Caitlin, are you happy?" She added after a moment. He nodded softly and was happy to the see that smile make itself known once again. "Good, good." She said happily before the lightning dispersed back into his hands and rain began to cascade down onto him.
Chapter 9

Caitlin Snow finds herself smiling as she exits the bathroom, sliding down into the bed beside the Scarlet Speedster, snuggling up against him and leaning her head on his shoulder. How could she not smile when she was around him? Barry strokes her hair softly, pressing a kiss onto her temple as Caitlin closed her eyes and basked in the comfort and simplicity of their life right now. Her hair has gone back to being frizzy, having dried up after the shower. She feels tired, and wants to fall asleep against him. Barry spreads his covers over themselves, tugging her in carefully. It feels warm and safe like a cocoon, his body a steady source of warmth.

She finds herself enfolded in his arms, his breath gentle and warm against her neck, his heartbeat steady in sync with hers. She smiles as she draws lazy circles across his chest with her finger, until he whispers something in the comfortable silence that makes her perk up with confusion. "Make a pie."

"What?" Caitlin questions, raising her head to look up at him, and she sees a soft smile across his face.

"That night we went to that Karaoke Bar and you got drunk, you asked what can't I do right after we sang together. I cannot make a pie like you can to save my life."

"I can't believe you remember that!" Caitlin laughed, a blush making it's way on her cheeks as she recalls that night. "But thank you for the compliment, I take pride in my baking exploits Mister Allen." He arched an eyebrow in return, making her giggle and break her semi-serious voice. After a few moments of laughing she leaned in a pressed a tender kiss against Barry's lips. He brought his hand up, gently brushing the nape of her neck as they shared yet another breathtaking moment, one they would never forget.

Caitlin pulled back after a few moments and smiled at him, they didn't have many small moments just between themselves but the ones they did have, she would always cherish. She snuggled up to the speedster once again, resting her head on his chest and reveling in the comfort of it all. "I love you Caitlin Snow." He whispers and she sinks into a dreamless slumber at the comfort of his words.

... 

Caitlin awoke the next morning to the smell of bacon wafting throughout the apartment. She rubbed her eyes free of their blurriness and stood up, heading to the kitchen. She walked up behind Barry, snaking her arms around his waist and holding him tightly as he cracks an egg. "Good morning beautiful." He whispers and she blushes madly, no matter how many times he might compliment her or say he loves her, the feeling never changes. It always gives her that feelings that a whole zoo is rampaging in her stomach.

"Good morning handsome." She replies, stealing a piece of bacon from the plate and munching on it, silently laughing as Barry shakes his head. She detaches from him and heads into the bathroom. 

Ten minutes pass and Barry furrows his eyebrows in confusion as he watches an omelette very slowly sizzle in a pan, realizing that he's in flashtime, only he didn't activate it. He turns off the stove and walks through the apartment warily, not wanting this to be another villainous speedster lurking in the shadows waiting to attack.

He turns into the hallway, looking down to the bathroom where the door is slightly ajar and
moving very slowly. He continues forward until he is face to face with the obstacle. He pushes it open eyes widening as he sees Caitlin is in flashtime as well, but he didn't bring her in so how is she moving freely?

He moves over to her, only to see streaks of lightning run across her figure and across her eyes. He helps her off the ground, hugging her tightly. Caitlin jumps as flashtime comes to a halt and the toothbrush she dropped finally hits the ground in real time. "Barry what's going on?" She questioned, raising her hands as an icy mist began emitting from them, bringing the temperature of the room way down. "What is happening to me?"

"I don't know, but we need to get to Star Labs to run some tests." He told her. "We'll figure this out." He reassured, cupping her face gently. She nodded before entrapping him in another tight hug.

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"So..." Caitlin started nervously, playing with her sweatshirts sleeves as Barry held the tablet with the results in his hands and Cisco stood in the corner of the room. She took a deep breath, hoping that it wasn't anything terrible.

"Somehow, I transferred some of my speed to you." He revealed, taking a seat next to her on the medical bed. "And since speed and cold are opposites, your body is fighting a war inside of itself. We need to get the residual speedforce out of your system or else-" He left the words in the air.

"I could die." She finished grimly for him making him close his eyes, he didn't want to think of that possibility. "How do we fix this?" She questioned and Barry seemed to be trapped in his thoughts for a moment before he began speeding around Star Labs, blowing loose papers everywhere and giving Caitlin goosebumps from the cold air. "Barry?"

"Tada!" Barry said, stopping next to Caitlin with a proud smile as they looked over the new Cosmic Treadmill that stood next to the old one. "You'll need to run at superspeed and the machine will drain the speed from your system and transfer it to me." He explained and she took in the information fully. "Are you ready?" Barry asked, and she nodded. He clicked on the machine and moved onto the old Cosmic Treadmill as she stepped onto the newly built one. As Caitlin's speed picked up more and more, the speedforce exited her body, transferring to the scarlet speedster. Barry quickly turned off the machines and grabbed Caitlin before the speed of the treadmill could through her into the wall like it had done to him so many times. "So?" Barry questioned Cisco.

"Her vitals seemed to be back to normal, but I'll need to take a blood test to be a hundred percent sure that we've fixed the problem." They waited anxiously for the results for half an hour, sighing heavily in relief as Cisco revealed that all the speedforce was gone from her system.

The three friends hugged each other tightly for a moment before disconnecting. In a flash of lightning Joe, Cecile and Ralph found themselves inside the cortex of Star Labs much to their confusion. "I need to show you guys something." Barry said, beginning moving his hands back and forth, eliciting a strange glare from everyone until they saw the lightning begin to spark from his hands.

"Oh my god." He hears Joe whisper as he lets the lightning flow from his hands. Eventually it takes the shape of his daughter as it did the other night and he smiles as he sees her wave, hitching her shoulders in the air in a shy manner. "How is this even possible?" Joe questioned as he waved back at the girl on shock.
"Because of her. She convinced the speedforce to give me this power so I could talk to any speedsters that had come and gone before me, so I could learn from them and find new ways to control and use my powers." Barry explained. "I learned how to use it for the first time a few days ago."

"Hey guys." Nora spoke softly. "It's good to see all of you, I hope you're going okay."

"How is it in the speedforce?" Cisco said in awe.

"Alright?" The woman made of lightning said unsurely. "There's a few grumps in here, but there's a few good apples too that crack some jokes that are way too cheesy, but it's nice." She smirked, then the lightning began to flicker, signifying they only had a few more moments left. "I miss you guys and I love you all!" She called as her voice became increasingly harder to hear until eventually the lightning crawled back into Barry's hands, leaving Team Flash in silence and shock.

-EARTH-TWO-

Harrison Wells shut the door to his home, slipping off his shoes and tossing his keys onto the counter before he checked the watch on his wrist. "Dammit." He muttered to himself as he saw it was well past midnight. He had promised Jessie that he would be home in time to help her study for her finals next week. He made his way down the hall, flicking the lights off in his daughter's room after he saw that she had fallen asleep studying for her finals by herself. Scolding himself he joined his wife in the bedroom and hung his coat up in the closet. He then flopped onto the bed with a tired sigh.

His wife Tess Morgan frowned at her husband as she set her book on the nightstand. "Are you alright?" She questioned.

"We had a few setbacks with Victor's surgery, but we managed to save him, albeit at the loss of most of his human body." Harrison sighed, hating to know what it's going to be like when that kid wakes up as a Cyborg. "He's going to wake up ninety percent robot. Tess, his normal teenage life is over."

"Hey, you saved a life with your technology, you did good." Tess assured. "You did what you could, and I'm sure Silas is grateful." Harrison smiled at her and she ran her hand through his hair soothingly. "Now come on, it's late and you've had a long day, you need to rest." As the words left her mouth, a large portal opened up in their bedroom, a storm of red lightning emerging from it and striking Harrison.

Tess leaped from the bed as the portal closed and her husband laid completely still on the floor. "Harrison!" She screamed. She jumped when his eyes shot open, revealing crimson orbs. His body vibrated for a moment, stopping when she reached out for his hand.

Her eyes never left the man as he rose to his feet, red lightning flickering all across his body. He looked at his hands for a moment before he set his attention on her. "Harrison Wells is gone." The demonic voice said with a smirk before he flashed away, leaving Tess in horror and shock.

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